Zambia Tong-Il Moo-Do Federation: Zambia's Youth Build Character Through Martial Arts

David Isaac Phiri
September 26, 2026



LUSAKA, Zambia - Before any kicks were thrown or forms executed at this year's National Martial Arts Championship, 115 young athletes gathered in a quiet lecture hall to tackle a different kind of test: ethics, anti-doping, and moral philosophy.

Organized by the Zambia Tong-Il Moo-Do Federation, the two-day championship brought together student participants from five provinces - Lusaka, Southern, Copperbelt, North-Western, and Luapula - alongside competitors from Springfield Primary School, Redford College, and the International School of Lusaka.

While the event culminated in intense sparring and technical martial arts displays, its primary purpose ran much deeper than physical competition.

Ethics Before Athletics

The national gathering kicked off on Friday with a dedicated anti-doping seminar and an examination of Tong-Il Moo-Do philosophy.

Rather than focusing solely on physical conditioning, sports educators led discussions on health, fairness, and the underlying spirit of athletics. Students learned about anti-doping rule violations, the hidden risks of unverified dietary supplements, and the absolute responsibility each athlete bears for what enters their body. The curriculum also addressed the subtle psychological pressures young competitors face, from coach and peer influences to the dangerous "win-at-all-costs" mindset.

Following the seminar, students were tested on the discipline's core philosophy - a system centered on unity of mind and body, moral character, and selfless service to the community.

> "A medal marks one day of achievement; character is shown in what we do every day."

- Mr. Sombwa Musunsa, Director General and CEO, National Sports Council of Zambia

Delivering the opening address, Mr. Sombwa Musunsa commended Federation Chairman Master Kouame Dieudonne Bohoussou, the organizing committee, instructors, and supporting families. He urged athletes to embrace fair play, show deep respect for their opponents, and abide by impartial officiating, emphasizing the need for safe, accessible martial arts training across the nation.



High-Energy Action on the Mat

Saturday saw the educational focus transition into active competition. Student athletes showcased their technical precision, courage, and self-control in individual and team events.

The championship featured individual entries in Bon (Forms), Sparring, and Special Techniques, alongside dynamic team performances in Gichoom, where groups of three to nine competitors executed synchronized martial arts routines.

Underneath the high-energy sparring matches lay a strict governance framework. The federation enforced mandatory medical disclosures, tournament compliance rules, and parent/guardian consent forms for all minor participants, demonstrating a firm commitment to youth safeguarding.

A Unified Path Forward

What stood out most was the event's unique progression: placing character development and ethical awareness before the thrill of victory. By uniting rural provincial learners with city school students under a shared philosophy, the championship illustrated how sport can serve as a bridge for community building and youth leadership.

As the mats were cleared and trophies handed out, the message resonated clearly: true champion status isn't defined by a podium finish, but by the integrity carried back into everyday life.