



CCMG's Expectations Ahead of the Kawambwa Constituency By-Elections

Scheduled for 20 December 2024

For Immediate Release

6 December 2024

The Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) will participate in the upcoming by-elections by deploying nine (9) Long-Term Observers to monitor the pre-election environment, including voter education, adherence to the electoral code of conduct and media coverage, as well as the Election Day Process and Results Verification for Transparency (PRVT) Monitors. CCMG will recruit, train, and deploy fifty-seven (57) election day monitors to all 57 polling stations in Kawambwa Constituency to monitor all election day procedures, including opening and setup procedures, voting and counting processes, and the official Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) announcement of results. The by-elections are scheduled for 20 December in Kawambwa Constituency of Kawambwa District in Luapula Province.

CCMG has several expectations from stakeholders as follows:

1. ***Electoral Code of Conduct:*** CCMG urges the ECZ to effectively enforce the Electoral Code of Conduct and ensure any violations are dealt with promptly. The importance of adherence to the Electoral Code of Conduct by all stakeholders, including political parties and candidates, cannot be over-emphasized. This is because the code serves as a framework for a credible and peaceful election. CCMG further urges all political parties to adhere to the Code of Conduct by refraining from hate speech, vote buying, voter intimidation, or engaging in acts of violence, and conduct their campaigns in accordance with the law established.
2. ***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 as has been experienced in the past. Additionally, the ECZ should consider accrediting political parties and CSOs/FBOs on separate dates to avoid 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 is not restricted.
3. ***Voter Cards Replacement:*** The ECZ should notify the public on any extension on registration hours and days for voter registration centres around Kawambwa Constituency such as Nchelenge and Mansa aimed at facilitating voter cards replacement. This is an important

undertaking. However, any modification to working hours and days must be communicated to the public in the interest of transparency and ensure that the opportunity is beneficial to all political parties and candidates.

4. ***Leave for Ministers Appointed as Campaign Managers:*** In the previous elections, CCMG documented instances of Ministers campaigning for candidates. While Ministers reserve the right to be appointed to serve as campaign managers of any political party/candidate, CCMG expects that when 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. Paragraph 3 (1) (b) of the Electoral Code of Conduct places a responsibility on the ECZ to ensure that no political party uses state resources to campaign for the benefit of any political party or candidate. It is therefore our expectation that the ECZ will enforce the Code of Conduct on this matter accordingly.
5. ***Campaign Schedules:*** It is CCMG's expectation that all political parties, candidates and supporters will adhere to the campaign schedules, which have been effective in reducing politically motivated violence. We expect that the UPND will 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.
6. ***Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) Participation:*** According to CCMG's 12th July 2024 By-Elections Observation Report, CCMG noted that 70% of polling stations had steps/stairs, making it difficult for PWDs to independently access polling stations. CCMG therefore expects that the ECZ will conduct an accessibility audit of all 57 polling stations in Kawambwa Constituency and ensure that temporary or permanent ramps are erected before poll day. By doing so, the ECZ will demonstrate compliance with the recent cabinet memo on ensuring accessibility of public buildings and Section 51 of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2012 as well as the Sela Brotherton vs ECZ case judgement which, among other things, directs the ECZ to enhance access to the electoral process for PWDs.
7. ***Disaggregation of Data:*** It is CCMG's expectation that ECZ will take necessary steps towards providing disaggregated voter turnout data for stakeholders to analyse 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 disaggregated data on voter turnout.
8. ***Inducement of Voters:*** In the recently held Dilika Ward by-election in Eastern Province, it was alleged that the government, through District Commissioners (DCs), were seen distributing relief food. While the distribution of relief is a critical undertaking noting the drought and hunger situation in the country, the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) is better placed to carry out this exercise. District Commissioners are political appointees who have a bias towards the appointing authority and may be seen to distribute relief food in a partisan manner. Our expectation therefore is that the ECZ will engage DCs in Luapula Province, in particular the DC of Luapula District, on the need to comply with the Electoral Code of Conduct, specifically Paragraph 3 (1) (b) of the Code.
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 period according to the agreed campaign schedule. CCMG also expects the police to act swiftly, and equitably and employ de-escalation methods when dealing with violations involving all political parties and candidates without any special treatment to the ruling party, as has been noted in previous elections.

10. **Safety at Polling Stations:** CCMG notes Police in the 12 July 2024 by-election in Chirundu and Sikongo District where UPND supporters attacked a police officer and an ECZ staff member. CCMG expects that the ECZ will work with the Zambia Police to enhance security at polling stations to ensure safety of voters and election materials throughout the voting process in the 20 December Kawambwa Constituency by-election.
11. **Religious and Traditional Leaders' Political Behaviour:** 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 thereby exerting undue influence on voters. This is in recognition of the influence that religious and traditional leaders have on their followers and subjects respectively.
12. **Role and Conduct of the Media:** CCMG recognizes the role that the media plays in shaping society's opinion and thus expects that the media will remain politically neutral and balanced in their programming. 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 carry out their duties without harassment or violence.

In conclusion, CCMG calls on citizens to avoid exchanging their NRCs and/or voters' cards with any gifts 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. CCMG would like to encourage eligible citizens to turn out in numbers on 20 December to uphold their democratic right and vote in their respective wards.

///END\\



Bishop Andrew Mwenda, EFZ

CCMG – Steering Committee Chairperson



Fr. Francis Mukosa, ZCCB

CCMG – Steering Committee Member



Bishop Emmanuel Chikoya, CCZ

CCMG - Steering Committee Member

Contact Details

Peter Mwanangombe

CCMG Program Director

+260977545592

Nalishebo Saapi

CCMG Communication Officer

+260979302149