



## **Pre-Election Statement on the Eight (8) Ward By-Elections Observation on 2 May 2024**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **I. Introduction**

Article 57 (1) of the Constitution of Zambia mandates the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to hold elections to fill any vacancy occurring in the office of a Member of Parliament, Mayor, Council Chairperson, and Councillor within 90 days. In compliance with this provision, the ECZ set 2 May 2024 as the date for the ward by-elections in Luangwa Ward, Chama District of Eastern Province, Munwa Ward, Chienge District of Luapula Province, Kaunga 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, Luumbo Ward, Gwembe District of Southern Province, and Ndanda Ward, Limulunga District of Western Province.

In contributing to enhanced transparency and accountability of the electoral process in Zambia, the Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) recruited, trained, and deployed nine (9) Long-Term Observers (LTOs) to observe the pre-election environment in all nine (9) wards. Additionally, CCMG observed nominations in all 9 wards and at the close of nominations in Chisanga Ward, Gweembe District of Southern Province, only one candidate (UPND) had successfully filed their nomination. In line with Article 53 of the Constitution of the Republic of Zambia, the UPND candidate in Chisanga ward was declared duly elected having been unopposed. On election day, CCMG will deploy 31 Process and Results Verification for Transparency (PRVT) election day monitors, in addition to eight (8) roving monitors.

### **II. Pre-Election Assessment**

All CCMG's LTOs reported having witnessed or heard of ECZ preparations including recruitment and training of poll staff ahead of the ward by-elections. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the LTOs reported having witnessed or heard of ECZ conducting voter education through its voter education facilitators. Eighty-eight percent (88%) reported witnessing and hearing of the District Voter Education Committee (DVEC) conducting voter education activities (VEA), while 92% VEA was conducted by the media, and 27% by civil society and faith-based organisations (CSOs/FBOs). Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the VEA targeted youth, 42% women, and 35% persons with disabilities. CCMG commends the ECZ, CSOs/FBOs, and the media for playing their role in conducting voter education ahead of the upcoming ward by-elections.

CCMG's LTOs reported having heard or witnessed the provision of security at campaign events for all candidates, and no incidents of disruption or cancellation of campaign events or meetings were reported.

CCMG also commends the Police for providing security during campaign events and calls upon them to continue to do so impartially.

Notwithstanding, CCMG's LTOs reported several Electoral Code of Conduct violations, including political violence and harassment of opposition party candidates and ECZ officials by suspected UPND members during the nomination process, as noted in [CCMG's April 12 statement](#). Twelve percent (12%) of CCMG's observers reported having witnessed or heard of the distribution of money or foodstuff by suspected UPND members as an inducement to support their candidate. During the campaign period, CCMG's LTO in Luangwa reported having heard of a UPND candidate offering a cow to a group of people in Kaunga Ward area; in Munwa Ward of Chiengi District, money and foodstuff were distributed; while in Luangwa Ward of Chama District, sweets were given out to men, women and children by suspected UPND members.

CCMG's LTOs reported having heard of the ferrying of youths from the 14 wards of Chiengi to Munwa Ward by UPND members. In Munwa Ward, CCMG's LTO reported witnessing the use of government vehicles and distribution of money and foodstuff by the Minister of Youth and Sport. These acts by the Minister are a violation of paragraph 3 (1) (b) and paragraphs 15 (h), (k), and (l) of the Electoral Code of Conduct. ***CCMG calls on the ECZ to investigate these violations swiftly and transparently in line with paragraph 3 (1) (b) of the Electoral Code of Conduct which places a duty on the Commission to ensure that political parties do not use state resources to campaign for the benefit of any political party or candidate.***

### III. Conclusion

CCMG urges the ECZ to enforce the Electoral Code of Conduct through the swift and transparent investigation of violations, and sanctioning of parties or individuals found violating the Electoral Code of Conduct. CCMG also calls upon the Police to investigate all suspected criminal conduct, including political violence, without fear or favour. CCMG recognises the efforts by CSOs/FBOs and the media in conducting voter education targeting women, youth, and persons with disabilities. We urge all political parties and their candidates to adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct and conduct peaceful campaigns. CCMG calls on all eligible voters in the eight (8) wards to turn up in numbers on 2 May and exercise their democratic right by peacefully voting in their wards.

\\ENDS\\



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