



Christian Churches Monitoring Group Statement on Observation of the 14 April Mayoral By-Election in Mongu District

For Immediate Release

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I. Introduction

The Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) trained and deployed 16 Long-Term monitors to observe the pre-election environment ahead of the 14 April 2022 Mongu Mayoral by-election. During the pre-election period and on the election day, CCMG recruited, trained and set out to deploy 146 election monitors to be stationed across all the 146 polling stations, and 16 roving monitors assigned to all the 27 wards in Mongu District for the Mongu Mayoral by-election. CCMG's election day monitors arrived at their assigned polling station at 05:30 hours and remained at their assigned polling station to observe the polling station setup and opening, voting, counting and the official announcement of results at the polling station. However, one of CCMG's monitors did not deploy due to a family emergency. The objective of CCMG's by-election project was to contribute to enhanced **transparency and accountability** of the Mongu Mayoral by-election by providing systematic and factual information on the conduct of the electoral process, and **inclusion** by giving voters the confidence to participate in the electoral process.

II. Pre-Election Assessment

While the electoral environment was generally calm and peaceful, CCMG notes with concern acts of voter inducement involving distribution of money (K20) to marketeers by the UPND, distribution of money (K30) to voters by the PNUP aspiring candidate and distribution of mealie meal to supporters by the PF aspiring candidate contrary to Section 15h(iii) of the Electoral Code of Conduct. CCMG's monitors also reported violation of section 15i of the Code by a traditional leader soliciting votes for the UPND candidate. CCMG believes that these violations undermine the credibility of elections and calls on the ECZ to proactively engage political parties and traditional leaders on the need to adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct and sanction erring political parties, candidates, and traditional leaders as provided for under the same Code.

CCMG noted with concern the short time allocated to accreditation of monitors and party agents as well as the number of kits (1 kit) and staff (1 staff) deployed to conduct accreditation

for the Mongu by-election¹. While the ECZ announced that the accreditation exercise would run for 3 days, from 11 to 13 April 2022, accreditation only commenced on 12 April 2022 at noon and continued into the early hours of 13 April 2022. This created a challenge with the distribution of accreditation cards to monitors ahead of deployment on poll day. Furthermore, the short period allocated to accreditation also created congestion and unnecessary confrontation among ECZ staff and political parties and CSOs.

Voter education targeting special interest groups, women, youth, and persons with disabilities, was low with only 27% of CCMG's monitors reporting having witnessed or heard of voter information/education activities aimed at youth, 36% reporting witnessing or hearing of voter information/education activities aimed towards women, and 27% reporting witnessing or hearing of voter information/education activities aimed towards persons with disabilities. CCMG calls on the ECZ, the District Voter Education Committees (DVEC), civil society organizations (CSOs), and the media to increase their efforts in future elections to provide accessible information to all voters, with a particular focus on marginalised groups and including information on COVID-19 mitigation measures.

Despite ECZ's efforts to develop political campaign schedules with political parties and the police and publicising the same, which appeared to reduce party clashes at campaign events in the past elections, there appeared to be a contravention, based on the protest letter written to the ECZ by the Socialist Party President related to the disregard of the agreed to and published campaign schedule during a rally held in Malekani area of Lukutu ward on 12 April 2022 by the UPND President and Head of State. In line with the EU Election Observer Mission recommendation to '*remove from the law undue campaign privileges for the President and Vice President to ensure equal campaign conditions for all candidates,*' CCMG believes that the uptake of this recommendation will ensure strict adherence to agreed campaign schedules as well as facilitate an equitable and even campaign environment including reduced instances of clashes in future.

CCMG notes, with commendation, the equitable provision of security by the Zambia Police Service to all political party campaigns.

