



CCMG Statement on Phase 2 of the 2020 Voter Registration Exercise ***Improvements in Registration Processing Time Noted, But Increased Deployment of Staff*** ***and Registration Kits Still Needed to Meet Demand and ECZ Target*** ***Access to Centres and Information for Observers Remains Problematic***

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As part of its voter registration observation exercise, the Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) trained, accredited and deployed 330 non-partisan voter registration observers to observe all four phases of the 2020 voter registration exercise. Of these, 298 CCMG observers are deployed to a statistically representative random sample of 1,000 registration centres across the four voter registration phases and the sampled centres are located in every province, district and constituency of Zambia. The remainder are deployed to the district boma registration centres. For Phase 2, the sample included 253 registration centres. In addition to their observation at designated registration centres, CCMG's observers also provide weekly reports on the general environment and stakeholder activities, as well as reports of critical incidents and violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct.¹

I. Registration Centre Opening

Based on the reports from its observers, during Phase 2 (17-23 November 2020) of the voter registration exercise, CCMG finds that nearly 100% of registration centres had all the critical materials with the exception of backup registration kits, which were present at 64% of registration centres. However, CCMG notes with concern multiple critical logistical and staffing issues, including the deployment of only one Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) staff (person) at nearly half (49%) of registration centres, only a slight improvement from Phase 1 (53%). In addition, CCMG continued to observe deviation from the ECZ's published national-level deployment plan in Phase 2, with 10% of CCMG's observers reporting centres not opening, which appeared to be primarily due to district-level deployment plans inconsistencies with the national-level plan, along with some logistical challenges.

II. Registrant Processing Time

CCMG reports an improvement in the processing time for a potential voter in Phase 2, at an average of 8 minutes, with an average of 82 registrants per centre processed in a day.² This was an improvement from Phase 1 of 10 minutes per registrant and 67 registrants per centre per day. Lusaka, Copperbelt and Northern Provinces saw the largest improvement in registrants processed per centre per day. However, due to the continued strong interest by eligible citizens, the continued lack of significant deployment of additional kits and staff, has limited further improvement. CCMG notes that, as in Phase 1, the logistical challenges do not appear to have affected significantly one region of the country more than others, based on data from observers on the average number of registrants per centre per day by province or the average minutes it took to register a person per province in Phase 2. Based on current rate of registration, CCMG believes it will be difficult to reach the ECZ's stated target of 9,000,000 registrants by the end

¹ For findings and recommendations related to the general voter registration environment, please see the full CCMG report available at ccmgzambia.org.

² These numbers are based on the information provided to CCMG observers; however, as noted in the next section, ECZ officers did not provide CCMG observers with this information in 28% of centres.



of the announced registration exercise on 12 December. Thus, *CCMG continues to call on the ECZ to immediately deploy additional staff and kits to increase the efficiency of voter registration and calls on ECZ to address publicly how it will address any expected shortfall from its announced target of registrants.*

III. Observer Access to Centres and Key Information

CCMG continues to be gravely concerned with the ECZ officers who continue to deny its duly accredited observers access to registration centres and information, as well as the lack of progress on this issue by the ECZ head office. In Phase 2, despite being duly accredited and presenting their credentials, 3% of CCMG's observers were not initially allowed to observe, which is the same rate at which CCMG experienced these challenges in Phase 1.³ In addition, 28% of CCMG's observers were not provided with key information on voter registration, including the daily numbers of how many people were successfully registered at the registration centre observed, which is only a very slight improvement from Phase 1. As noted in CCMG's Phase 1 statement, this information should be public as a critical element of enhancing the transparency of the voter registration process and building confidence among the electorate. *CCMG therefore renews its call to the ECZ to immediately take concrete steps to grant access to registration centres and key registration centre information to all duly accredited observers.*

IV. Additional ECZ Recommendations:

Based on its observation of Phase 2 of the voter registration exercise, CCMG also has the following recommendations to ECZ:

- a) **CCMG calls on the ECZ to immediately release the total number of voters registered during Phase 1 and Phase 2, disaggregated by province, district and constituency**, as well as by key demographic groups (women, youth and people with disabilities). CCMG also calls on the ECZ to release its targets for the voter registration exercise, again disaggregated, as a critical part of enhancing the transparency of the exercise.
- b) **CCMG calls on the ECZ to publicly release the number of officers and registration kits deployed to every province, district and constituency**, as well as those planned for deployment in Phases 3 and 4. This will not only enhance the transparency of the exercise but also allow stakeholders to understand and evaluate the process and rationale.
- c) Given that the voter registration exercise is half way through its scheduled period, **CCMG again calls on the ECZ to enhance the transparency of this exercise by immediately releasing the procedures for the registration of incarcerated individuals** that will guide this exercise and ensuring accessibility to the correctional facilities where registration will take place by observers and party representatives.
- d) **CCMG renews its request that ECZ allow an independent audit**, sometimes called

³ CCMG notes that extensive contact with the ECZ and with local officials resolved 24% of these issues.



a voter list verification, of the voters' register to enhance public confidence in the voter registration process and the voters' register by providing an independent assessment of the voters' register.

V. Political Party and Other Non-Partisan Observers and Civil Society Organisations

CCMG's observers continued to report low levels of observation by party representatives and other non-partisan observers, which reduces the ability of parties and other observers to comment on, and provide recommendations for the process from an evidence base. CCMG also urges political parties and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) to intensify their voter education and mobilisation activities, as CCMG observers report relatively low levels less than two weeks before the end of the exercise on 12 December.

CCMG again commends the efforts of citizens to register, especially those who had to wait in long lines and particularly the youth and first-time registrants, women and persons with disabilities. We also hereby encourage all eligible citizens who have not yet registered to ensure that they visit a registration centre and complete the process prior to the announced end of the exercise on 12 December 2020.

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Overview of CCMG

The Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) is an alliance of four faith-based organisations formed to help promote credible elections through non-partisan citizen monitoring. The CCMG partner organisations are Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ); Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ); Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflections (JCTR); and Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB), formerly the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), through Caritas Zambia. CCMG was founded ahead of the 20th January 2015 presidential by-election. CCMG is a member of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM) (<https://gndem.org/>) and conducts all of its observation efforts in conformity with the Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations (<https://gndem.org/declaration-of-global-principles/>). CCMG is strictly independent and non-partisan. We support no political party or candidate.