Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD)

GUIDELINES FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION —IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES— IN ZAMBIA



Prepared for:
The Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD)

Supported By:
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Prepared by

Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD)

With Technical and Financial Support from

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

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The views expressed in this publication are intended to provide technical guidance on disability-inclusive electoral processes and do not necessarily represent the official position of every participating institution or development partner.

This publication was developed under the project **"Fostering ECZ Engagement with Persons with Disabilities to Improve Electoral Access"**, implemented by the Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD) with support from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

FOREWORD

Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD)

Free, fair, credible and inclusive elections are the cornerstone of every democratic society. The right to vote, to be elected and to participate in public affairs is guaranteed under the Constitution of Zambia and is further reinforced through the Persons with Disabilities Act, Zambia's commitments under international and regional human rights instruments, and recent legislative reforms aimed at strengthening democratic participation.

Persons with disabilities constitute an important segment of Zambia's population and make valuable contributions to the country's political, economic and social development. Despite notable progress in the legal recognition of their rights, many continue to encounter barriers that limit their effective participation in electoral processes. These barriers may be physical, communication-related, institutional, technological or attitudinal, and they undermine the principle that every eligible citizen should be able to participate equally in democratic governance.

The enactment of the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2025 and the Electoral Process (Amendment) Act No. 12 of 2026 marks a significant milestone in Zambia's journey towards strengthening the political rights of persons with disabilities. These reforms demonstrate the Government's commitment to advancing inclusive democracy and provide an enhanced legal foundation for disability-inclusive elections. They also reaffirm Zambia's commitment to implementing the principles contained in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other regional and international human rights instruments.

While these legislative developments deserve commendation, legislation alone cannot eliminate barriers to participation. Achieving genuine inclusion requires practical implementation measures, institutional commitment, adequate resources and continuous engagement with Organisations of

Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). These Guidelines have therefore been developed to bridge the gap between legal obligations and day-to-day electoral practice by providing practical standards and guidance for the Electoral Commission of Zambia, political parties, government institutions, election officials, civil society organisations, development partners and other stakeholders.

The Guidelines promote a human rights-based approach to electoral management founded on equality, dignity, accessibility, universal design, reasonable accommodation and meaningful participation. They seek to ensure that disability inclusion is integrated throughout the electoral cycle — from strategic planning and voter registration to polling, counting, announcement of results and post-election evaluation.

ZAFOD expresses its sincere appreciation to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) for its continued technical and financial support towards strengthening disability-inclusive democratic governance in Zambia. We also acknowledge the Electoral Commission of Zambia, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, government institutions, civil society organisations, political parties and all stakeholders whose experiences and expertise informed the development of these Guidelines.

It is our hope that this publication will serve as a practical reference document and contribute to the continued advancement of inclusive, accessible and participatory elections in Zambia.



Mr. Justin Bakali – Federal Director
Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD)

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The development of the Guidelines for Disability Inclusion in Electoral Processes in Zambia was made possible through the collective efforts and contributions of numerous institutions and individuals committed to advancing inclusive democratic governance.

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Special appreciation is extended to the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) for its cooperation throughout the consultancy process and its continued commitment to promoting inclusive electoral processes. The Commission's openness to institutional learning, engagement and collaboration significantly enriched the development of these Guidelines.

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ZAFOD also acknowledges the valuable contributions of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), government ministries and agencies, political parties, civil society organisations, election observers, development partners, media institutions and independent experts who participated in the consultation process and shared practical experiences, recommendations and lessons that informed this publication. The conclusions and comments adopted at the national stakeholder validation meeting held on 31 July 2026 have been duly incorporated into this final version.

Sincere appreciation is also extended to the consultants, Mr Chaponda M. Kuwani and Mr Bornface Tumba, whose technical expertise, research and extensive stakeholder engagement culminated in the preparation of these Guidelines.

It is our collective hope that this publication will contribute meaningfully to the realization of electoral processes in which every eligible citizen, regardless of disability, can participate fully, equally and with dignity.



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR – African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

ACDEG – African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

CRPD – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CSO – Civil Society Organisation

DPO – Disabled Persons' Organisation

ECZ – Electoral Commission of Zambia

EMB – Election Management Body

ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

IFES – International Foundation for Electoral Systems

OPD – Organisation of Persons with Disabilities

PWD – Person with Disability

SADC – Southern African Development Community

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

ZAFOD – Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations

ZAPD – Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Accessibility

The design and provision of programmes, environments, infrastructure, information, communication, technologies, services and electoral processes that enable persons with disabilities to access, understand and use them and to participate independently, safely and on an equal basis with others.

Assistive Technology

Any device, equipment, software or technological solution designed to improve the functional capabilities and independence of persons with disabilities during electoral processes.

Disability

Has the meaning assigned under the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 6 of 2012 and includes long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disability Inclusion

The systematic process of ensuring that persons with disabilities participate equally, meaningfully and effectively in every aspect of electoral planning, administration, observation and political participation without discrimination.

Participation

The active, informed and influential involvement of persons with disabilities and OPDs in electoral activities and decision-making. Participation shall be assessed by the nature, stage, frequency, accessibility and outcomes of involvement, and not solely by attendance or headcount.

Persons with Disabilities

Include those who have physical, mental, psycho-social, intellectual, neurological, developmental or other sensory impairments which, in interaction with environmental, attitudinal or other barriers, hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Electoral Cycle

The continuous sequence of activities before, during and after elections, including strategic planning, voter registration, voter education, nomination of candidates, campaigning, polling, counting, declaration of results, dispute resolution and post-election evaluation.

Inclusive Election

An election in which every eligible citizen, regardless of disability, can register, access electoral information, vote secretly and independently where possible, seek elective office, observe elections and participate fully in democratic processes without discrimination.

Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (OPD)

An organisation established, governed, directed and led by persons with disabilities that represents their interests and advocates for the promotion and protection of their rights. Organisations established primarily by persons who provide disability-related services may collaborate in implementing these Guidelines, but shall be distinguished from representative OPDs unless their governance and leadership satisfy this definition.

Reasonable Accommodation

Necessary and appropriate modifications or adjustments, including the provision of assistive technologies and support where required in an individual case, which do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden and which ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy or exercise their electoral rights and freedoms equally with others.

Universal Design

The design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

Universal Suffrage

The right of every eligible citizen to vote and to participate in public affairs without discrimination, including discrimination based on disability.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Guidelines for Disability Inclusion in Electoral Processes in Zambia have been developed to provide a comprehensive framework for promoting the full, equal and effective participation of persons with disabilities throughout the electoral cycle. The Guidelines recognise that inclusive elections are fundamental to democratic governance, the rule of law and the protection of human rights, and that every eligible citizen has the right to participate in public affairs without discrimination.

The Guidelines are grounded in the Constitution of Zambia, the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 6 of 2012, the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2025, the Electoral Process (Amendment) Act No. 12 of 2026 and Zambia's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). They also draw upon international and regional good practices relating to disability-inclusive elections.

The Guidelines acknowledge the significant progress that Zambia has made in strengthening the political rights of persons with disabilities through recent constitutional and electoral reforms. In particular, the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2025 and the Electoral Process (Amendment) Act No. 12 of 2026 have enhanced the legal framework for the participation of persons with disabilities in electoral processes. These reforms demonstrate Zambia's commitment to building a more inclusive democratic society. At the same time, the Guidelines recognise that further practical measures remain necessary to eliminate persistent physical, communication, institutional and attitudinal barriers that continue to affect the effective participation of persons with disabilities.

The Guidelines adopt an electoral cycle approach, recognising that disability inclusion must be integrated into every stage of the electoral process rather than confined to polling day. They therefore provide standards and practical guidance covering electoral planning, voter registration, civic and voter

education, political participation, accessible polling and voting, electoral administration, accessible information and communication, election observation, electoral justice and institutional implementation.

The document is guided by the principles of equality and non-discrimination, accessibility, Universal Design, reasonable accommodation, participation, dignity, independence, accountability, transparency and continuous improvement. These principles are intended to guide the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), Government institutions, political parties, election officials, civil society organisations, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), media institutions, development partners, the general public and all other stakeholders involved in electoral processes.

The Guidelines comprise twelve chapters.

Chapter One introduces the purpose, scope, objectives and methodology of the Guidelines and explains the rationale for adopting a disability-inclusive approach to electoral processes.

Chapter Two provides the legal, constitutional and policy framework governing disability inclusion in elections in Zambia. It examines national legislation alongside relevant international and regional human rights instruments. The Chapter also recognises that, while Zambia has made substantial progress in strengthening domestic protections, the country has not yet ratified the African Disability Protocol, and notes that ratification and domestication would further strengthen the protection of the political rights of persons with disabilities.

Chapter Three establishes the guiding principles underpinning disability-inclusive electoral processes, including equality, accessibility, Universal Design, reasonable accommodation, participation and respect for human dignity.

Chapter Four serves as the bridge between the foundational chapters and the operational chapters. It establishes the electoral cycle as the organising framework for the Guidelines and ensures that disability inclusion is understood as a continuous process spanning pre-election, election-day and post-election activities. This structure reflects international electoral good practice and provides a coherent framework for implementing disability inclusion across Zambia's entire electoral system.

Chapter Five establishes standards for accessible voter registration, including accessible registration centres, inclusive registration procedures, reasonable accommodation and monitoring of accessibility.

Chapter Six provides guidance on disability-inclusive civic and voter education, emphasising accessible communication, multiple information formats, inclusive outreach strategies and continuous public engagement.

Chapter Seven focuses on the participation of persons with disabilities as candidates and political leaders. It promotes disability-inclusive political party structures, accessible nomination procedures, inclusive campaign practices and leadership development.

Chapter Eight establishes standards for accessible polling stations and voting procedures, ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to vote independently, secretly, safely and with dignity while preserving the integrity of the electoral process.

Chapter Nine provides guidance on disability-inclusive electoral administration by strengthening the capacity, professionalism and accountability of election officials and mainstreaming disability inclusion within the Electoral Commission.

Chapter Ten addresses accessible electoral information, communication and technology, promoting accessible communication systems, inclusive digital platforms, assistive technologies and innovation to ensure equal access to electoral information.

Chapter Eleven focuses on election observation, electoral justice and complaints mechanisms, ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to participate in election observation, access complaints procedures and obtain effective remedies where their electoral rights are infringed.