III. Election Day Key Findings

Based on reports from CCMG's 145 Election Day Monitors and 16 Mobile Election Day Monitors, CCMG finds that the Mongu Mayoral by-election followed the national and regional standard procedures for the set-up, voting and counting processes. All of CCMG's monitors who deployed to polling stations were permitted to observe. At 100% of the polling stations, polling officials checked the fingers of potential voters for indelible ink prior to voting, and marked the voters' fingers/thumbs with indelible ink prior to voting. At 100% of polling stations, no one voted without the requisite documents such as NRC or voter ID or had ink on their finger. CCMG further notes that 60% of polling stations did not have Braille Jackets for blind voters while all other required materials were present at the start of voting. CCMG notes that ECZ officials and stakeholders generally adhered to the COVID-19 protocols, including

¹ ECZ deployed one kit and one ECZ staff to conduct accreditation, CCMG alone had 161 monitors to be accredited. Accreditation started on the afternoon of 12 April 2022 and closed on 13 April 2022. CCMG received accreditation cards for its monitors on 13 April 2022 (afternoon) which made distribution of cards to the monitors challenging.

the use of social distancing (1 metre) during the setup of polling stations (83%) and providing hand washing or sanitizing facilities (95%). These rates are comparable to the rates seen in the 12 August 2021 elections. The use of thermo scanners continues to be low at 13% compared to 11% in the Kabwata by-elections in February 2022, 14% in the Chisamba, Kaumbwe and Lusangazi by-elections in October 2021, and 14% for the 12 August 2021 elections. CCMG encourages continued and increased adherence to all COVID-19 mitigation measures as set out by the ECZ and Ministry of Health.

At those polling stations where there were voters in the queue at 18hrs, all were given an opportunity to vote. PF party agents were present for the counting of ballot papers at 71% of polling stations while PNUP party agents were present for counting at 20% and UPND party agents were present for counting at 98% of polling stations. In all the polling stations where there were party agents for PF, PNUP and UPND, all agreed with the results, signed the results forms and each was given a copy. At all polling stations, ballot papers were counted at the polling station where they were cast; all ballot papers were shown to all party agents and monitors present so they could see how each ballot paper was marked; all ballot papers were sorted into individual piles by candidate. At 4% of polling stations, however, results were not posted at the polling station for the public to see.

IV. Recommendations and Conclusion

CCMG will continue to engage with key stakeholders, including the ECZ, the Zambia Police, political parties, media and CSOs, to share its findings and key recommendations below:

Electoral Commission of Zambia

- **Code of Conduct Violations:** CCMG noted with concern acts of voter inducement involving distribution of money (K20) to marketeers by the UPND, distribution of money (K30) to voters by the PNUP aspiring candidate and distribution of mealie meal to supporters by the PF aspiring candidate contrary to Section 15h(iii) of the Electoral Code of Conduct. CCMG's monitors also reported violation of section 15i of the code by a traditional leader soliciting votes for the UPND candidate. CCMG believes that these violations undermine the credibility of elections and calls on the ECZ to proactively engage political parties and traditional leaders on the need to adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct and sanction such political parties, candidates, and traditional leaders as provided for under the code.
- **Accreditation:** CCMG urges the ECZ to deploy sufficient kits and staff to conduct accreditation of monitors and political party agents as a measure to decongest accreditation centres as well as to issue accreditation cards on time to avoid issuing cards late in the night as was the case for Mongu by-election. Additionally, the ECZ should consider accrediting political parties and CSOs/FBOs on separate dates to avoid confrontations and congesting accreditation centres.
- **Campaign Schedules:** CCMG encourages all political parties, and specifically the UPND, to factor in their campaign schedules any foreseen and planned campaign activity by the party president who is the Head of State to avoid instances where the Head of State's campaign activities which are outside of the agreed campaign schedule affect other political party campaign activities in the agreed campaign schedule. Furthermore, in line with the EU Election Observer Mission report recommendation to

‘remove from the law undue campaign privileges for the President and Vice President to ensure equal campaign conditions for all candidates,’ it’s CCMG’s considered view that this will ensure strict adherence to agreed campaign schedules as well as facilitate an equitable and even campaign environment.

- **Posting of Election Results and Online Release:** CCMG notes that the Mongu Mayoral by-election results were not posted at 4% of polling stations for the public to see, and calls on the ECZ to ensure that the results of any election are posted at all polling stations for the public as per standard procedure and for transparency. CCMG further calls on the ECZ to release the results of this and other elections on the ECZ website by polling station in an accessible format.
- **COVID-19 Protocols and Polling Officer Training:** CCMG encourages the ECZ to ensure that its officers are properly trained in COVID-19 mitigation measures throughout the set-up and voting processes, including social distancing, which was not maintained at 17% of polling stations during set-up.

