



CCMG Statement on Phase 5 and 6 of the 2025 Mobile Voter Registration Exercise

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For Immediate Release

Following the Electoral Commission of Zambia's (ECZ) conclusion of Phase 5 and 6 of the 2025 voter registration exercise, the Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) is pleased to share its observation findings from the two phases of mobile voter registration. CCMG assessed the voter registration process based on access to registration centres by accredited monitors/observers, opening of registration centres, setup, registration process and procedure, and closing processes. Furthermore, CCMG assessed the general political and electoral environment, focusing on voter education and publicity, as well as the participation and compliance of political parties and citizens with the Electoral Code of Conduct, and adherence to the voter registration regulations by the ECZ. CCMG's sample included 165 registration centres in Phase 5 and 167 registration centres in Phase 6.

Registration Centre Opening

CCMG observers reported that 11% of registration centres remained closed during Phases 5 and 6 (9% in Phase 5; 12% in Phase 6), mirroring the same 11% average closure rate observed in Phases 3 and 4. This indicates no improvement in the misalignment between national and district deployment plans. Similarly, 5% of centres opened late (after 8:30), the same proportion recorded in Phases 3 and 4. As in earlier phases, 1% of centres opened but later closed due to power issues, demonstrating that power-related vulnerabilities remain unresolved.

Materials and Equipment

Core materials such as BVR kits, laminates, and forms continued to be available at nearly all centres, maintaining the positive consistency previously observed in Phases 3 and 4. However, 50% of centres lacked backup kits in Phases 5 and 6, compared to 51% in Phases 3 and 4, a marginal improvement, but the deficit remains significant. Five percent (5%) of centres experienced kit malfunction, identical to Phases 3 and 4, indicating no improvement in equipment reliability. Overall, while availability of critical materials remains stable, the lack of backup equipment has been a persistent issue across all phases.

Access to Information

In Phases 5 and 6, 7% of centres did not provide daily registration statistics, showing a slight improvement from 10% in Phases 3 and 4. Despite this progress, the ECZ's continued withholding of disaggregated daily statistics, combined with directives in earlier phases discouraging officers from sharing data with observers, remains a major transparency gap across all phases.

Inclusion

CCMG continues to observe strong commitment to queue prioritization, with 95% of centres allowing persons with disabilities, pregnant women, and nursing mothers to go to the front. This is consistent with the 94% reported in Phases 3 and 4. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of centres recorded the type of disability in Phases 5 and 6, similar to 98% in Phases 3 and 4. However, one concerning trend emerged: 65% of centres were only accessible via steps or stairs, similar to 68% in Phases 3 and 4, demonstrating continued systemic inaccessibility. At 98% of registration centres, there was sufficient light.

Questionable Registrations

CCMG observers did not report a single instance of questionable registration in Phases 5 and 6, compared to minor but concerning instances in Phases 3 and 4, notably isolated reports of apparent underage registrants¹. This represents a positive improvement, suggesting enhanced adherence to registration procedures by ECZ officers in Phases 5 and 6.

Presence of Stakeholders

Stakeholder presence has remained largely unchanged from previous phases. Security personnel were present at 99% of registration centres. Political party agents were observed at low levels: UPND (3%), PF (3%), and other parties (2%). Observers from civil society and faith-based organizations were present at 5% of registration centres. This indicates stagnation, especially regarding low party and civil society presence, which limits broader oversight of the process.

Voter Education

Voter information and education by ECZ's Voter Education Facilitators (VEFs) improved during Phases 5 and 6, with 70% of observers reporting witnessing or hearing of such activities. Seventy-one percent (71%) of CCMG's observers reported witnessing or hearing of voter education by local media, while civil society voter education efforts remained low, with only 4% of observers reporting hearing of such activities. Overall, voter education saw notable regression in ECZ-led efforts, from 96% in Phases 3 and 4, though media efforts remained moderately strong.

Adherence to Procedures

CCMG's observers reported high levels of adherence to registration procedures, consistent with Phases 3 and 4. CCMG's observers reported that at all registration centres, ECZ officials appeared to know how to operate the voter registration kit: 100% reporting that applicants showed proof of eligibility, 100% reporting that successful applicants were given a voter's card with a photo, 100% reporting that registration materials were packed away safely at the end of the day, and only 1% reporting registration centres which closed before 17 hours.

Extension of Mass Voter Registration Exercise

While CCMG welcomes the ECZ's decision to extend the mass voter registration exercise to 26 November, which offers additional opportunity for eligible citizens to register, CCMG is concerned that the ECZ has not provided the deployment plan in advance so that citizens can know where they have to go to register. Additionally, this situation hinders stakeholders' capacity to plan accordingly and mobilise voters to turnout.

The Commission's announcement of the extension on 11 November did not specify which registration centres would be open during the extension or in which areas nationwide. While the ECZ outlined the phased structure of the extension, the ECZ has still not released a full deployment plan. A preliminary analysis of the deployment plans show that they are not uniform across the districts and in certain instances inconsistent with the directives published by the ECZ in terms of the durations of each of the extension phases. ***This lack of information limits both public participation and CCMG's ability to conduct a statistically based observation.*** Additionally, the ECZ has not clarified how population data

¹A CCMG observer in Chasefu Constituency witnessed an incident at Lupamadzi Secondary School where seven pupils from the school, who appeared to be underage, presented themselves to register as voters. Their NRCs indicated that they would not turn 18 by 30 April 2026 - the eligibility cutoff date for voter registration. Despite this, ECZ officials at the centre proceeded to issue the pupils with voter's cards.

or registration rates at district and constituency levels informed the extension and subsequent deployment decisions.

CCMG urges the ECZ to promptly publish a comprehensive national list of registration centres for the extension and to adopt a more transparent, data-driven approach to operational planning in subsequent electoral processes. Clear and timely communication will help strengthen public confidence and enhance the credibility of the voter registration exercise.

Conclusion

CCMG's observations across Phases 5 and 6 reveal a voter registration process that continues to display strong procedural adherence and steady availability of essential materials. Compared to Phases 3 and 4, improvements were noted in the reduced proportion of centres failing to provide daily registration statistics and the absence of any reports of questionable registrations.

However, longstanding challenges remain unresolved, including persistent inconsistencies between district and national deployment plans, continued shortages of backup kits, and limited accessibility for persons with disabilities. Most concerning is the notable decline in Voter Education Facilitator-led voter education, both of which represent setbacks from earlier phases.

CCMG therefore calls on the ECZ to urgently address ongoing transparency and operational challenges by publishing the extension's full national deployment plan, routinely releasing disaggregated registration statistics, ensuring full accessibility at centres, and strengthening VEF-led voter education. As the extension period progresses, timely and comprehensive communication will be critical to strengthening public confidence and supporting effective oversight. CCMG remains committed to observing the process and offering evidence-based recommendations to help enhance the credibility and inclusiveness of Zambia's voter registration process.

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