Chapter Twelve establishes the implementation framework, assigning institutional responsibilities, promoting coordination, monitoring implementation, evaluating progress and providing for review at least annually and comprehensively after each general election to ensure the Guidelines' continued relevance and effectiveness.

The successful implementation of these Guidelines requires sustained political commitment, institutional leadership, adequate resource allocation and meaningful collaboration among all stakeholders. Disability inclusion should be mainstreamed into electoral planning, budgeting, operational procedures, procurement, communication strategies and institutional culture rather than being treated as a standalone initiative.

Ultimately, these Guidelines seek to support the Electoral Commission of Zambia and its partners in building an electoral system that is accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all citizens. By implementing the standards contained herein, Zambia will continue to strengthen democratic governance, uphold constitutional and human rights obligations and promote the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in public life.

These Guidelines reaffirm the principle that inclusive elections are stronger elections. Ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to participate equally as voters, candidates, election officials, observers and leaders strengthens not only the protection of individual rights but also the legitimacy, credibility and integrity of Zambia's democratic processes.

CHAPTER ONE

PURPOSE, SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE GUIDELINES

1.1 Background

The right to participate in political and public affairs is a fundamental constitutional and human right that underpins democratic governance. Free, fair and inclusive elections ensure that every eligible citizen has an equal opportunity to influence public decision-making through voting, contesting elections and participating in electoral processes.

Persons with disabilities constitute an important segment of Zambia's population and are entitled to enjoy these rights on an equal basis with others. Their participation in electoral processes strengthens representative democracy, promotes social inclusion and contributes to good governance. However, despite significant legal and policy advances, many persons with disabilities continue to encounter physical, communication, institutional, technological and attitudinal barriers that limit their effective participation throughout the electoral cycle.

Zambia has established a progressive legal framework for the protection of the political rights of persons with disabilities. The Constitution of Zambia guarantees equality, non-discrimination, human dignity and universal suffrage, while the Persons with Disabilities Act No. 6 of 2012 domesticates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and places obligations on public institutions to promote accessibility and equal participation.

Recent reforms introduced through the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2025 and the Electoral Process (Amendment) Act No. 12 of 2026 further strengthen the participation and representation of persons with disabilities by reinforcing constitutional and statutory protections relating to accessibility, political participation and equality.

These national laws are complemented by Zambia's obligations under international and regional human rights instruments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

Although these legal and policy frameworks provide a strong foundation for disability inclusion, effective implementation requires practical guidance that enables electoral stakeholders to translate legal obligations into operational practice. These Guidelines have therefore been developed to support disability-inclusive electoral planning, administration and participation throughout the electoral cycle.

1.2 Context

In recent years, Zambia has demonstrated an increasing commitment to promoting inclusive democratic governance through collaboration between the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), the Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD), the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), civil society organisations and development partners. These efforts have included accessibility assessments, voter education initiatives, stakeholder consultations and capacity-building programmes aimed at improving electoral participation by persons with disabilities.

While these initiatives have contributed to important progress, accessibility remains a major concern and measures have often been implemented inconsistently across electoral processes and geographical locations. Practical challenges continue to affect the participation of persons with disabilities, including inaccessible voter registration centres and polling stations, limited availability of electoral information in accessible formats, limited availability of qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language

interpreters, insufficient disability awareness among election officials, gaps in accessible electoral sensitisation, inaccessible digital communication platforms, inadequate disability-disaggregated data and inconsistent provision of reasonable accommodation.

These challenges are often more pronounced in rural and underserved communities, where limited infrastructure, transport and communication services create additional barriers to participation.

At the same time, technological innovation presents significant opportunities to improve electoral accessibility through accessible digital platforms, assistive technologies, electronic communication systems and alternative information formats. Realising these opportunities requires deliberate planning, investment and adherence to recognised accessibility standards.

Internationally, disability inclusion has become an integral component of democratic governance. Election management bodies are increasingly mainstreaming accessibility into electoral planning, voter registration, civic education, polling operations, election observation and dispute resolution. Zambia's recent constitutional and electoral reforms provide a strong legal basis for adopting similar approaches and positioning the country as a regional leader in disability-inclusive elections.

Against this background, these Guidelines establish a comprehensive national framework for mainstreaming disability inclusion across the entire electoral cycle. They promote consistent implementation of accessibility standards, strengthen institutional coordination and support practical measures that enable persons with disabilities to participate fully, effectively and with dignity in all electoral processes.

1.3 Rationale

The development of these Guidelines is founded on the principle that inclusive elections are essential to democratic governance, constitutionalism and the protection of human rights. Every eligible citizen has the right to participate in political and public affairs without discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of disability. While Zambia has made significant progress in strengthening the legal protection of these rights through constitutional, legislative and policy reforms, practical barriers continue to hinder the full participation of persons with disabilities in electoral processes.

The enactment of the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2025 and the Electoral Process (Amendment) Act No. 12 of 2026 represents a significant milestone in promoting the political rights of persons with disabilities. These reforms reinforce the principles of equality, accessibility, participation and non-discrimination, while providing a stronger legal framework for disability-inclusive elections. However, legislation alone is insufficient to guarantee effective participation. The realization of these rights depends on clear operational standards, institutional commitment, adequate resources and coordinated implementation.

Consultations undertaken during the development of these Guidelines, together with the desk review and the national stakeholder validation meeting, identified persistent challenges affecting electoral participation by persons with disabilities. These include inaccessible electoral infrastructure, limited access to information in accessible formats, inadequate provision of reasonable accommodation, insufficient and uneven electoral sensitisation, unclear operational boundaries between some institutions, exclusion from electoral employment opportunities, inconsistent accessibility practices and limited disability-disaggregated data to support planning and monitoring.

The absence of a comprehensive national framework has also resulted in inconsistent approaches to disability inclusion across electoral activities. In

many instances, accessibility initiatives have depended on project-based support or individual institutional efforts rather than being integrated into standard electoral planning and operations. This has created disparities in the experiences of persons with disabilities across different electoral events and geographical locations.

These Guidelines have therefore been developed to bridge the gap between legal obligations and practical implementation. They provide a common national framework to support the Electoral Commission of Zambia and all electoral stakeholders in mainstreaming disability inclusion throughout the electoral cycle. The Guidelines establish minimum standards for accessibility, reasonable accommodation, inclusive communication, stakeholder engagement, monitoring and accountability, while promoting consistent application across all electoral processes.

The Guidelines also recognise that disability inclusion is a shared responsibility. Achieving inclusive elections requires collaboration among the Electoral Commission of Zambia, Government institutions, the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, political parties, civil society organisations, the media, security agencies, development partners and other stakeholders. Through coordinated action, electoral processes can be made more accessible, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of persons with disabilities.

Ultimately, these Guidelines seek to support the implementation of Zambia's constitutional and international obligations, strengthen public confidence in electoral institutions and promote an electoral system in which every eligible citizen is able to participate fully, independently and with dignity. By mainstreaming disability inclusion throughout the electoral cycle, Zambia will continue to advance democratic governance and uphold the principle that no citizen should be excluded from political participation on the basis of disability.

1.4 Purpose of the Guidelines

These Guidelines establish a national framework for promoting disability-inclusive electoral processes in Zambia by providing practical guidance for implementing constitutional, legislative and policy commitments relating to the political rights of persons with disabilities. They translate legal obligations into operational standards that support the effective participation of persons with disabilities throughout the electoral cycle.

The Guidelines are intended to assist the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), Government institutions, political parties, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), civil society organisations, election observers, development partners, media institutions, the general public and other stakeholders in integrating disability inclusion into electoral planning, administration, monitoring, evaluation, advocacy and public awareness.

Specifically, the Guidelines seek to:

- promote equal participation of persons with disabilities in all electoral processes;
- establish minimum national standards for accessibility and reasonable accommodation;
- strengthen institutional capacity to implement disability-inclusive electoral practices;
- improve coordination among electoral stakeholders;
- facilitate compliance with national, regional and international legal obligations; and
- promote continuous monitoring, learning and improvement in electoral accessibility.

The Guidelines complement existing electoral legislation and administrative procedures and should be applied alongside all relevant laws and policies governing elections and disability rights in Zambia.

1.5 Objectives

1.5.1 Overall Objective

The overall objective of these Guidelines is to promote and sustain disability-inclusive electoral processes by ensuring that persons with disabilities participate fully, effectively and on an equal basis with others throughout the electoral cycle.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the Guidelines are to:

1. promote equal participation of persons with disabilities as voters, candidates, election officials, observers and political leaders;
2. support the implementation of Zambia's constitutional, legislative and policy framework relating to disability rights and electoral participation;
3. facilitate compliance with regional and international human rights obligations, including the CRPD;
4. establish national standards for accessibility in voter registration, voter education, polling stations, electoral information, communication systems and electoral services;
5. promote the application of universal design and reasonable accommodation throughout electoral processes;
6. strengthen institutional capacity through planning, budgeting, training, monitoring and evaluation;
7. clarify the roles and responsibilities of electoral stakeholders in implementing disability-inclusive elections;
8. improve access to electoral information through accessible communication formats and technologies;
9. encourage the collection and use of disability-disaggregated data to support evidence-based planning and decision-making;
10. establish mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and continuous improvement of disability inclusion within electoral processes; and

11. strengthen collaboration among Government institutions, OPDs, civil society, political parties, development partners, media institutions and other stakeholders.

1.5.3 Expected Outcomes

Implementation of these Guidelines is expected to result in:

- increased participation of persons with disabilities throughout the electoral cycle;
- improved accessibility of electoral facilities, information and services;
- strengthened institutional capacity for disability-inclusive electoral administration;
- enhanced coordination among stakeholders;
- improved compliance with national and international obligations; and
- greater public confidence in the inclusiveness, credibility and integrity of Zambia's electoral processes.

1.6 Scope and Application

These Guidelines apply to all electoral processes conducted or supervised by the Electoral Commission of Zambia, including presidential, parliamentary, local government elections, by-elections and referenda. They recognise that disability inclusion is a continuous process and should be integrated throughout every stage of the electoral cycle.

The Guidelines cover strategic planning, legal and policy development, voter registration, civic and voter education, candidate nomination, political campaigning, polling, counting and declaration of results, electoral dispute resolution and post-election evaluation.

They apply to all institutions and individuals involved in electoral processes, including:

- the Electoral Commission of Zambia;
- Government ministries, departments and agencies;

- the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities;
- Organisations of Persons with Disabilities;
- political parties and independent candidates;
- election officials;
- election observers;
- security agencies;
- local authorities;
- media institutions;
- civil society organisations;
- development partners; and
- private sector entities providing electoral goods and services; and
- members of the general public.

