



## CCMG Statement on Analysis of the Voters Register

*Understanding the Credibility and Acceptability of the Voters Register*

*14 April 2021*

### 1. Preamble

The Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) has completed its independent analysis of the voter registration numbers released by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) in February 2021. CCMG commends the ECZ for releasing the voter registration figures showing the total number of voters registered, disaggregated by province, district and constituency, as well as gender.

CCMG, using the voting age population (VAP) estimates from the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats) that were released in December last year<sup>1</sup>, analysed the 2021 voter registration figures. The VAP is an estimate that shows how many eligible voters are estimated to reside in a given area. The use of VAP estimates to assess the quality of a voters register in terms of how well it reflects a country's population is a standard practice of election observation groups worldwide. This is done to contribute to the credibility of the register because it determines how representative the register is of those who are eligible to vote.

### 2. Analysis

The table below provides the results of the analysis of the announced registration figures by province compared to the ZamStats VAP estimates. It is important to note that while registration rates may not be identical across the country, they should be relatively uniform. Similar registration rates suggest that all eligible voters had an equal opportunity to register while significant disparities suggest under or over registration of particular communities.

Province	ECZ Registered Voters	ZamStats VAP Estimate	% Registered
Luapula	562,230	601,058	93.5%
Eastern	896,213	973,790	92.0%
Western	447,143	507,184	88.2%
North-Western	384,452	447,661	85.9%
Northern	600,859	706,495	85.0%
<b>Total Zambia</b>	<b>7,002,393</b>	<b>8,414,839</b>	<b>83.2%</b>
Copperbelt	1,023,223	1,257,460	81.4%

<sup>1</sup> CCMG sent a letter to ZamStats seeking clarification on how the VAP estimates were developed but has not yet received a response. If ZamStats provides a response at a later date that alters CCMG's analysis, CCMG will issue a statement to share any changes.



Province	ECZ Registered Voters	ZamStats VAP Estimate	% Registered
Lusaka	1,241,992	1,545,892	<b>80.3%</b>
Muchinga	401,542	507,366	<b>79.1%</b>
Southern	778,099	1,005,816	<b>77.4%</b>
Central	666,640	862,117	<b>77.3%</b>

This analysis demonstrates that there are three provinces – Muchinga, Southern and Central provinces - where under 80 percent of the estimated voting age population is registered and that the two provinces with the largest populations provinces – Copperbelt and Lusaka provinces - are registered at rates that are below the national average (83.2 percent). The analysis also shows that there is 16.2 percent registration rate gap between the province with the highest registration rate (Luapula) and the province with the lowest registration rate (Central), although this is a smaller gap compared to 2016 based on a similar analysis of the 2016 voters register.

In addition to the VAP analysis of the voters register presented above, CCMG observers also monitored both the mobile national registration card (NRC) issuance exercise and the voter registration process. Both observation efforts point to several shortcomings and/or possible concerns with both of those efforts. The primary among several that CCMG has raised are:

1. Multiple unannounced mobile NRC issuance exercises that were confirmed by CCMG observers and media to have taken place in Eastern, Northern, Luapula, North-Western and Muchinga provinces. Despite CCMG inquiries to the Ministry of Home Affairs on this matter, no explanation or public accounting of these activities was provided.
2. A ministerial statement in Parliament detailing the Ministry of Home Affairs' targets for NRCs to be issued and those actually issued that showed issuance rates against the targets varied significantly by province, with the lowest issuance rates in Western (52%), Lusaka (79%), Southern (90%) and Copperbelt (93%) and the highest issuance rates in Luapula (181%), Northern (156%), Central (145%), North-Western (135%) and Muchinga (118%); despite CCMG inquiries to the Ministry of Home Affairs, no explanation up to now has been provided for the varying NRC issuance rates against the targets.
3. Widely varying ECZ staffing rates by province at registration centres as documented by CCMG observers<sup>2</sup>, showing provinces with the most registration centres staffed with only one ECZ official were North-Western (75% of centres), Copperbelt (70% of centres), Western (56% of centres) and Southern (53% of centres). Provinces with the least registration centres staffed by only one ECZ official were Eastern (28% of centres), Northern (33% of centres), Muchinga (35% of centres) and Luapula (37%) of centres; despite CCMG inquiries, the ECZ did not share where or how many registration officials were deployed by province either prior to Phase 1 or when additional staff were added prior to Phase 3.

