



Global Expertise. Local Solutions.  
Sustainable Democracy.

# **Elections in Zambia**

## *2016 National General Elections*

Frequently Asked Questions

Africa

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

2011 Crystal Drive | Tenth Floor | Arlington VA 22202 | [www.IFES.org](http://www.IFES.org)

August 10, 2016

# Frequently Asked Questions

- When is Election Day?..... 1
- What are citizens voting for on Election Day? ..... 1
- What is the electoral system?..... 1
- Who can vote in the country?..... 1
- How many registered voters are there? ..... 2
- Are there reserved seats for women? What is the gender balance within the candidate list? ..... 2
- What is the election management body? What are its powers? ..... 2
- Is out-of-country voting allowed?..... 2
- How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?..... 2
- What technology will be used?..... 3
- Will the election management body use a media center? ..... 3
- Where is voting, counting and tabulation held?..... 3
- Who will observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation? ..... 4
- When will official results be announced? ..... 4
- How will election disputes be adjudicated? ..... 4
- How will Election Day security be ensured? ..... 4
- How has the Electoral Commission of Zambia increased transparency this election period?..... 4
- How will the Electoral Commission of Zambia track the status of all polling stations? ..... 5
- Resources ..... 6

*Disclosure:*  
*These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Zambian elections authorities as of August 10, 2016, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.*

## **When is Election Day?**

Election day is August 11, 2016.

## **What are citizens voting for on Election Day?**

In the 2016 national general elections voters will elect a President, National Assembly, Mayors, Chairpersons, and Councillors, and vote on the adoption of a referendum to make changes to the constitution.

- **Presidential election (national level):** There are nine political parties running candidates – the People’s Alliance for Change, United Progressive People, Rainbow Party, Patriotic Front (PF), Green Party, United National Independence Party, United Party for National Development (UPND), Forum for Democracy and Development, and the Democratic Alliance – and the most popular candidates are incumbent President Edgar Lungu (PF) and opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema (UPND).
- **National Assembly (constituency level):** One Member of Parliament is elected per constituency. There are 156 constituencies in Zambia and 653 candidates running.
- **Mayor/Chairperson (district level):** At the district level, either a Mayor will be elected for a city or a Chairperson will be elected for a town. There will be 19 Mayors elected out of 74 mayoral candidates and 85 Chairpersons out of 257 Chairperson candidates. This is the first election by which Mayors and Chairpersons are directly elected.
- **Councillor (ward level):** Councillors are elected for each ward; there are 1624 wards in Zambia.

## **What is the electoral system?**

All seats are elected with first-past-the-post system, with the exception of the President and Vice President, which will be elected by simple majority (50% +1).

## **Who can vote in the country?**

To vote in the presidential, mayoral, National Assembly, and Councillor elections, it is required to present a Voter Registration Card and a green National Registration Card. You can register for a Voter Registration Card when you are 18 years old or older. To vote for the referendum, the voter is only required to present a green National Registration Card and be 18 years old or older. An individual in prison is not eligible to vote.

## **How many registered voters are there?**

There are 6,698,372 registered voters (3,372,935 women, 3,325,437 men) that can vote in the presidential, mayoral, National Assembly, and Councillor elections. The census projected that there are 7,500,000 eligible voters over the age of 18 who could vote in the elections.

## **Are there reserved seats for women? What is the gender balance within the candidate list?**

There are no reserved seats or a quota for women in government, however women are allowed and encouraged to run for office. There is one female candidate out of nine presidential candidates, two female candidates out of nine vice presidential candidates, 106 female candidates out of 651 Member of Parliament candidates (16%), 40 female candidates out of 331 Mayor/Chairperson candidates (12%), and 415 female candidates out of 4,566 Councillor candidates (9%).

## **What is the election management body? What are its powers?**

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) has regulatory powers to determine how all election activities shall be conducted. Electoral Act No. 24 (2006) empowers the ECZ to make such regulations vis-à-vis the registration of voters, presidential and parliamentary elections, election offenses, the Electoral Code of Conduct and Penalties, election petitions and the hearing and determination of applications relating to Parliament.

The ECZ consists of a Chairperson and not more than four Commissioners appointed by the President, subject to ratification by the National Assembly, for a term not exceeding seven years. The Chairman and Commissioners constitute the policy-making body. The Commission appoints a Director who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission and is responsible for:

- Management and administration of the Commission; and
- Implementation of the decisions of the Commission.

The Director is assisted by staff as appointed by a statutory instrument on terms and conditions determined by the ECZ.

## **Is out-of-country voting allowed?**

No, out-of-country voting is not allowed.

## **How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?**

The Election Commission of Zambia has made strides with making voting accessible to voters with disabilities. For example, visually impaired voters who are braille literate have the option to use a braille template to vote independently. If a visually impaired voter is not braille literate, they can choose to have

a family member or a supporter of their party help them fill out the ballot. Presiding Officers for each polling station are guided to do whatever is necessary so that someone who is blind, has physical disabilities, or another disability can vote. Voters with mental disabilities are allowed to vote if they have the necessary identification cards.