The Guidelines are intended to benefit all persons with disabilities, recognising the diversity of disability and the need for reasonable accommodation and accessible services that respond to individual needs and circumstances.

These Guidelines apply uniformly throughout Zambia and should be implemented consistently in both urban and rural areas, while recognising that additional measures may be required in remote or underserved communities.

The Guidelines complement existing constitutional, legislative and policy frameworks and do not replace any legal obligations imposed by the Constitution of Zambia, the Persons with Disabilities Act, the Electoral Process Act or any other applicable law. Where the Guidelines prescribe standards that exceed statutory minimum requirements, such standards should be regarded as good administrative practice aimed at progressively strengthening disability-inclusive electoral governance.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia should review implementation of these Guidelines at least annually, in consultation with ZAPD, OPDs and other key stakeholders, and undertake a comprehensive review after each general

election to ensure continued responsiveness to legislative developments, technological innovation, emerging good practices and the evolving needs of persons with disabilities.

1.7 Target Users

These Guidelines are intended for all institutions, organisations and individuals involved in the planning, administration, support, observation and oversight of electoral processes in Zambia. Disability inclusion is a shared responsibility that requires coordinated action by all stakeholders.

1.7.1 Primary Users

The primary users of these Guidelines are:

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), which shall use the Guidelines to integrate disability inclusion into electoral planning, policy development, voter registration, voter education, polling operations, staff training, procurement, monitoring and evaluation.

Election Officials, including Returning Officers, Registration Officers, Presiding Officers, Polling Assistants and other electoral personnel, who shall apply the Guidelines to ensure that electoral services are delivered fairly, respectfully and without discrimination, while providing reasonable accommodation where required.

The Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), which shall provide technical guidance on disability inclusion, support accessibility assessments, facilitate capacity building, monitor compliance with disability rights obligations and collaborate with the ECZ in implementing these Guidelines.

1.7.2 Other Stakeholders

These Guidelines shall also guide:

- Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in advocacy, stakeholder engagement, voter education, monitoring and technical support;
- Political parties and independent candidates in promoting inclusive participation, accessible campaigns and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- Government ministries, departments and agencies in supporting accessible electoral services and infrastructure;
- Civil society organisations in civic education, election observation, advocacy and public awareness;
- Media institutions in providing accessible, balanced and non-discriminatory election coverage;
- Election observation missions in assessing compliance with disability inclusion standards;
- Development partners in aligning technical and financial support with national priorities; and
- Academic and research institutions in undertaking research, capacity building and policy development relating to disability-inclusive elections.
- Members of the general public in using the Guidelines as an advocacy and awareness tool to promote disability inclusion and challenge attitudinal barriers.

1.7.3 Beneficiaries

These Guidelines ultimately serve all persons with disabilities by promoting equal participation as voters, candidates, political party members, election officials, observers and advocates. They also support a more inclusive, transparent and credible electoral system that benefits all citizens.

1.8 Guiding Principles

The implementation of these Guidelines shall be guided by the following principles:

(a) Equality and Non-Discrimination

All eligible citizens shall have equal opportunities to participate in electoral processes without discrimination on the basis of disability or any other prohibited ground.

(b) Accessibility

Electoral facilities, information, communication, technologies and services shall be designed and delivered in a manner that enables persons with disabilities to participate independently, safely and effectively.

(c) Universal Design

Electoral systems, infrastructure and services should be planned and implemented using universal design principles to maximise usability for all people without the need for specialised adaptation wherever possible.

(d) Reasonable Accommodation

Appropriate modifications and adjustments shall be provided where necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy and exercise their electoral rights on an equal basis with others.

(e) Participation and Inclusion

Persons with disabilities and their representative organisations shall be meaningfully consulted and actively involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of electoral processes, in accordance with the principle of **"Nothing Without Us."**

(f) Respect for Dignity and Autonomy

Every person with a disability shall be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy, and shall be supported to exercise their electoral rights independently to the greatest extent possible.

(g) Gender Equality and Diversity

Electoral processes shall recognise and respond to the diverse experiences of women, men, youth, older persons and persons with different types of disabilities, including those facing multiple or intersecting forms of discrimination.

(h) Transparency and Accountability

Electoral stakeholders shall implement these Guidelines in an open, accountable and measurable manner, supported by effective monitoring, reporting and stakeholder engagement.

(i) Collaboration and Partnership

The successful implementation of disability-inclusive elections requires cooperation among the Electoral Commission of Zambia, Government institutions, OPDs, political parties, civil society organisations, development partners, the media and other stakeholders.

(j) Continuous Improvement

Disability inclusion is an ongoing process. Electoral stakeholders should regularly review policies, procedures and practices, incorporate lessons learned and adopt innovations that enhance accessibility and participation.

Chapter Summary

This Chapter establishes the foundation for the Guidelines by outlining their background, context, rationale, purpose, objectives, scope, target users and guiding principles. It affirms Zambia's commitment to promoting disability-inclusive elections in accordance with national legislation and

international human rights standards. The Chapter further recognises that meaningful participation by persons with disabilities requires coordinated action by all electoral stakeholders and the consistent integration of accessibility and inclusion throughout the electoral cycle.

CHAPTER TWO

LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Disability-inclusive electoral processes are founded on a comprehensive legal and policy framework that guarantees the political rights of persons with disabilities and imposes obligations on public institutions to eliminate discrimination, promote accessibility and ensure equal participation. In Zambia, these obligations arise from the Constitution, national legislation, regional and international human rights instruments, as well as relevant public policies.

This Chapter outlines the principal legal and policy instruments governing disability inclusion in electoral processes and provides the normative framework upon which these Guidelines are based. It demonstrates that disability inclusion is not discretionary but a constitutional, statutory and human rights obligation applicable to all electoral stakeholders.

2.2 Constitutional Framework

The Constitution of Zambia is the supreme law of the Republic and guarantees equality before the law, human dignity, political participation and freedom from discrimination. These constitutional guarantees apply equally to persons with disabilities and require public institutions to ensure that electoral processes are inclusive and accessible.

The Constitution recognises every citizen's right to participate in public affairs, including the right to vote, stand for election and participate in democratic governance. Public institutions are therefore required to remove barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from exercising these rights on an equal basis with others.

The Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2025 further strengthened disability inclusion by enhancing constitutional protections

relating to representation, participation and accessibility. These reforms reinforce Zambia's commitment to inclusive democracy and provide a stronger constitutional foundation for implementing disability-inclusive electoral processes.

2.3 National Legislative Framework

2.3.1 Persons with Disabilities Act No. 6 of 2012

The Persons with Disabilities Act is the principal legislation governing the rights of persons with disabilities in Zambia. It domesticates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.

The Act requires public institutions to promote accessibility, provide reasonable accommodation and ensure equal access to public services. These obligations extend to electoral processes and require election management bodies and other stakeholders to eliminate barriers that hinder political participation.

The Act also establishes the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), whose mandate includes promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and advising Government institutions on disability inclusion.

2.3.2 Electoral Process Act No. 35 of 2016

The Electoral Process Act provides the legal framework for the conduct of elections in Zambia. It regulates voter registration, nomination of candidates, polling, vote counting, declaration of results and electoral dispute resolution.

The Act places responsibility on the Electoral Commission of Zambia to conduct elections that are free, fair, transparent and credible. These responsibilities include ensuring that electoral processes are accessible to all eligible citizens.

2.3.3 Electoral Process (Amendment) Act No. 12 of 2026

The Electoral Process (Amendment) Act No. 12 of 2026 significantly strengthens the participation of persons with disabilities by reinforcing accessibility requirements and promoting inclusive electoral administration.

The amendments provide a stronger statutory basis for implementing practical measures that facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities throughout the electoral cycle and should be read together with these Guidelines.

2.3.4 Other Relevant Legislation

Other legislation supporting disability-inclusive electoral processes includes, where applicable:

- the Electoral Commission of Zambia Act;
- the Access to Information Act;
- the Cyber Security Act and Cyber Crimes Act in relation to digital electoral information;
- legislation governing public procurement, public finance and local government; and
- any other laws affecting political participation, public administration and human rights.

2.3.5 Legal Clarity and Mandatory Effect

Where constitutional or statutory provisions use discretionary wording in relation to measures intended to protect disability rights, responsible institutions should not interpret that wording as permission to deny equality, accessibility or reasonable accommodation required by binding law. Government, Parliament and responsible institutions should review such provisions and, where appropriate, replace discretionary wording such as 'may' with clear mandatory duties that give full effect to disability rights.

2.3.6 Electronic Voting and Law Reform

Electronic voting is not introduced by these Guidelines. Any future introduction of electronic voting would require prior enabling legal reform, meaningful consultation with OPDs, independent accessibility and security assessments, transparent piloting, voter-verifiable audit mechanisms, privacy and data-protection safeguards, contingency arrangements and equal access for voters who cannot use a digital system.

Electoral stakeholders should ensure that these laws are implemented consistently with constitutional guarantees and disability rights principles.

2.4 International Human Rights Framework

Zambia is party to several international instruments that recognise the political rights of persons with disabilities and require States to ensure equal participation in public affairs.

These include:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The CRPD is the primary international treaty governing disability rights. Article 29 obliges States Parties to guarantee political rights and ensure that persons with disabilities can participate effectively and fully in political and public life, including voting, standing for election and participating in public affairs.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

The ICCPR guarantees every citizen the right to participate in public affairs, vote in genuine elections and have equal access to public service without unreasonable restrictions.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

The UDHR recognises the equal dignity and rights of all persons and affirms that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government through periodic and genuine elections.

2.5 Regional Framework

Regional human rights instruments reinforce Zambia's commitment to disability-inclusive democratic governance.

These include:

- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;
- SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections; and
- other relevant African Union and SADC commitments relating to democracy, elections and human rights.

These instruments require electoral processes to be inclusive, transparent and non-discriminatory while promoting equal participation by all citizens.

2.6 African Disability Protocol

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa (African Disability Protocol) provides a comprehensive regional framework for protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Protocol contains specific provisions relating to political participation, accessibility, equality and non-discrimination that complement the CRPD and strengthen regional standards for disability-inclusive governance.