Political Parties

- **Inducement of Voters:** While the electoral environment was generally calm and peaceful, CCMG’s monitors reported acts of voter inducement involving distribution of money (K20) to marketeers by the UPND, distribution of money (K30) to voters by the PNUP aspiring candidate, and distribution of mealie meal to supporters by the PF aspiring candidate contrary to section 15 h (iii) of the Electoral Code of Conduct. These violations undermine the credibility of elections. CCMG calls on all political parties to desist from offering inducement to voters as this is a direct violation of the Electoral Code of Conduct.
- **Women Participation:** CCMG continues to note, with concern, the low participation of women in previous elections and specifically the Mongu by-election where no female candidate contested the election. We call on political parties to create an enabling environment to facilitate the participation of women in future elections.
- **COVID-19 Protocols:** CCMG continues to call on political parties to enforce strict adherence to COVID-19 mitigation measures at all their activities, and notes with concern that adherence to these important protocols decreased throughout the campaign period. CCMG recommends that political party campaign teams appoint an official responsible for enforcing COVID-19 mitigation measures and for educating party members on COVID-19 prevention.

Zambia Police

- **Equitable Provision of Security and Response:** CCMG commends the Police for providing security to contesting political parties and candidates during the campaign period.

Civil Society Organizations

- **Voter Education:** While voter education remains a key component of the electoral process to enhance citizen’s participation in the electoral process, CCMG monitors documented very low voter information/education by CSOs during the campaign period and therefore calls on CSOs to increase and enhance their voter education and information campaigns for future by-elections/electoral processes, particularly those


activities targeted to the needs of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. CCMG notes the need to increase sensitization efforts on COVID-19 prevention, including mitigation measures for political and electoral activities by CSOs, in order to enhance compliance by stakeholders participating in electoral processes.

Traditional Leaders

- **Traditional Leaders' Political Behaviour:** CCMG's monitors reported violation of section 15 i of the Electoral Code of Conduct by a traditional leader soliciting votes for the UPND aspiring candidate. CCMG believes that this act exerts undue influence on voters due to the authority traditional leaders have over their subjects. Such acts could potentially undermine the credibility of elections. CCMG therefore calls on the ECZ to proactively engage traditional leaders on the need to adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct and sanction such traditional leaders as provided for under the code.

Media

- **Voter Education and Information:** Voter education and information through media was reported by CCMG's monitors to be very low. CCMG, therefore, calls on local media to increase their efforts to provide citizens with accessible information on electoral processes, including sensitising the public on adherence to COVID-19 mitigation measures at all times during the electoral process.



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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 Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB), 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.

Detailed Findings Addendum

A. Detailed Findings from Election Day

Setup and Opening of Polling Stations

- 7% of polling stations were open by 06:00 and 97% polling stations were open by 06:30 with the remain 5% opening by 7am;
- At 64% of polling stations an agent for PF was present during opening and setup
- At 19% of polling stations an agent for PNUP was present during opening and setup
- At 98% of polling stations an agent for UPND was present during opening and setup;
- At 100% of polling stations a security officer was present during opening and setup; the ballot box was shown to be empty before being closed and sealed at the polling station; and had a voters' register, the correct ballot papers, the official stamp/mark, and permanent/indelible ink for marking voters' fingers.

Voting Process

- At 100% of polling stations election officials stamped ballot papers with the official mark/stamp;
- At 100% of polling stations indelible ink was applied to voters' fingers;
- At 100% of polling stations no one was permitted to vote if they did not have their NRC and Voter's Card with them, if they already had indelible ink on their finger, or if they did not appear in the voters register;
- At 99% of polling stations a few (one to five) eligible voters were turned away and not permitted to vote even though they had their NRC and Voter's Card with them, did not have indelible ink on their finger, and their names were on the voters register;
- At 22% of polling stations a few (one to five) men voted on behalf of an able-bodied woman (not physically disabled); and
- At 5% of polling stations someone (other than polling officials) assisted multiple people to vote.

