**Results Governance Zambia 2009-2010**



**Embassy:** Lusaka

**Country:** Zambia

**Strategic Goal:** To promote a democratic, just, transparent and accountable Zambian society

**Sub-goal selected for this form:** To effectively and efficiently manage free and fair elections

**This form is completed by:** Joost van Ettro

1. **Context**
   1. **Country and sector context**

Zambia prides itself for being a stable and peaceful country, amidst other countries that have known (civil) war. From independence until 1991, it was ruled by UNIP, under President Kaunda. In 1991, as in many other countries worldwide, the one-party rule came to an end and the first multiparty elections were held since 1968.

Since 1991 5 presidential elections have been held, all in a peaceful and reasonable transparent manner, the latest being in 2008 after the unexpected death of President Mwanawasa. Presidential and Parliamentary elections will take place in 2011. Quickly after the 2008 elections, Zambian politicians started positioning themselves for the next elections of 2011.

* 1. **Description of the problem**

In accordance with the constitution, the elections in 2008 had to be held within 90 days after the death of President Mwanawasa, leaving little time for proper preparations. Zambia has a system of double registration of voters, requiring people to have an ID card and a voter card to be allowed to vote. It was impossible to update the voters list in these 90 days, forcing the Electoral Commission of Zambia to conduct the elections with the voters role of 2006. It is estimated that therefore 300.000 people could not register to vote, while the difference between the winner and runner-up was only [35.209](http://www.elections.org.zm/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=52&Itemid=78)[[1]](#footnote-2) votes.

[Monitors](http://eeas.europa.eu/_human_rights/election_observation/zambia/final_report_en.pdf)[[2]](#footnote-3) had also other concerns on the process, such as the need to improve the regulatory framework of the [media](http://www.misazambia.org.zm/media/news/viewnews.cgi?category=4&id=1233311739)[[3]](#footnote-4) (which in turn should lead to equal and neutral coverage of all parties in the press), the low participation of women as candidates, the slowness of tabulating and transmitting results and the need to consolidate and simplify the legal instruments related to elections. As 2011 would be the next elections year, it was widely agreed a comprehensive approach was needed and could be used in the run up to that election. It was agreed that continuous voter registration, allowing people to register at any moment, would be part of the solution. This is only possible if Zambia moves form a paper-based registration to a digital database.

* 1. **Intervention logic**

Given the variety of issues that have to be addressed to create better guarantees for free and fair elections and the sensitive nature of supporting electoral processes, various donors have put their collective resources in a [UN-led trust fund](http://www.undp.org.zm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=117:strengthening-electoral-process-in-zambia-support-to-the-electoral-cycle-2009-2012&catid=5:democratic-economic-governance&Itemid=7)[[4]](#footnote-5) that supports the ECZ, political parties, NGOs and media. The first priority was updating the voters roll, while at the same time reducing possibilities for fraud. Different teams toured the country with laptops, equipped with digital camera’s and fingerprint scanners, to capture as many new voters or replacing lost voters cards. ECZ and NGOs [informed](http://www.registertovotezambia.org)[[5]](#footnote-6) the public of when and where they could be registered and appealed people to take the effort to do so.

At the same time media were informed of the changes in the procedures, but also trained in their role of independent reporters who should neutrally inform the public. Political parties and NGOs were brought together to think through why women did not stand as candidates. This inclusive and comprehensive approach should help ensure that no stakeholder is left out and that each stakeholder can contribute to better elections in 2011 on the basis of his specific interest and expertise.

1. **Results and lessons learned**
   1. **What was achieved and why? What made it happen?**

The percentage of registered voters is slightly higher than in 2008, close to 75%. The biggest progress was made when both departments involved in registration, the one that issues ID’s and ECZ that issues voters cards, started offering joint services to the people, so that people could conclude all formalities in one go.

Political parties, NGOs and other stakeholders worked together to modify the Electoral Code of Conduct (ECC), that governs the behaviour of political parties, media and all others involved in the way elections are held. The proposed amendments to the ECC are currently being debated in parliament, with input from NGOS and media. It is no longer a document only owned by the politicians.

* 1. **What went less well and why?**

Although [more voters](http://www.lusakatimes.com/2010/11/18/14-million-register-voters/)[[6]](#footnote-7) are registered, it is unlikely Zambia will have reached its proclaimed goal of having 80% of all eligible voters registered. Especially in the beginning of the registration exercise, people did not know where they could register. Due to a lack of coordination not all interested persons could get an ID before trying to register as a voter.