## **What technology will be used?**

A Results Transmission System (RTS) is used to communicate results from each Constituency Totalling Center (156 constituencies) to the National Results Center in Lusaka. Each RTS kit includes a computer, scanner, printer, satellite, cell phone, and extra battery. When the official result forms arrive from each polling station the results are entered into a computer program and sent to the National Results Center. Before the results for each polling station are systematically allowed to be encrypted and transmitted, a scan of the original polling station results forms must be attached. The system has a built-in control to detect errors in the aggregation and unless results are correctly entered, transmission is not possible. To ensure all inputting is accurate, it is possible to cross check results at the polling station and constituency level by election monitors and political party agents. To transmit the information to the National Results Center, a combination of satellite and cell phone service is used. All results are also faxed to the National Results Center to ensure all results are transmitted accurately.

## **Will the election management body use a media center?**

Yes, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) is setting up a media center at the National Election Center. The center will provide space and connectivity for journalists and reporters, both national and international. There will be a team to produce news stories about the polling period and an interview room to be used by both the ECZ and reporters. Public information about the process will be available in the media center for election stakeholders and observers.

## **Where is voting, counting and tabulation held?**

Voting happens at polling stations set up in each of the 156 constituencies. There are approximately 7,700 polling stations around the country. Once polling stations close at 6 p.m. on Election Day and the last person in the queue has voted, ballots are counted at the polling station. Results for each polling station are announced and posted. If this process is monitored by political party agents and observers they have the option to sign the results form. These results are hand delivered from each polling center to the Constituency Totalling Centers.

In the Constituency Totalling Centers, the results from each polling station are entered using the Results Transmission System and submitted to the National Results Center. The Returning Officer verifies the forms for accuracy and consistency and political party agents and monitors are present during this inputting. Partial aggregated results are printed out for agents and monitors every time five polling station results are transmitted.

Results are aggregated in a secure server room in the National Results Center in Lusaka. A live transmission of results will be witnessed by agents and monitors and observers.

## **Who will observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?**

There are several hundred observers, both national and international, for the lead up to the elections, Election Day, and post-election activities. The international observers are from many organizations all over the world including, but not limited to, the Carter Center, Christian Churches Monitoring Group, the African Union, and the European Union. Observers can get two types of accreditation. The first type is to gain access to polling stations and District Totalling Centers and this accreditation was available from May 23 through August 2. The second type is to gain access to the National Results Center in Lusaka on Election Day, and this accreditation was open from August 3-9. To get accreditation they must present a letter from the organization, with names, passport numbers, and passport-sized photos to the Electoral Commission of Zambia during the aforementioned time periods.

## **When will official results be announced?**

The target is that the official results will be announced 48 hours after the last polling station is processed at the National Results Center.

## **How will election disputes be adjudicated?**

Most election disputes will be handled by Conflict Management Committees, which are constituted at the local level with the participation of election stakeholders, including political party agents, civil society organizations, and the church. If disputes are not resolved at the local level, they will be elevated to the courts.

## **How will Election Day security be ensured?**

Every polling station has a contingent of uniformed staff who, for the period of polling, will report to election officers. There will be 17,362 uniformed staff dispersed between all polling stations.

## **How has the Electoral Commission of Zambia increased transparency this election period?**

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) has significantly increased their transparency with stakeholders for this election by taking the following steps:

- Opening the results verification room to political party agents on election night;
- Paying for political party agents to go to Dubai to witness the printing of the ballot papers;
- Allowing observation of the in-country verification and distribution of ballot papers;

- Holding meetings with electoral stakeholders (political parties, civil society, etc.) about the Results Transmission System, a preliminary audit meeting, preliminary findings of the audit, and final findings of the audit; and
- Bringing independent auditors to audit the voter register and provide the final findings and action points that the ECZ will implement to resolve the issues highlighted in the findings to the public.

At every level, they have consistently engaged stakeholders at each phase of this electoral cycle.

## **How will the Electoral Commission of Zambia track the status of all polling stations?**

The Electoral Commission of Zambia has organized a National Election Support Center and a Provincial Election Support Center (PESC) in each of the 10 provinces. In each PESC, a call center will be in charge of calling each polling station in their province every two hours to check on the deployment of materials the night before, opening and closing of the polling station, counting of ballots, and arrival of results to the Constituency Totalling Center. During these calls, they will also take note of any incidents that happen at the polling stations, such as not enough materials, poll workers not showing up for their shift, or cases of violence. The status of each polling center and any incidents are reported periodically to the National Election Support Center to analyze data and track trends.

## Resources

- [Electoral Commission of Zambia – Conflict Management \(English\)](#)
- [Electoral Commission of Zambia – ECZ Structure \(English\)](#)