Although Zambia has made significant progress in strengthening domestic legal protections for persons with disabilities, the country has not yet ratified the African Disability Protocol. Ratification and domestication would further reinforce Zambia's legal framework and strengthen implementation of disability-inclusive electoral processes.

2.7 National Policy Framework

Several national policies support disability inclusion and provide guidance for implementing accessible electoral processes.

These include:

- the National Policy on Disability;
- national governance and decentralisation policies;
- ICT and digital transformation policies;
- gender equality and social inclusion policies; and
- relevant Electoral Commission of Zambia policies, regulations and administrative procedures.

Electoral stakeholders should mainstream disability inclusion into institutional policies, strategic plans, operational manuals and budgets to ensure sustainable implementation.

2.8 Implications for Electoral Stakeholders

The legal and policy framework outlined in this Chapter establishes clear responsibilities for all institutions involved in electoral processes.

Accordingly, stakeholders should:

- ensure equal participation of persons with disabilities throughout the electoral cycle;
- eliminate physical, communication and institutional barriers;
- provide reasonable accommodation where required;
- adopt accessible communication and information systems;
- engage Organisations of Persons with Disabilities meaningfully at every stage of the electoral cycle and in related decision-making;
- build institutional capacity on disability inclusion;
- monitor compliance with accessibility standards; and
- continuously review and improve disability-inclusive electoral practices.

Chapter Summary

Zambia has established a strong constitutional, legislative and policy framework for promoting disability-inclusive elections. National laws, supported by regional and international human rights instruments, require electoral stakeholders to eliminate discrimination, improve accessibility and ensure equal participation by persons with disabilities. These Guidelines operationalise those obligations by translating legal principles into practical standards that can be implemented consistently throughout the electoral cycle.

CHAPTER THREE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE ELECTORAL PROCESSES

3.1 Introduction

Disability-inclusive elections are founded on principles that promote equality, participation and respect for human rights. These principles guide the planning, administration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of electoral processes and should inform the interpretation and application of these Guidelines.

All electoral stakeholders shall apply these principles consistently throughout the electoral cycle to ensure that persons with disabilities participate fully, effectively and on an equal basis with others.

3.2 Equality and Non-Discrimination

Every eligible citizen has the right to participate in electoral processes without discrimination. Electoral stakeholders shall ensure that no person is excluded or disadvantaged on the basis of disability, gender, age, language, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation or any other prohibited ground.

Measures designed to promote the participation of persons with disabilities shall not constitute discrimination but shall be regarded as necessary steps towards achieving substantive equality.

3.3 Accessibility

Accessibility is fundamental to inclusive elections. Electoral infrastructure, information, communication, technology, transport and services shall be planned, designed and delivered to enable persons with disabilities to participate independently and safely.

Accessibility should be incorporated from the earliest stages of electoral planning rather than introduced as an afterthought.

3.4 Universal Design

Electoral systems, facilities and services should apply the principles of universal design wherever possible. Electoral materials and environments should be usable by the widest range of people without requiring specialised adaptation.

Where universal design alone does not meet individual needs, reasonable accommodation shall be provided.

3.5 Reasonable Accommodation

Electoral stakeholders shall provide appropriate and necessary modifications or adjustments to enable persons with disabilities to exercise their electoral rights equally with others.

Reasonable accommodation may include:

- accessible polling arrangements;
- interpretation by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters;
- Braille and tactile materials;
- large-print electoral information;
- assistive technologies;
- support persons where permitted by law; and
- other measures responding to individual needs.

Requests for reasonable accommodation shall be considered promptly and without discrimination.

3.6 Respect for Dignity, Autonomy and Independence

Persons with disabilities shall be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect throughout the electoral process.

Electoral officials shall respect each person's right to make independent decisions and shall provide assistance only where requested or legally permitted.

Confidentiality and the secrecy of the vote shall always be protected.

3.7 Participation and Consultation

Persons with disabilities and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) shall participate meaningfully in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of electoral processes. Meaningful participation requires timely and accessible information, reasonable accommodation, an opportunity to influence decisions, and documented feedback explaining how stakeholder contributions were considered.

Electoral stakeholders should apply the principle of **"Nothing Without Us"** by ensuring that disability-related decisions are informed by the experiences and expertise of persons with disabilities.

3.8 Inclusion and Diversity

Electoral processes shall recognise the diversity of persons with disabilities and the different barriers experienced by various groups.

Special attention should be given to:

- women with disabilities;
- youth with disabilities;
- older persons with disabilities;
- persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities;
- persons with multiple disabilities;
- persons living in rural and remote communities; and
- other groups facing multiple or intersecting forms of discrimination.

Electoral inclusion should respond to these diverse needs through appropriate and targeted measures.

3.9 Gender Equality

Women and girls with disabilities frequently encounter multiple forms of discrimination that affect their political participation.

Electoral stakeholders shall promote equal opportunities for women with disabilities to register as voters, contest elections, participate in political parties, serve as election officials and engage in electoral decision-making.

3.10 Transparency and Accountability

Institutions responsible for electoral processes shall implement disability inclusion in a transparent, accountable and measurable manner.

This includes:

- documenting accessibility measures;
- monitoring implementation;
- responding to complaints;
- reporting progress; and
- reviewing performance after each electoral process.

Stakeholders should be held accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities under these Guidelines.

3.11 Collaboration and Partnership

Disability-inclusive elections require collaboration among the Electoral Commission of Zambia, Government institutions, ZAPD, OPDs, political parties, civil society organisations, development partners, media institutions, security agencies and local authorities.

Partnerships should support coordinated planning, resource mobilisation, information sharing and continuous improvement.

3.12 Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Electoral planning should be informed by reliable data, research, accessibility assessments and stakeholder consultations.

The Electoral Commission should promote the collection and use of disability-disaggregated data to support planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.

3.13 Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Electoral stakeholders should promote innovation in accessibility by adopting appropriate technologies, improving operational procedures and applying lessons learned from previous elections.

Implementation of these Guidelines should be reviewed at least annually and comprehensively after each general election to reflect legislative reforms, technological developments, emerging international standards and evolving good practices.

Chapter Summary

Disability-inclusive elections are achieved through the consistent application of principles that promote equality, accessibility, participation, dignity and accountability. These principles provide the foundation for implementing practical measures that enable persons with disabilities to participate fully and effectively throughout the electoral cycle. All electoral stakeholders share responsibility for upholding these principles and ensuring that no eligible citizen is excluded from democratic participation on the basis of disability.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ELECTORAL CYCLE APPROACH TO DISABILITY INCLUSION

4.1 Introduction

Disability inclusion is a continuous process that extends throughout the electoral cycle rather than being limited to polling day. Persons with disabilities should have equal opportunities to participate at every stage of the electoral process, including strategic planning, voter registration, civic and voter education, political participation, polling, counting, dispute resolution and post-election evaluation.

The electoral cycle approach provides a structured framework for integrating accessibility and inclusion into electoral management. It promotes proactive planning, coordinated implementation and continuous improvement, ensuring that disability inclusion becomes an integral component of electoral governance.

4.2 The Electoral Cycle

The electoral cycle comprises three interrelated phases:

(a) Pre-Election Phase

This phase includes all preparatory activities undertaken before polling day, including:

- strategic planning;
- legal and policy development;
- budgeting and resource mobilisation;
- stakeholder engagement;
- voter registration;
- civic and voter education;
- political party engagement;
- candidate nominations;
- procurement of electoral materials;

- recruitment and training of election officials; and
- accessibility assessments.

Disability inclusion should be incorporated into each of these activities from the planning stage.

(b) Election Phase

The election phase includes all activities undertaken on polling day and during the immediate electoral period.

These include:

- polling station operations;
- voter assistance;
- queue management;
- accessible communication;
- voting procedures;
- counting and tallying of votes;
- announcement of results; and
- incident reporting.

Electoral officials shall ensure that voters with disabilities are able to vote independently, secretly and safely while preserving the integrity of the electoral process.

(c) Post-Election Phase

The post-election phase focuses on evaluation and continuous improvement.

Activities include:

- election observation;
- accessibility assessments;
- complaints and dispute resolution;
- stakeholder consultations;
- collection and analysis of disability-disaggregated data;

- evaluation of accessibility measures;
- institutional reporting; and
- review of policies and procedures.

Lessons learned should inform future electoral planning and strengthen disability-inclusive electoral administration.

4.3 Mainstreaming Disability Inclusion Across the Electoral Cycle

Disability inclusion shall be integrated into every stage of electoral planning and implementation rather than treated as a separate activity. The ECZ shall engage OPDs meaningfully throughout the pre-election, election-day and post-election phases, with accessible information, reasonable accommodation and documented responses to their recommendations.

Electoral stakeholders should ensure that accessibility considerations are reflected in:

- strategic plans;
- operational manuals and applicable codes of conduct;
- budgets;
- procurement processes;
- staff recruitment;
- training programmes;
- public communication;
- monitoring frameworks; and
- institutional performance assessments.

Mainstreaming disability inclusion promotes sustainability and reduces reliance on ad hoc interventions.

4.4 Roles and Responsibilities Throughout the Electoral Cycle

Successful implementation requires coordinated action by all stakeholders.

a. Electoral Commission of Zambia

The ECZ shall provide overall leadership by:

- integrating disability inclusion into electoral planning;
- establishing accessibility standards;
- coordinating implementation;
- monitoring compliance; and
- reviewing electoral performance.

b. Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities

ZAPD shall exercise its statutory and technical role by advising on disability inclusion, supporting accessibility assessments, guiding reasonable accommodation, facilitating capacity development and monitoring compliance. ZAPD's oversight and technical functions do not transfer the ECZ's responsibility for administering accessible elections.

c. Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

OPDs shall:

- participate meaningfully at every stage of the electoral cycle;
- provide representative, lived-experience and technical expertise on meaningful disability inclusion;
- support voter education;
- monitor accessibility;
- identify barriers; and
- contribute to continuous improvement.

d. Political Parties

Political parties should promote the participation of persons with disabilities by:

- adopting inclusive policies;
- ensuring accessible campaigns;
- encouraging candidature by persons with disabilities; and
- removing barriers within party structures.

e. Civil Society and Development Partners

Civil society organisations and development partners should support voter education, capacity building, election observation, research, innovation and resource mobilisation.

