



## **CCMG Statement on the Physical Inspection of the Provisional Voter Register**

*29 April 2021*

As part of CCMG's overall mission to enhance the transparency, accountability, and inclusivity of Zambia's electoral processes, CCMG trained and deployed 330 non-partisan voter register inspection observers to observe the physical inspection of the provisional voter register at polling stations. CCMG observers were deployed to the polling stations located in every province, district, and constituency of Zambia. CCMG observers deployed on 3 days (March 29, April 1, and April 7) to different polling stations, including the polling station where the observer was registered.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) did not provide a schedule of when polling stations would be open and where ECZ staff and kits were deployed for the exercise to either stakeholders or the public. As a result, CCMG could not deploy its observers to a nationally representative random sample of inspection centres and so cannot provide data on how the issues described below may have affected other polling stations around the country where CCMG observers were not present.

CCMG has analyzed the observers' reports on the physical inspection of the provisional register and shares the following key highlights:

- **Registers were available for inspection in all polling stations observed (965) and ECZ staff were present in almost all polling stations observed (961 of 965).**
- **More than one-third (354 of 965) of the polling stations observed were not accessible for people with mobility disabilities**, requiring voters to go up steps in order to inspect the provisional voters register.
- **At a small number of polling stations observed (10 of 965) at least five registered voters did not find their names included on the provisional voters register at polling station despite having a voter's card showing that they were registered to vote at that polling station. On average, this issue affected four voters per station.** Also, at less than one fifth of polling stations observed (126 of 965) five or more voters found that some part of their details in the register were incorrect, affecting an average of five voters per station. As noted above because CCMG was not able to deploy observers to a nationally representative random sample of polling stations, it is not possible to determine how or if these issues affected other polling stations around the country where CCMG observers were not present.
- **There was a very low presence of political party representatives and civil society organisations (CSOs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs) at polling stations observing the inspection process.** Out of the 965 polling stations observed, CCMG's observers reported a Patriotic Front (PF) representative at 47 polling stations, a United Party for National Development (UPND) representative at 25, a representative of other parties (not PF or UPND) at 35. Non-partisan observers, other than CCMG, were only reported at 13 of the polling stations observed.

While the ECZ provided information on the inspection exercise, the ECZ failed to publish a list of polling stations where registration kits were available for voters to make any corrections to their voter registration details, and on what days ECZ staff would be available at polling stations to support the inspection exercise. This resulted in cases of voters going to their polling stations to correct their details and being redirected to other polling stations with kits, placing an unnecessary burden on voters. **As the phone-based and online verification is slated to continue to 7 May, CCMG calls on**



**the ECZ to immediately provide the public with detailed information on what to do if they find that their details are omitted or incorrect on these platforms.**

CCMG has continued to raise concerns about the ECZ's engagement with stakeholders. During the inspection process, ECZ failed to provide CCMG with the procedures for the inspection process, despite request, and failed to accredit some of CCMG's observers in time to observe the entire inspection process. CCMG has also raised concerns regarding the lack of understanding of some ECZ officials of the role and accreditation of observers, who demanded that CCMG's observers seek additional clearances to observe despite accreditation. However, CCMG and other organisations faced the same issues during the voter registration process. **With only a few weeks before candidate nominations and as we approach the critical campaign period, CCMG urges the ECZ to address its accreditation process and training, to provide a hotline for observation organisations to rapidly resolve any accreditation issues during their observation and to improve its public communications and stakeholder engagement.**

Lastly, both CCMG and the Zambian Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD) have raised the issue of accessibility of polling stations for people with disabilities and have documented significant numbers of polling stations that are not accessible for people with mobility disabilities. CCMG calls on the ECZ to immediately share its updated *Action Plan for Enhancing Electoral Services for Persons with Disabilities* and to ensure that prior to any electoral process all venues to be used are accessible and if not, that measures are taken to ensure that the issues are rectified.

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*For CCMG's full report its observation of the Physical Inspection of the Provisional Voter Register please visit CCMG's website at [ccmgzambia.org](http://ccmgzambia.org).*