<sup>2</sup> See CCMG's findings and recommendations in its 2020 Voter Registration Report Phases 1-4 at [ccmgzambia.org/download/ccmg-2020-voter-registration-report-phases-1-4/](http://ccmgzambia.org/download/ccmg-2020-voter-registration-report-phases-1-4/)



4. Long voter registration lines leading to a slow registration process, particularly in urban areas and especially at the beginning of voter registration, that likely had a deterrent or frustrating effect on some citizens who had intended to register.
5. The ECZ's strategy for the December 2020 extension of the voter registration period was not based on an analysis of where there was under-registration and targeting those areas for an extension period.

### 3. Conclusion

In order to address the concerns of key stakeholders and based on these shortcomings in the mobile NRC issuance and the voter registration processes, **CCMG would like to strongly urge the ECZ to undertake additional targeted voter registration exercises where there is demonstrated relative low registration rates** per the VAP analysis, especially in the three provinces with the lowest registration rates – Central, Southern and Muchinga. However, any targeted voter registration exercise should be based on an analysis of registration rates at lower geographic levels as well. Using the December 2020 ZamStats VAP estimates, CCMG has (see Appendix 1 below) identified districts with registration rates below 75 percent. **While it would require additional effort, CCMG believes it would be possible to undertake quick and targeted voter registration in under-registered districts and urges the ECZ to do so to build confidence in the voter registration process and to provide those in under-registered areas every opportunity to participate in the electoral process.**

A voting age population estimate analysis is only one type of analysis that can be conducted on a voters register to determine the quality of the register. **CCMG would again like to call upon the ECZ to release the complete provisional voters register, as well as the certified voters register, to allow stakeholders to review the full registers and to conduct computer-based audits of the register.** By releasing the voters registers for stakeholders to inspect in this way, ECZ will be demonstrating its commitment to the transparency of the electoral process, and will go a long way in building confidence and acceptability of the outcome of the elections.

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### Appendix 1: Districts with Low Registration Rates

There are 20 districts with registration rates under 75%. Low registration rates could be due to those areas not being provided sufficient opportunity to register or some registrants from those areas not being included on the voters register, but this could also be due to individuals choosing to register in other areas or due to demographic changes.

<b>Appendix 1: Districts with Low Registration in the 2021 Voters Register</b>				
<b>Province</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>ZamStats VAP Estimate 2020</b>	<b>Registered Voters 2021</b>	<b>Registration Rate</b>
Southern	Pemba	45,837	34,324	74.9%
Copperbelt	Mpongwe	59,536	44,295	74.4%
Northern	Lunte	36,954	27,419	74.2%
Muchinga	Nakonde	85,344	63,237	74.1%
Central	Mkushi	73,853	54,635	74.0%
Western	Sikongo	25,528	18,836	73.8%
Northern	Senga Hill	59,029	43,240	73.3%
Muchinga	Lavushimanda	29,000	20,871	72.0%
Lusaka	Rufunsa	35,220	25,324	71.9%
Copperbelt	Lufwanyama	50,050	35,905	71.7%
Muchinga	Chama	74,070	53,075	71.7%
Central	Mumbwa	108,166	75,425	69.7%
Central	Serenje	73,571	50,010	68.0%
Northern	Lupososhi	44,311	29,444	66.4%
Southern	Namwala	70,189	44,515	63.4%
Southern	Kalomo	128,751	81,653	63.4%
Central	Chisamba	64,898	40,627	62.6%
Central	Kapiri Mposhi	145,137	89,925	62.0%
Muchinga	Kanchibiya	58,568	34,811	59.4%
Eastern	Lusangazi	37,309	19,546	52.4%