



## COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP TO ZAMBIA

Statement by Vice Chair  
Mr Kenneth Tsekoa, former Cabinet Minister, Lesotho

*Lusaka, 9 August 2016*

The Commonwealth is honoured to have been asked by Commonwealth Secretary-General the Rt. Hon Patricia Scotland QC, to lead the Commonwealth Observer Group to Zambia's General Elections scheduled for 11 August 2016.

The Group was constituted following an invitation from the Government of Zambia. It is made up of 17 eminent persons drawn from across the different regions of the Commonwealth, including Africa, Asia, the Americas, Pacific and Caribbean. The Group arrived on 4 August and will stay in Zambia until 18 August.

The group brings a wealth of experience from across the social and political spectrum: from civil society, women's and youth groups, human rights organisations and the media.

Our briefings, which began on Saturday 6 August, have been wide-ranging from the Electoral Commission of Zambia and local stakeholders including citizen observers to political parties and youth groups. We have also heard from our Advance Observer Team who has been on the ground in Zambia since 22 July.

The Group notes efforts that have been made to strengthen the legal framework that will enhance governance of the electoral process from the constitutional amendments to the adoption of new legislation. Our role as independent observers is to scrutinise the entire election process, then take a view whether it has being conducted to the national, regional, Commonwealth and international standards to which Zambia has committed itself.

We are aware of the significance of these elections to the people of Zambia. Our presence here affirms the Commonwealth's support to the country and its democratic processes.

We will perform our observation role with impartiality, independence and transparency.

Observer teams were deployed to nine districts across the country to observe preparations ahead of polling day. On Election Day, they will observe opening, voting, closing, counting and the results management process.



We will issue an Interim Statement on our preliminary findings on 13 August. A final report will then be prepared and submitted to the Secretary-General, and subsequently shared with relevant stakeholders and the public. The Group is scheduled to depart on 18 August 2016.

We hope that our Group's presence will demonstrate the Commonwealth's solidarity with the people of Zambia.

We urge all stakeholders to play their part in ensuring peaceful and credible elections. We further urge all political leaders and their supporters to commit to accepting the results to be announced by the ECZ.

On behalf of the Group, I wish the people of the Republic of Zambia, well as they exercise their franchise on Thursday.

*Note to Editors:*

The Commonwealth Observer Group will function impartially and independently and will conduct itself according to the standards expressed in the International Declaration of Principles for Election Observation.

The 17 Commonwealth Observers will be in Zambia from 4 to 18 August 2016. An Advance Observer Team was deployed to Zambia on 22 July 2016.

Find out more at [www.thecommonwealth.org/zambiaelection2016](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/zambiaelection2016)

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states. It is home to 2.2 billion citizens, of which over 60% are under the age of 30. The Commonwealth includes some of the world's largest, smallest, richest and poorest countries, spanning five regions. Thirty-one of its members are small states, many of them island nations. Commonwealth countries are supported by an active network of more than 80 intergovernmental, civil society, cultural and professional organisations.

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