Counting Process

- At 100% of polling stations all party polling agents present were permitted to observe the counting of ballot papers;
- At 94% of polling stations there was sufficient light during the counting of ballot papers;
- At 71% of polling stations a representative for PF was present during counting;
- At 98% of polling stations a representative for UPND was present during counting;
- At 20% of polling stations a representative for PNUP was present during counting process;
- At 99% of polling stations, polling officials showed the ballot papers to all party representatives so that they could see how each was marked;

Party Agents during Counting Process

- At 100% of the polling stations where PF party agents were present during the counting process, all agreed with the by election results, signed the results forms, and were issued a copy of the form;
- At 100% of the polling stations where PNUP agents were present during the counting processes, all agreed with the results, signed the results forms and were issued with a copy of the form;
- At 100% of the polling stations where UPND agents were present during the counting processes, all agreed with the results, signed the results forms and were issued with a copy of the form; and

Accessibility of Voting for People with Disabilities

- 40% of polling stations had Braille jackets for blind voters.
- At 81% of polling stations, voters had to go up the stairs to reach the polling station.
- At 96% of polling stations people with disabilities, pregnant women and nursing mothers were allowed to go to the front of the queue

COVID-19 Mitigation Measures

- 95% of polling stations had hand washing/sanitizing facilities. For the 12 August 2021 elections, 95% of polling stations had hand washing/sanitizing facilities.
- At 99% of polling stations ECZ officials were using COVID-19 protective wear, such as masks and sanitizers. For the 12 August 2021 elections, ECZ officials were using COVID-19 protective wear at 99% of polling stations.
- At 83% of polling stations social distancing (1 metre) was maintained between all persons in the set-up for the polling station.
- At 13% of polling stations a thermometer/thermo scanner was used to take the temperature of all persons entering the polling station. Similarly, for the 12 August 2021 elections, 14% of polling stations used a thermometer/thermo scanner to take the temperature of all persons entering the polling station.
- At 5% of polling stations a few people (one to five) were turned away and not allowed to vote as they did not comply with COVID-19 mitigation measures (including use of face masks and handwashing). For the 12 August 2021 elections, at 12% of polling stations a few people (one to five) were not permitted to vote due to noncompliance with COVID-19 mitigation measures.

Participation of Women

- There was an average of 6 ECZ officials in the polling stations, 3 were women;
- 41% of the polling stations had a female security officer; and 49% of party representatives for PF were women, 46% for UPND were women, and PNUP's representatives were 38% women.

Election Day Critical incidents

There were no critical incidents reported on the election day

B. Detailed Key Findings from the Pre-Election Period

Voter Education/Information

Voter education, particularly targeting women, youth, and persons with disabilities, was low with only 27% of CCMG's monitors reporting witnessing or hearing of voter information/education activities aimed at youth, 36% reporting witnessing or hearing of voter information/education activities aimed at women, and 27% reporting witnessing or hearing of voter information/education activities aimed at persons with disabilities. CCMG calls on the ECZ, the District Voter Education Committees (DVEC), civil society organizations (CSOs), and the media to increase their efforts in future elections to provide accessible information to all voters, with a particular focus on marginalized groups and including information on COVID-19 mitigation measures.

Election Preparations

98% of CCMG's long term observers reported having witnessed or heard of election preparations by the ECZ, while 17 % reported having witnessed or heard of trainings of ECZ officials

V. Critical Incidents

Critical incidents are incidents that are serious in nature and which are reported immediately by CCMG monitors and on which there is follow-up and verification of all available details. CCMG received three (3) critical incident reports of a political party meeting/activity stopped due to COVID-19 reasons as detailed below:

- On March 16, CCMG's monitor in Mulambwa Ward (Mongu Central Constituency) heard that UPND supporters gathered at the house of one of the supporters for a meeting. The police came to the meeting and disbanded the meeting citing non-adherence to COVID-19 mitigation measures (social distancing and wearing masks).
- On April 4, a UPND campaign meeting in Lealui Lower Ward (Mongu Central Constituency) was stopped by the Police for non-adherence to COVID-19 mitigation measures, specifically not wearing face masks.
- On April 12, a meeting by PNUP officials in Lealui Lower Ward (Mongu Central Constituency) was reportedly stopped by traditional leaders for non-adherence to COVID-19 mitigation measures including wearing of face masks and use of hand sanitizers.