



The Roadmap for Electoral and Constitutional Reform

CSOs Call for a Transparent and Expedited Process for Electoral and Legislative Reform

For Immediate Release

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We, the undersigned Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), have observed the inertia on the part of government in embarking on a review of the national constitution. ***We urge the government to provide a clear roadmap and expedite the process of reforming the Constitution and electoral laws related to conduct and management of elections.*** The government should urgently engage all stakeholders in the development of a roadmap and build consensus on the reform approach.

The President has made several pronouncements around constitutional and legislative reforms, specifically key electoral reforms. In September 2021, in his speech during the opening of the first session of the 13th National Assembly the President spoke of the need for reforms, he also repeated this during his meeting with the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) in March 2022, as well as his address to the European Union Parliament in June 2022. Most recently, during the Summit for Democracy in March 2023, the President further reiterated his commitment to drive legislative reforms that seek to strengthen institutions of governance responsible for the management of elections.

We, the undersigned CSOs believe that the pronouncements by the President are clear, however we are disappointed on how the responsible institutions and Ministries are dealing with reforms. There has been little to no engagement with stakeholders to plan around constitutional and electoral reform, and particularly in the case of electoral reform and in most cases the Ministry of Justice has not been clear on which institution should initiate the reforms.

We recognize that the 8th National Development Plan comprehensively reiterates that constitutional reform will be undertaken to enhance good governance and strengthen the protection of human rights, which are critical to the wellbeing of citizens and that subsidiary laws will be aligned to the Constitution. We also note that the National Development Plan envisages 2024 and 2025 as the time for electoral and constitutional reforms respectively, however, we are of the view that the government must begin engaging stakeholders now in a meaningful and transparent manner, and take advantage of the 2024 budgeting process to provide for these reforms in the 2024 budget. By doing so, the government will be demonstrating commitment to the reform agenda and not rhetoric as has previously been the case.

We, the undersigned CSOs will continue to objectively provide checks and balances to ensure that the Government is accountable for its promises, fully commits and provides a clear roadmap towards Constitutional and electoral reform.

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Bishop Andrew Mwenda

CHAIRPERSON - CCMG STEERING COMMITTEE

For and on behalf of;

Action Aid Zambia,

Alliance for Community Action,

Bloggers of Zambia,

Center for Young Leaders in Africa-Zambia,

Chapter One Foundation,

Christian Churches Monitoring Group

Foundation for Democratic Process,

Governance, Electoral Advocacy and Research Services Initiative Zambia,

Media Institute for Southern Africa-Zambia Chapter,

Operation Young Vote,

Transparency International-Zambia,

Zambia Centre for Interparty Dialogue,

Zambia Federation for Disability Organisations, and

Zambia National Women's Lobby