4.5 Disability Inclusion Throughout the Electoral Cycle

The following accessibility measures should be considered throughout the electoral cycle:

ELECTORAL PHASE	ACCESSIBILITY PRIORITIES
Strategic Planning	Disability-inclusive policies, accessibility audits, budgeting for reasonable accommodation and personal assistants, and OPD engagement at every stage
Voter Registration	Accessible registration centres, communication and reasonable accommodation
Civic and Voter Education	Continuous accessible sensitisation and information in Braille, large print, audio, Easy-to-Read formats and interpretation by

	qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters
Political Participation	Accessible campaigns, meetings and nomination processes
Polling	Accessible polling stations, voting assistance, personal assistants or support persons where permitted by law, and inclusive queue management
Counting and Results	Accessible communication of results and participation of observers with disabilities
Dispute Resolution	Accessible complaints procedures and reasonable accommodation
Post-Election Review	Accessibility audits, OPD consultations, annual review, post-election review and time-bound corrective action

4.6 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Disability inclusion should be monitored throughout the electoral cycle using measurable indicators.

The Electoral Commission should:

- conduct periodic accessibility assessments;
- collect disability-disaggregated data;
- monitor implementation of accessibility standards;
- engage stakeholders in evaluating electoral processes;

- publish reports on disability inclusion, including aggregate data on the recruitment, training and deployment of persons with disabilities; and
- implement corrective measures where gaps are identified.

Continuous monitoring enables electoral institutions to strengthen accessibility over successive electoral cycles.

4.7 Chapter Summary

Disability inclusion is a continuous responsibility that extends across every stage of the electoral cycle. Electoral stakeholders should adopt a proactive and coordinated approach that integrates accessibility into planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Applying an electoral cycle approach ensures that disability inclusion becomes an institutional practice rather than a one-time intervention and supports the progressive realisation of inclusive, accessible and credible elections.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE VOTER REGISTRATION

5.1 Introduction

Voter registration is the gateway to electoral participation. Every eligible citizen has the right to register as a voter without discrimination and to access voter registration services independently, safely and with dignity.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) shall ensure that voter registration processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by removing physical, communication, institutional and technological barriers and by providing reasonable accommodation where necessary.

5.2 Guiding Principles

Voter registration shall be guided by the following principles:

- equality and non-discrimination;
- accessibility;
- universal design;
- reasonable accommodation;
- dignity and independence;
- confidentiality and data protection;
- participation and inclusion; and
- accountability.

5.3 Planning for Accessible Voter Registration

The ECZ shall integrate disability inclusion into the planning and implementation of voter registration exercises by:

- consulting Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs);
- conducting accessibility assessments of registration centres;
- budgeting for accessibility measures;
- identifying potential barriers to participation;

- ensuring availability of accessible voter registration materials; and
- promoting the inclusion of qualified persons with disabilities among registration officials and training all registration officials on disability inclusion.

Accessibility considerations shall form part of all voter registration operational plans.

5.4 Accessible Registration Centres

Registration centres should be selected and arranged to maximise accessibility.

Where possible, centres should provide:

- step-free entrances;
- ramps compliant with national accessibility standards;
- accessible toilets where available;
- adequate lighting and signage;
- sufficient space for wheelchair users;
- seating for elderly persons and persons with disabilities;
- accessible waiting areas; and
- safe pedestrian access.

Where permanent accessibility features are unavailable, temporary measures should be implemented wherever practicable.

5.5 Accessible Registration Procedures

Registration procedures shall be designed to enable persons with disabilities to complete registration independently or with assistance where requested.

The ECZ should ensure:

- simplified registration procedures;
- priority service for persons requiring additional assistance;
- clear and accessible instructions;

- respectful interaction by registration officials;
- confidentiality of personal information; and
- equal treatment of all applicants.

No eligible person shall be denied registration on the basis of disability.

5.6 Accessible Information and Communication

Information relating to voter registration shall be made available in formats accessible to persons with different disabilities.

These may include:

- Braille;
- large-print materials;
- Easy-to-Read publications;
- audio formats;
- interpretation by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters;
- captioned audiovisual materials;
- accessible websites and digital platforms; and
- community radio and other accessible media.

Public information campaigns should begin well before registration commences.

5.7 Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation shall be provided where required to enable persons with disabilities to register effectively.

Examples include:

- assistance completing registration forms;
- interpretation by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters;
- accessible seating;
- priority queues;
- alternative communication methods;
- flexible arrangements for persons with mobility limitations; and
- other adjustments responding to individual needs.

The provision of reasonable accommodation shall not compromise the integrity of the voter registration process.

5.8 Registration Officials

The ECZ shall ensure that all registration officials receive training on disability inclusion before deployment.

Training should include:

- disability rights;
- respectful communication;
- disability etiquette;
- provision of reasonable accommodation;
- operation of accessible equipment;
- assisting persons with different disabilities;
- confidentiality; and
- responding appropriately to accessibility concerns.

Officials shall treat all applicants with courtesy, dignity and professionalism.

5.9 Mobile and Outreach Registration

Where mobile registration is conducted, it shall be designed and implemented inclusively and shall reach persons with disabilities and other underserved communities, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Special attention should be given to:

- rural communities;
- institutions accommodating persons with disabilities;
- hospitals and rehabilitation centres where appropriate;
- remote communities; and
- locations with limited transport infrastructure.

Outreach activities should be planned in consultation with OPDs and local stakeholders.

5.10 Technology and Innovation

The ECZ should utilise technology to improve accessibility during voter registration.

Appropriate measures may include:

- accessible online information;
- accessible registration verification systems;
- assistive technologies;
- digital communication platforms;
- SMS and mobile information services; and
- accessible electronic data collection systems.

Technology should comply with recognised accessibility standards.

5.11 Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The ECZ shall monitor accessibility throughout voter registration by:

- conducting accessibility inspections;
- collecting feedback from persons with disabilities;
- documenting accessibility challenges;
- monitoring the provision of reasonable accommodation;
- collecting disability-disaggregated registration data where lawful and appropriate; and
- implementing corrective measures where deficiencies are identified.

Monitoring findings should inform future registration exercises.

5.12 Roles and Responsibilities

Electoral Commission of Zambia

The ECZ shall:

- establish accessibility standards;
- ensure accessible registration centres;
- train registration officials;
- provide reasonable accommodation;
- monitor implementation; and
- review accessibility performance.

Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities

ZAPD shall provide technical guidance, support accessibility assessments and advise on disability-inclusive practices.

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

OPDs shall:

- participate meaningfully at every stage of the electoral cycle;
- monitor accessibility;
- support voter awareness;

- identify barriers; and
- provide feedback on registration processes.

Other Stakeholders

Government institutions, civil society organisations, development partners and community leaders should support accessible voter registration through awareness raising, technical assistance and community mobilisation.

5.13 Key Performance Indicators

Implementation of this Chapter may be measured using indicators such as:

- proportion of registration centres meeting accessibility standards;
- number of registration officials trained on disability inclusion;
- availability of voter registration information in accessible formats;
- number of reasonable accommodation requests successfully provided;
- participation rates of persons with disabilities in voter registration; and
- stakeholder satisfaction with accessibility measures.

Chapter Summary

Accessible voter registration is essential to ensuring the equal participation of persons with disabilities in electoral processes. The Electoral Commission of Zambia and all stakeholders should integrate accessibility into the planning, implementation and monitoring of voter registration activities. Through accessible infrastructure, inclusive communication, trained personnel and appropriate reasonable accommodation, voter registration can be conducted in a manner that upholds equality, dignity and democratic participation for all eligible citizens.

CHAPTER SIX

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction

Access to accurate, timely and accessible electoral information is fundamental to the effective participation of persons with disabilities in democratic processes. Civic and voter education enables citizens to understand their electoral rights and responsibilities, electoral procedures and opportunities for political participation.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, shall ensure that civic and voter education programmes are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the diverse communication needs of persons with disabilities.

6.2 Objectives

The objectives of disability-inclusive civic and voter education are to:

- promote awareness of electoral rights among persons with disabilities;
- ensure equal access to electoral information;
- encourage informed participation throughout the electoral cycle;
- eliminate communication barriers that limit participation;
- promote confidence in electoral processes; and
- increase voter turnout and political participation by persons with disabilities.

6.3 Guiding Principles

Civic and voter education programmes shall be guided by the principles of:

- equality and non-discrimination;
- accessibility;
- inclusion and participation;

- universal design;
- reasonable accommodation;
- accuracy and impartiality;
- cultural and linguistic appropriateness; and
- respect for dignity and diversity.

6.4 Accessible Information and Communication

Electoral information shall be produced and disseminated in formats that are accessible to persons with different disabilities.

Where appropriate, information should be provided through:

- Braille publications;
- large-print materials;
- Easy-to-Read formats;
- audio recordings;
- interpretation by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters;
- captioned videos;
- accessible websites and mobile applications;
- community radio broadcasts;
- television programmes with accessibility features; and
- other accessible communication technologies.

Information should be clear, accurate, consistent and available sufficiently in advance of electoral activities.

6.5 Inclusive Civic and Voter Education Strategies

The ECZ shall adopt inclusive strategies that ensure persons with disabilities are reached through multiple communication channels.

Strategies should include:

- community outreach programmes;
- collaboration with OPDs;

- continuous, targeted and accessible sensitisation campaigns on electoral rights, procedures, available accommodations and complaints mechanisms;
- digital communication platforms;
- social media;
- schools, colleges and universities;
- traditional and community leaders; and
- faith-based and community organisations.

Special efforts should be made to reach persons with disabilities living in rural and underserved communities.

6.6 Participation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) shall play a central role in civic and voter education by:

- providing technical expertise;
- reviewing educational materials for accessibility;
- supporting community mobilisation;
- facilitating awareness programmes;
- identifying communication barriers; and
- providing feedback to the ECZ.

Meaningful engagement with OPDs shall be undertaken throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation of voter education and sensitisation programmes, including in rural and underserved communities.

6.7 Training of Civic and Voter Educators

Individuals responsible for delivering civic and voter education shall receive training on:

- disability rights and inclusion;
- disability-sensitive communication;
- accessible presentation techniques;
- use of accessible information formats;
- provision of reasonable accommodation;
- safeguarding dignity and confidentiality; and
- responding appropriately to the diverse needs of participants.

Training should promote respectful engagement and eliminate discriminatory attitudes.

6.8 Inclusive Public Meetings

Public meetings and voter education sessions should be organised in accessible venues and conducted in a manner that enables the participation of persons with disabilities.

