



CCMG's Expectations Ahead of the Nine Ward By-Elections on 2 May 2024

For Immediate Release

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CCMG will participate in the upcoming by elections by deploying Long-Term Observers to monitor the pre-elections environment including, voter education, adherence of the electoral code of conduct and media coverage, as well as Election Day Process and Results for Transparency (PRVT) monitors. CCMG will recruit, train and deploy election day monitors to monitor all election day procedures including, opening and setup procedures, voting and counting processes, as well as the official Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) announcement of results. The by-elections scheduled for May 2 are as follows: Luangwa Ward, Chama District of Eastern Province, Munwa Ward, Chienge District of Luapula Province, Kuanga Ward, Luangwa District of Lusaka Province, Kaela Ward, Lupososhi District of Northern Province, Chikenge Ward, Kabompo district of North-Western Province, Malama Ward, Chikankata District of Southern Province, Chisanga and Luumbo Wards, Gwembe District of Southern Province, and Ndanda Ward, Limulunga District of Western Province. CCMG notes with concern the incidents of harassment and violence against ECZ officials and candidates which took place at nominations and calls on the ECZ and police to investigate these incidents transparently, and for political party leaders to condemn these acts in the strongest possible terms.

CCMG has several expectations from stakeholders as follows:

1. **Monitors/Observers Accreditation and Access:** CCMG expects the ECZ to provide and deploy sufficient kits, staff and time for accreditation of monitors, observers and political party agents to ensure smooth operations at accreditation centers and to issue accreditation cards on time, avoiding delayed issuance late in the night. Additionally, the ECZ should consider accrediting political parties and CSOs/FBOs on separate dates to avoid confrontations and congesting accreditation centers. We further expect the ECZ to adopt accreditation best practices as submitted by a consortium of CSOs in February 2022 to ensure the right of observers to observe is not restricted.
2. **Electoral Code of Conduct Enforcement:** CCMG expects strict, impartial, and transparent enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct. This includes sanctioning those violating the Code through sanctions as provided for in the law. We also expect ECZ to actively monitor and document any Code of Conduct violations in order to effectively and transparently implement the Code.
3. **Leave for Ministers Appointed as Campaign Managers:** Appointing campaign managers for any campaign the right of any political party/candidate, however CCMG expects that where a Minister is appointed as a campaign manager, they will take unpaid leave as they will be performing their party functions and not official duties. CCMG expects that the Secretary to Cabinet will ensure that Ministers on campaign duty will be given leave and that they will not draw a salary during the period. By doing so, the Secretary to Cabinet will be ensuring compliance with Paragraph 3 (1) (b) of the Electoral Code of Conduct. CCMG urges the ECZ to equally enforce Paragraph 3 (1) (b) of the Electoral Code of Conduct as not doing so will be neglecting the duties assigned to the Commission in the Electoral Code of Conduct.

4. **Campaign Schedules:** It is CCMG's expectation that all political parties and independent candidates will adhere to the campaign schedules, which have been effective in reducing politically motivated violence. The UPND should keep in mind any foreseen and planned campaign activity by the Head of State and the Vice President to avoid instances where the Head of State's campaign activities are outside of the agreed campaign schedule. We expect that all political parties and independent candidates will work with the ECZ and the Police to develop and adhere to the agreed developed schedules to facilitate an equitable campaign environment.
5. **Women, Youths and People with Disabilities Participation:** CCMG continues to note, with concern, the low participation of women, youths and PWDs in previous elections, and calls on political parties to take practical steps to create an enabling environment for the meaningful participation and adoption of women, youth and persons with disabilities in these and future by-elections.
6. **Accessibility by Persons with Disabilities:** As observed in previous elections and during the current voter registration exercise, access to polling stations and registration centers for people with physical disabilities has remained a challenge. Our expectation is that the ECZ will make reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities to access polling stations. In addition, CCMG expects the ECZ to conduct voter education targeted at persons with disabilities and provide information in accessible formats. Furthermore, we expect the ECZ to take practical, verifiable steps towards the implementation of the Court Judgement of 2011 (Sara Brotherton and the People vs ECZ).
7. **Disaggregation of Data:** It is CCMG's expectation that ECZ will take necessary steps towards providing desegregated voter turnout data in order for stakeholders to analyze and promote greater participation in the electoral process. CCMG calls on the ECZ to intensify the use of Voter Verification Devices that proved to be useful in the provision of desegregated data on voter turnout.
8. **Inducement of Voters:** In the 2023 Serenje District local government by-election, CCMG monitors reported acts of voter inducement involving distribution of bags of mealie meal to voters in Chitimukulu Ward contrary to section 15 h (iii) of the Electoral Code of Conduct. These violations undermine the credibility of elections. CCMG calls on political parties, candidates and their supporters to refrain from engaging in any form of voter inducement as this is a direct violation of the Electoral Code of Conduct.
9. **Administration of the Public Order Act, Equitable Provision of Security and Police Response:** CCMG expects the Police to enforce the Public Order Act in line with human rights standards and that the Police will provide equitable security to all contesting political parties and candidates during the campaign periods according to the agreed campaign schedules. CCMG also expects the police to act swiftly, equitably and employ de-escalation methods when dealing with violations involving all political party and independent candidates without any special treatment to the ruling party, as has been noted in previous elections.
10. **Voter Education by Civil Society Organisations and Community-Based Organizations:** While voter education remains a key component of the electoral process to enhance citizen participation in the electoral process, CCMG monitors have documented very low voter information/education during the campaign in past by elections calls on CSOs/CBOs to increase and enhance their voter education and information campaigns, particularly those activities targeted to the needs of women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
11. **Religious and Traditional Leaders' Political Behavior:** CCMG expects the ECZ to proactively engage religious and traditional leaders on the need to adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct and refrain from endorsing candidates or parties in accordance with the Code.
12. **Role and Conduct of the Media:** CCMG recognizes the role that the media plays in shaping opinion of society and thus expects that the media will remain politically neutral and balanced in their programing. CCMG expects the media, particularly public media, to provide equal coverage to all candidates in the coming by-elections as provided for in the Electoral Process Act. Additionally, CCMG expects the media to use its coverage to provide voter education and information. CCMG

also calls on political parties and police to ensure that journalists are free to engage in their activities without harassment or violence.

In conclusion we would like to encourage eligible citizens to turn out in numbers on 2 May and vote in their respective wards. We also call on citizens to avoid exchanging their NRCs and or voters' cards with any gifts of food stuff including refusing to have their NRCs/Voters card numbers recorded by candidates or their supporters. Citizens/voters are encouraged to report any such acts to the Zambia Police and ECZ as these are violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct.

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