Political parties have not shown much interest to improve internal democracy, to start issue-based campaigning or selecting more women to stand for positions. Traditionally that is not how parties in Zambia are run and changing the way they do their business has proven to be difficult. Parties are organised around leaders, not issues.[[7]](#footnote-8) When leaders leave, their supporters will follow, even to other parties.

Media reforms have proven to be equally difficult. The vested interests of the government to use state owned media, and those of the private owners of other media who equally have their political agenda’s, limit the space for willing journalists to report on all candidates. Journalism is overall of a very descriptive nature: there is not yet a tradition of investigative journalism.

Women so far have not demonstrated a greater willingness to stand as candidates. This is explained in general terms by a society in which women in general face constraints that prevent them from participating equitably in many spheres of life. Women’s still limited role and position in politics seems to be more specifically the result of the absence of a clear strategy and action plan to increase the percentage of women in parliament, even though Zambia subscribed to the SADC 50 percent target for representation of women in political and decision-making positions at all levels. The political scene is very much the domain of men, with sometimes crude [threats to women](http://www.postzambia.com/post-read_article.php?articleId=4670)[[8]](#footnote-9).

The Embassy had the ambition to set up a joint donor programme supporting the development and improvement of the elections. To a certain extend this has been achieved, but, the programme did not succeed in improving the legal framework governing the elections well in time before the elections actually would take place. We are now faced with a situation that major changes, including the creation of extra constituencies, the introduction of proportional representation for a limited number of seats are still being discussed a few months before the elections. It is possible that such fundamental changes will be made just before the people get the chance to vote.

* 1. **What has been learned?**

The registration exercise was costly and cumbersome, but should be continued each year, even when no elections are imminent. Only then, and only when it is done in coordination between both involved government institutions and NGOs, with sufficient outreach to the public, can the ambition of real continuous registration be achieved. That will also greatly reduce the allegations of political biased registration. As elections are often seen as the highlight of a democratic process, many donors will be willing to offer support in the immediate run-up. However, more can be done just after elections, in a relatively quiet period to prepare for the next elections. Voter registration just before elections will be perceived by some as an option for rigging, would the registration be ongoing from the first day after elections, this process is better protected from accusations or abuse. The same holds true for reforms connected to elections.

The new constitution will, when adopted, oblige parties to have women in at least 30% of all elected positions, including parliament, forcing parties to select more women as candidates. Achievement of the target will also be made possible by the introduction of a limited number of seats to be allocated on the basis of proportional representation.

The quality of the media and fairness of their reporting will depend on the willingness of the owners to allow media to play such a role. It is unlikely that there will be a significant change in their position. It equally depends on how Zambia will progress with the delicate issue of media [regulation](http://www.freemedia.at/singleview/5203/)[[9]](#footnote-10), where government is currently favouring statutory regulation over self-regulation but is in dialogue with the media on a solution that is acceptable for all.

1. **Resources spent**

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| --- | --- |
| **Dutch ODA disbursed during 2009-2010** | **USD 400.000,=** |
| **Average amount Embassy FTEs allocated** | **0.2** |
| **Piramide numbers of relevant activities** | **20202** |

1. **Overall Traffic Light Score**

The overall achievement of results is: on track

1. http://www.elections.org.zm/index.php?option=com\_docman&task=cat\_view&gid=52&Itemid=78 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <http://eeas.europa.eu/_human_rights/election_observation/zambia/final_report_en.pdf> and 2008 Presidential Election in Zambia, final civil society election monitoring report - FODEP [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. http://www.misazambia.org.zm/media/news/viewnews.cgi?category=4&id=1233311739 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. http://www.undp.org.zm/index.php?option=com\_content&view=article&id=117:strengthening-electoral-process-in-zambia-support-to-the-electoral-cycle-2009-2012&catid=5:democratic-economic-governance&Itemid=7 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. http://www.registertovotezambia.org/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. http://www.lusakatimes.com/2010/11/18/14-million-register-voters/ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. See also “THE STATE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ZAMBIA – 2003”, by FODEP and NDI (<http://www.afrimap.org/english/images/documents/file42d39ffcdd3ea.pdf>) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. http://www.postzambia.com/post-read\_article.php?articleId=4670 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. http://www.freemedia.at/singleview/5203/ [↑](#footnote-ref-10)