Where necessary, organisers should provide:

- accessible venues;
- interpretation by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters;
- captioning services;
- accessible seating arrangements;
- assistive listening devices where available;
- accessible presentation materials; and
- adequate time for questions and discussion.

Meeting notices should be circulated early and in accessible formats.

6.9 Digital Accessibility

Digital platforms used for civic and voter education shall comply with recognised accessibility standards.

The ECZ should ensure that:

- official websites are accessible;
- online publications are compatible with assistive technologies;
- audiovisual content includes captions and, where appropriate, interpretation by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters;
- social media content is accessible; and
- electronic information systems do not exclude persons with disabilities.

Digital innovation should complement, rather than replace, traditional communication methods.

6.10 Community Engagement

Effective civic and voter education requires partnerships with Government institutions, OPDs, civil society organisations, traditional leaders, media institutions and development partners.

Community engagement should:

- promote disability awareness;
- encourage participation in electoral processes;
- address misconceptions relating to disability;
- strengthen public confidence in inclusive elections; and
- support outreach to marginalised communities.

6.11 Monitoring and Evaluation

The ECZ shall monitor the effectiveness of civic and voter education programmes by:

- assessing the accessibility of educational materials;
- collecting feedback from persons with disabilities;
- evaluating outreach activities;
- measuring participation levels;
- identifying communication gaps; and
- documenting lessons learned for future electoral programmes.

Monitoring results should inform continuous improvement.

6.12 Roles and Responsibilities

Electoral Commission of Zambia

The ECZ shall:

- develop accessible voter education materials;
- coordinate disability-inclusive education programmes;
- train voter educators;
- monitor accessibility; and
- evaluate programme effectiveness.

Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities

ZAPD shall provide technical advice on accessibility, support awareness programmes and collaborate with the ECZ in promoting disability-inclusive voter education.

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

OPDs shall:

- support community outreach;
- review educational materials;
- facilitate awareness campaigns;
- provide technical expertise; and
- monitor accessibility.

Other Stakeholders

Government institutions, civil society organisations, media institutions, educational institutions and development partners should support the dissemination of accessible electoral information and strengthen public awareness of disability rights.

6.13 Key Performance Indicators

Progress in implementing this Chapter may be assessed through:

- availability of voter education materials in accessible formats;
- number of voter educators trained on disability inclusion;
- accessibility of public awareness campaigns;
- participation of OPDs in voter education activities;
- outreach coverage among persons with disabilities; and
- stakeholder satisfaction with accessibility measures.

Chapter Summary

Disability-inclusive civic and voter education is essential to informed electoral participation. The Electoral Commission of Zambia and its partners shall ensure that electoral information is accessible, timely and responsive to the diverse communication needs of persons with disabilities. Through inclusive communication, stakeholder collaboration and continuous monitoring, voter education programmes can empower persons with disabilities to participate fully and effectively in democratic processes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS CANDIDATES AND POLITICAL LEADERS

7.1 Introduction

The right to stand for election, hold public office and participate in political life is a fundamental constitutional and human right. Persons with disabilities should have equal opportunities to participate as candidates, political party members, elected representatives and political leaders without discrimination.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), political parties and other stakeholders shall take appropriate measures to remove barriers that limit the political participation of persons with disabilities and promote inclusive leadership at all levels.

7.2 Objectives

This Chapter seeks to:

- promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to contest elections;
- encourage disability-inclusive political party structures and processes;
- eliminate barriers affecting political participation;
- promote accessible electoral campaigns;
- strengthen leadership opportunities for persons with disabilities; and
- encourage inclusive political representation.

7.3 Guiding Principles

Political participation shall be guided by:

- equality and non-discrimination;
- accessibility;
- inclusion and participation;
- dignity and respect;
- transparency and fairness;
- gender equality; and
- reasonable accommodation.

7.4 Inclusive Political Parties

Political parties should promote disability inclusion by:

- adopting internal disability inclusion policies;
- eliminating discriminatory membership practices;
- encouraging the recruitment and participation of persons with disabilities;
- establishing accessible party structures and meetings;
- consulting members with disabilities on policy development; and
- promoting leadership opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Political parties are encouraged to mainstream disability inclusion into their constitutions, manifestos and strategic plans.

7.5 Accessible Candidate Nomination

Nomination procedures should be accessible to all eligible candidates.

The ECZ and political parties should ensure that:

- nomination centres are physically accessible;
- nomination information is available in accessible formats;
- reasonable accommodation is provided where required;
- nomination procedures are transparent and non-discriminatory; and

- candidates with disabilities receive equal treatment throughout the nomination process.

No eligible candidate shall be excluded solely on the basis of disability.

7.6 Accessible Election Campaigns

Political parties and candidates should ensure that campaign activities are accessible and inclusive.

Campaigns should, where practicable:

- be conducted in accessible venues;
- provide interpretation by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters where appropriate;
- use accessible campaign materials;
- ensure digital campaign platforms comply with accessibility standards;
- promote respectful and non-discriminatory communication; and
- facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in campaign activities.

Campaign messaging should avoid stereotypes and promote respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

7.7 Participation in Political Decision-Making

Political parties are encouraged to promote the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making structures by:

- encouraging representation on party committees;
- supporting leadership development;
- promoting equal opportunities in candidate selection;
- consulting members with disabilities on policy issues; and
- strengthening internal accountability for disability inclusion.

7.8 Women and Youth with Disabilities

Women and youth with disabilities often experience multiple and intersecting barriers to political participation.

Political parties and electoral stakeholders should adopt measures to:

- encourage their participation as candidates and party leaders;
- strengthen leadership and mentorship programmes;
- promote equal access to campaign opportunities;
- eliminate discriminatory practices; and
- ensure that gender and disability considerations are integrated into political participation initiatives.

7.9 Capacity Building

The ECZ, political parties, OPDs and development partners should support capacity-building programmes that enhance the participation of persons with disabilities in political leadership.

Training may include:

- leadership development;
- campaign management;
- public speaking;
- civic engagement;
- electoral law and procedures;
- media engagement; and
- governance and public policy.

7.10 Roles and Responsibilities

Electoral Commission of Zambia

The ECZ shall:

- ensure accessible nomination procedures;
- provide accessible information for candidates;
- monitor compliance with legal requirements;
- promote awareness of electoral rights; and
- engage stakeholders on disability-inclusive political participation.

Political Parties

Political parties shall:

- promote equal participation of persons with disabilities;
- remove barriers within party structures;
- conduct accessible campaigns;
- encourage leadership opportunities; and
- implement disability-inclusive policies.

Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities

ZAPD shall provide technical advice and collaborate with stakeholders to promote disability-inclusive political participation.

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

OPDs shall:

- advocate for equal political participation;
- support leadership development;
- provide representative, lived-experience and technical expertise on meaningful disability inclusion;
- monitor accessibility; and
- promote awareness of political rights.

7.11 Monitoring and Evaluation

The ECZ and political parties should monitor:

- participation of persons with disabilities as candidates;
- accessibility of nomination processes;
- accessibility of campaign activities;
- representation of persons with disabilities within political parties;
- implementation of reasonable accommodation; and
- stakeholder feedback on political participation.

Findings should inform future electoral reforms and political party practices.

7.12 Key Performance Indicators

Implementation of this Chapter may be measured through:

- number of candidates with disabilities contesting elections;
- accessibility of nomination centres;
- political parties adopting disability inclusion policies;
- number of accessible campaign activities conducted;
- participation of women and youth with disabilities in political leadership; and
- stakeholder satisfaction with accessibility measures.

Chapter Summary

Inclusive democracy requires that persons with disabilities participate not only as voters but also as candidates, political party members and leaders. Electoral stakeholders should eliminate barriers that restrict political participation and promote equal opportunities throughout the electoral process. Accessible nomination procedures, inclusive political party practices, leadership development and reasonable accommodation will strengthen representative democracy and ensure that persons with disabilities can contribute fully to public life.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ACCESSIBLE POLLING STATIONS AND VOTING PROCEDURES

8.1 Introduction

The right to vote is a fundamental democratic right guaranteed under the Constitution of Zambia and international human rights instruments. Every eligible voter, including persons with disabilities, shall have the opportunity to vote independently, secretly and with dignity.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) shall ensure that polling stations, voting procedures and electoral services are accessible and inclusive, enabling persons with disabilities to participate fully and effectively in elections.

8.2 Objectives

This Chapter seeks to:

- ensure that polling stations are accessible to persons with disabilities;
- promote independent and secret voting;
- establish standards for reasonable accommodation during polling;
- strengthen the capacity of election officials to support voters with disabilities;
- improve accessibility of voting materials and equipment; and
- promote confidence in the integrity and inclusiveness of the voting process.

8.3 Guiding Principles

Polling and voting procedures shall be guided by the principles of:

- equality and non-discrimination;
- accessibility;
- universal design;
- reasonable accommodation;
- secrecy of the ballot;
- dignity and independence;

- transparency; and
- integrity of the electoral process.

8.4 Accessible Polling Stations

The ECZ shall ensure that polling stations are selected and arranged to maximise accessibility.

Polling stations should, where practicable:

- be located in accessible public buildings;
- provide step-free access or ramps;
- have clearly marked and accessible entrances and exits;
- provide sufficient space for wheelchair users and persons using mobility aids;
- have adequate lighting and clear signage;
- provide seating for elderly persons and persons with disabilities;
- include accessible voting booths where possible; and
- maintain safe pathways free from unnecessary obstacles.

Where permanent accessibility features are unavailable, temporary accessibility measures should be implemented wherever practicable.

8.5 Accessible Polling Station Layout

The internal layout of polling stations should facilitate safe and efficient movement.

The ECZ should ensure:

- logical placement of voting stations;
- adequate circulation space;
- clearly identified service points;
- accessible ballot boxes;
- unobstructed emergency exits; and
- effective queue management.

Polling officials should monitor accessibility throughout polling day and promptly address any barriers that arise.

8.6 Voting Procedures

Voting procedures shall enable persons with disabilities to cast their ballots independently wherever possible while preserving the secrecy and integrity of the vote.

The ECZ shall ensure that:

- polling officials explain voting procedures clearly and respectfully;
- assistance is provided only upon the request of the voter or as provided by law;
- reasonable accommodation is available where required;
- all voters are treated equally and without discrimination; and
- no eligible voter is denied the opportunity to vote on the basis of disability.

8.7 Assistance to Voters with Disabilities

A voter with a disability who requires assistance to vote may be assisted in accordance with the Electoral Process Act and applicable electoral regulations.

Polling officials shall ensure that:

- assistance respects the dignity, choice and independence of the voter;
- the secrecy of the ballot is maintained;
- assistance is provided impartially;
- undue influence is prohibited; and
- electoral procedures governing assisted voting are strictly observed.

8.8 Priority Services

Persons with disabilities, elderly persons, pregnant women and other voters requiring additional support should receive priority service where appropriate.

Priority arrangements may include:

- priority queues;
- dedicated service points;
- seating while waiting;
- expedited processing; and
- assistance with movement within the polling station.

Priority services shall not compromise fairness or electoral integrity.

8.9 Accessible Voting Materials

The ECZ shall progressively provide voting materials that improve accessibility for persons with disabilities.

These may include:

- tactile voting devices or templates where approved;
- large-print notices and instructions;
- Braille information materials;
- pictorial or Easy-to-Read guidance where appropriate;
- clearly designed ballot papers;
- accessible signage; and
- assistive technologies approved by the Commission.

The introduction of accessibility measures shall preserve ballot security and public confidence in the electoral process.

8.10 Communication During Polling

Polling officials shall communicate respectfully and effectively with voters with disabilities.

Where appropriate, communication may include:

- clear verbal explanations;
- written information;
- visual aids;
- qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters where available;
- alternative communication methods; and
- assistance consistent with the wishes of the voter.

Officials shall avoid discriminatory language or assumptions about a person's abilities.

8.11 Training of Polling Officials

Recruitment and deployment processes shall use lawful affirmative measures to promote the inclusion of qualified persons with disabilities among polling officials. Recruitment notices shall expressly encourage qualified persons with disabilities to apply, be issued in accessible formats and be widely disseminated through mainstream and OPD-supported channels. The ECZ shall provide mandatory training for all polling officials on disability-inclusive polling procedures.

Training should include:

- disability awareness and etiquette;
- communication with persons with different disabilities;
- provision of reasonable accommodation;
- assisted voting procedures;
- operation of accessibility equipment;
- safeguarding voter dignity and confidentiality; and
- responding appropriately to accessibility concerns.

Training should form part of all pre-election preparations.

8.12 Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Emergency procedures shall take account of the needs of persons with disabilities.

Polling stations should have arrangements for:

- safe evacuation;
- accessible emergency communication;
- assistance during emergencies;
- management of overcrowding; and
- continuity of polling where accessibility is affected.

Polling officials shall receive appropriate guidance on emergency response involving persons with disabilities.

8.13 Roles and Responsibilities

Electoral Commission of Zambia

The ECZ shall:

- establish accessibility standards for polling stations;
- ensure provision of reasonable accommodation;
- train polling officials;
- monitor accessibility during polling;
- provide accessible voting information; and
- review polling arrangements after each election.

Polling Officials

Polling officials shall:

- treat voters with dignity and respect;
- implement accessibility measures;
- provide assistance in accordance with the law;
- protect the secrecy of the ballot; and
- promptly address accessibility concerns.

Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities

ZAPD shall provide technical guidance, support accessibility assessments and advise on appropriate accessibility measures.

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

OPDs shall:

- monitor accessibility during polling;
- provide feedback to the ECZ;
- support voter awareness initiatives; and
- participate in post-election evaluations.

8.14 Monitoring and Evaluation

The ECZ shall evaluate accessibility during polling by:

- conducting polling station accessibility assessments;
- monitoring implementation of reasonable accommodation;
- collecting feedback from voters with disabilities;
- documenting accessibility challenges;
- reviewing complaints relating to accessibility; and
- incorporating lessons learned into future elections.

8.15 Key Performance Indicators

Implementation of this Chapter may be measured using indicators such as:

- percentage of polling stations meeting accessibility standards;
- number of polling officials trained in disability inclusion;
- availability of accessible voting materials;
- number of requests for reasonable accommodation successfully provided;
- satisfaction levels among voters with disabilities; and
- reduction in accessibility-related electoral complaints.

Chapter Summary

Accessible polling stations and inclusive voting procedures are essential to ensuring that persons with disabilities can exercise their right to vote independently, secretly and with dignity. The Electoral Commission of Zambia, election officials and all electoral stakeholders shall work together to eliminate barriers, provide reasonable accommodation and maintain the integrity of the electoral process. Through accessible infrastructure, trained personnel and effective monitoring, Zambia can strengthen public confidence in inclusive and credible elections.

CHAPTER NINE

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION

9.1 Introduction

The effective administration of elections requires electoral institutions to integrate disability inclusion into their governance, planning, policies and operations. Disability-inclusive electoral administration is essential for ensuring that electoral processes are accessible, transparent, efficient and responsive to the needs of all citizens.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) shall mainstream disability inclusion across all aspects of electoral management to ensure that persons with disabilities participate fully and effectively throughout the electoral cycle.

9.2 Objectives

This Chapter seeks to:

- strengthen institutional capacity for disability-inclusive electoral administration;
- integrate disability inclusion into electoral planning and management;
- promote accessible electoral services and infrastructure;
- improve staff capacity on disability inclusion;
- establish accountability mechanisms for accessibility; and
- promote continuous institutional improvement.

9.3 Institutional Mainstreaming

The ECZ shall integrate disability inclusion into its institutional governance by:

- incorporating disability inclusion into strategic plans and operational policies;
- allocating adequate financial and human resources;
- establishing institutional procedures that promote accessibility;
- integrating disability inclusion into procurement processes;
- considering accessibility in infrastructure development; and
- ensuring disability inclusion is reflected in electoral planning and decision-making.

Disability inclusion shall be treated as a core institutional responsibility rather than a stand-alone programme.

9.4 Institutional Planning and Budgeting

Disability inclusion shall be incorporated into annual work plans, operational plans and electoral budgets.

Planning should include:

- accessibility improvements;
- procurement of accessible materials and equipment;
- staff training;
- stakeholder engagement;
- public awareness activities;
- monitoring and evaluation; and
- contingency measures to address accessibility challenges; and
- budget provision for personal assistants or support persons, including reasonable fees, transport, accommodation and other necessary costs, where required to enable participation;

Adequate resources should be allocated to ensure effective implementation of accessibility measures.

9.5 Human Resource Development

The ECZ shall ensure that permanent and temporary staff possess the knowledge and skills necessary to implement disability-inclusive elections.

The ECZ shall apply lawful affirmative measures and progressively work towards at least 10 per cent representation of qualified persons with disabilities among recruited and deployed electoral personnel, subject to applicable law, merit-based selection and the availability of qualified candidates.

All recruitment advertisements shall expressly encourage qualified persons with disabilities to apply, be issued in accessible formats and be widely disseminated through mainstream media, OPDs and other accessible channels.

The ECZ shall publish aggregate and privacy-protective data on the number and percentage of persons with disabilities who apply, are shortlisted, recruited, trained and deployed, disaggregated by role, sex, age and location where appropriate and lawful.

Training programmes should cover:

- disability rights and inclusion;
- accessibility standards;
- communication with persons with different disabilities;
- reasonable accommodation;
- electoral procedures involving persons with disabilities;
- customer service and disability etiquette; and
- complaint handling.

Training should be integrated into staff induction, refresher courses and election-specific capacity-building programmes.

9.6 Accessible Procurement

The ECZ shall incorporate accessibility requirements into the procurement of electoral goods, services and infrastructure.

Procurement processes should promote:

- accessible polling equipment;
- accessible information and communication technologies;
- accessible furniture and facilities;
- assistive devices where appropriate;
- accessible signage; and
- compliance with recognised accessibility standards.

Suppliers should be encouraged to demonstrate compliance with applicable accessibility requirements.

9.7 Disability-Disaggregated Data

The ECZ should promote the collection, analysis and responsible use of disability-disaggregated data, in accordance with applicable data protection laws.

Such data may be used to:

- improve electoral planning;
- identify accessibility gaps;
- inform resource allocation;
- monitor participation by persons with disabilities;
- evaluate electoral programmes; and
- support evidence-based decision-making.

The collection and use of data shall respect privacy, confidentiality and informed consent.

9.8 Stakeholder Coordination

Effective disability inclusion requires collaboration among all electoral stakeholders.

The ECZ shall establish mechanisms for regular engagement with:

- Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD);
- Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs);
- Government ministries and agencies;
- political parties;
- civil society organisations;
- media institutions;
- development partners;
- local authorities; and
- other relevant stakeholders.

Consultations with OPDs should be undertaken at every stage of the electoral cycle, be accessible, and be supported by a documented recommendation-and-response process.

9.9 Institutional Accountability

The ECZ shall establish mechanisms to monitor compliance with these Guidelines.

This should include:

- internal reporting on disability inclusion, including aggregate workforce participation data;
- accessibility audits;
- performance monitoring;
- stakeholder consultations;
- corrective action where deficiencies are identified; and
- annual institutional reviews and a comprehensive review after each general election.

Senior management should ensure that disability inclusion remains a standing institutional priority.

9.10 Innovation and Technology

The ECZ should encourage innovation to improve accessibility and service delivery.

This may include:

- accessible digital platforms;
- electronic information systems;
- assistive technologies;
- accessible communication tools;
- digital voter information services; and
- emerging technologies that improve electoral participation.

Technological innovation should complement existing accessibility measures and comply with recognised accessibility standards.

9.11 Roles and Responsibilities

Electoral Commission of Zambia

The ECZ shall:

- provide leadership in disability-inclusive electoral administration;
- mainstream accessibility across all electoral operations;
- allocate adequate resources;
- develop institutional policies and procedures;
- train staff;
- monitor implementation; and
- report on progress.

Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities

ZAPD shall:

- provide technical guidance and advise on applicable disability rights and accessibility standards;
- support independent and joint accessibility assessments;
- advise on reasonable accommodation and accessible budgeting;
- collaborate in capacity building and support the use of qualified and accredited accessibility service providers; and
- monitor compliance, refer systemic gaps to responsible authorities and participate in institutional reviews.

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

OPDs shall:

- provide representative, lived-experience and technical expertise on meaningful disability inclusion;
- participate meaningfully at every stage of the electoral cycle;
- monitor implementation;
- identify accessibility barriers; and
- contribute to continuous improvement.

Other Stakeholders

Government institutions, civil society organisations, development partners and the private sector shall support disability-inclusive electoral administration through technical assistance, advocacy, research and resource mobilisation.

9.12 Monitoring and Evaluation

The ECZ shall regularly assess institutional performance by:

- conducting accessibility audits;
- reviewing implementation of these Guidelines;
- evaluating staff capacity;
- monitoring accessibility of electoral services;
- collecting stakeholder feedback; and
- implementing recommendations arising from evaluations.

Findings should be incorporated into future electoral planning and institutional reforms.

9.13 Key Performance Indicators

Progress in implementing this Chapter may be measured using indicators such as:

- adoption of disability-inclusive institutional policies;
- proportion of staff trained on disability inclusion;
- allocation of budget for accessibility measures, including personal assistants or support persons where required;
- accessibility compliance in procurement processes;
- stakeholder participation in electoral planning;
- accessibility audit results; and
- implementation of recommendations arising from monitoring and evaluation.

Chapter Summary

Disability-inclusive electoral administration requires institutional leadership, adequate resources and sustained commitment. By integrating disability inclusion into governance, planning, budgeting, procurement, staff development and stakeholder engagement, the Electoral Commission of Zambia can strengthen the accessibility, credibility and effectiveness of electoral processes. Continuous monitoring, accountability and innovation will ensure that disability inclusion becomes an integral part of electoral administration rather than a project-based initiative.

CHAPTER TEN

ACCESSIBLE ELECTORAL INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

10.1 Introduction

Access to electoral information is essential for informed participation in democratic processes. Persons with disabilities have the right to receive electoral information in accessible formats and through communication methods that enable them to participate effectively and independently throughout the electoral cycle.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) shall ensure that electoral information, communication systems and technologies are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of persons with disabilities.

10.2 Objectives

This Chapter seeks to:

- ensure equal access to electoral information;
- promote accessible communication across the electoral cycle;
- encourage the use of accessible information and communication technologies (ICTs);
- strengthen digital accessibility;
- improve public awareness of electoral rights and procedures; and
- promote innovation in accessible electoral communication.

10.3 Guiding Principles

Electoral information and communication shall be guided by the principles of:

- accessibility;
- equality and non-discrimination;
- universal design;
- reasonable accommodation;
- accuracy and impartiality;
- timeliness;
- confidentiality where applicable; and
- continuous improvement.

10.4 Accessible Electoral Information

The ECZ shall ensure that electoral information is available in formats that are accessible to persons with different disabilities.

Where appropriate, information should be provided through:

- Braille publications;
- large-print materials;
- Easy-to-Read formats;
- audio recordings;
- tactile information materials;
- interpretation by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters;
- captioned audiovisual content;
- accessible websites;
- mobile communication platforms; and
- other accessible communication methods.

Information shall be accurate, timely and easy to understand.

10.5 Accessible Public Communication

Public communication relating to elections shall be inclusive and accessible.

The ECZ should ensure that:

- public announcements are disseminated through multiple communication channels;
- media briefings are accessible;
- election notices are produced in accessible formats;
- emergency electoral information is communicated promptly and accessibly; and
- communication strategies take account of the needs of persons with different disabilities.

10.6 Digital Accessibility

Digital platforms used by the ECZ shall comply with recognised accessibility standards.

The Commission should ensure that:

- official websites are accessible to persons using assistive technologies;
- downloadable documents are available in accessible formats;
- online voter information services are accessible;
- electronic communication platforms are compatible with screen readers and other assistive technologies;
- multimedia content includes captions and, where appropriate, interpretation by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters; and
- digital services do not create unnecessary barriers to participation.

Accessibility should be considered during the design, procurement and maintenance of all digital systems.

10.7 Information and Communication Technologies

The ECZ should promote the use of ICTs to improve electoral accessibility.

Appropriate technologies may include:

- accessible voter information portals;
- SMS information services;
- mobile applications;
- electronic voter information systems;
- assistive communication technologies;
- accessible digital mapping of polling stations; and
- other technologies that improve access to electoral information.

Technology should complement traditional communication methods and should not exclude persons with limited access to digital services.

10.8 Media Engagement

Media institutions play an important role in ensuring that electoral information reaches all citizens.

The ECZ should collaborate with public and private media to promote:

- accessible election coverage;
- captioned broadcasts;
- qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters where appropriate;
- disability-sensitive reporting;
- balanced representation of persons with disabilities; and
- public awareness of disability rights during elections.

Media organisations are encouraged to avoid discriminatory language and stereotypes in electoral reporting.

10.9 Communication During Electoral Events

Communication during voter registration, polling, counting and announcement of results should be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Electoral officials should:

- provide clear verbal explanations;
- use plain language;
- make written information available in accessible formats where practicable;
- facilitate alternative communication methods where required; and
- ensure that announcements are communicated in ways that reach diverse audiences.

10.10 Innovation and Emerging Technologies

The ECZ should encourage innovation that enhances electoral accessibility.

Potential areas include:

- artificial intelligence applications that improve accessibility;
- speech-to-text and text-to-speech technologies;
- accessible mobile applications;
- remote information services;
- digital accessibility tools; and
- other emerging technologies that support independent participation.

All innovations should be assessed to ensure compliance with accessibility, privacy and data protection requirements.

10.10.1 Electronic Voting

The ECZ and Government may study accessible electronic voting options, but no electronic voting system should be introduced without enabling legislation and an inclusive national consultation. Any feasibility study or pilot shall involve OPDs from design through evaluation and shall test accessibility, security, secrecy, independent verifiability, auditability, usability, affordability, digital inclusion and reliable non-electronic contingency arrangements.

10.11 Roles and Responsibilities

Electoral Commission of Zambia

The ECZ shall:

- develop accessible communication strategies;
- ensure accessibility of electoral information;
- maintain accessible digital platforms;
- engage media institutions;
- promote innovation; and
- monitor compliance with accessibility standards.

Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities

ZAPD shall provide technical guidance on accessible communication and support the review of electoral information and communication systems.

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

OPDs shall:

- advise on accessible communication;
- review communication materials;
- identify accessibility barriers;
- support awareness campaigns; and
- provide feedback on communication strategies.

Media Institutions

Media organisations should promote accessible election coverage and support public awareness of disability-inclusive electoral processes.

10.12 Monitoring and Evaluation

The ECZ shall monitor the accessibility of electoral information and communication by:

- reviewing communication materials;
- assessing digital accessibility;
- collecting stakeholder feedback;
- monitoring media accessibility;
- evaluating the effectiveness of communication strategies; and
- implementing improvements where necessary.

10.13 Key Performance Indicators

Implementation of this Chapter may be assessed using indicators such as:

- proportion of electoral information available in accessible formats;
- accessibility compliance of ECZ digital platforms;
- availability of captioned electoral broadcasts and broadcasts interpreted by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters;
- stakeholder satisfaction with electoral communication;
- accessibility of media engagement activities; and
- implementation of recommendations arising from communication accessibility assessments.

Chapter Summary

Accessible information and communication are essential to ensuring that persons with disabilities can participate fully in electoral processes. The Electoral Commission of Zambia shall ensure that electoral information is produced and disseminated in accessible formats, supported by inclusive communication strategies and accessible technologies. Through collaboration with media institutions, OPDs and other stakeholders, electoral information can reach all eligible citizens and strengthen public confidence in inclusive democratic processes.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ELECTION OBSERVATION, ELECTORAL JUSTICE AND COMPLAINTS MECHANISMS

11.1 Introduction

Free, fair and inclusive elections require effective election observation, accessible complaints mechanisms and impartial electoral dispute resolution. Persons with disabilities have the right to participate in election observation, report violations of their electoral rights and access timely and effective remedies without discrimination.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), electoral dispute resolution bodies and other relevant institutions shall ensure that election observation and electoral justice mechanisms are accessible and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.

11.2 Objectives

This Chapter seeks to:

- promote the participation of persons with disabilities in election observation;
- ensure accessible electoral complaints and dispute resolution mechanisms;
- strengthen accountability for disability-inclusive electoral processes;
- improve monitoring of accessibility during elections; and
- provide effective remedies for violations of electoral rights.

11.3 Guiding Principles

Election observation and electoral justice shall be guided by the principles of:

- equality and non-discrimination;
- accessibility;
- impartiality;
- independence;
- transparency;
- fairness;
- confidentiality where appropriate; and
- timely resolution of complaints.

11.4 Inclusive Election Observation

Election observation contributes to the transparency, credibility and integrity of electoral processes.

The ECZ and accredited observation missions should promote the participation of persons with disabilities as election observers and ensure that observation activities are accessible and inclusive.

Observation missions should:

- recruit observers with disabilities where practicable;
- provide reasonable accommodation;
- ensure accessible training programmes;
- deploy observers without discrimination; and
- include disability inclusion as a component of election observation.

11.5 Monitoring Disability Inclusion

Election observation should assess the extent to which electoral processes are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Observation activities should include assessment of:

- accessibility of voter registration centres;
- accessibility of polling stations;
- availability of accessible electoral information;
- provision of reasonable accommodation;
- participation of voters with disabilities;
- participation of candidates with disabilities;
- accessibility of electoral communication; and
- compliance with applicable disability rights standards.

Observation reports should include findings and recommendations on disability inclusion.

11.6 Accessible Complaints Mechanisms

Persons with disabilities shall have equal access to electoral complaints and grievance mechanisms.

The ECZ and other relevant institutions shall ensure that complaints procedures are:

- easy to understand;
- physically accessible;
- available in accessible formats;
- responsive to different communication needs;
- free from discrimination; and
- capable of providing timely decisions.

Information on complaints procedures shall be widely disseminated in accessible formats.

11.7 Electoral Dispute Resolution

Electoral dispute resolution bodies shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate effectively in proceedings.

Reasonable accommodation should be provided where necessary, including:

- accessible hearing venues;
- interpretation by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters;
- accessible documentation;
- assistive communication technologies;
- flexible procedural arrangements where appropriate; and
- other accommodations necessary to ensure equal participation.

All proceedings shall respect the dignity, independence and rights of persons with disabilities.

11.8 Institutional Responsibilities

Electoral Commission of Zambia

The ECZ shall:

- establish accessible complaints mechanisms;
- investigate complaints relating to electoral accessibility;
- maintain records of accessibility-related complaints;
- implement corrective measures where appropriate; and
- collaborate with relevant institutions to improve electoral accessibility.

Courts and Electoral Dispute Resolution Bodies

Relevant adjudicative bodies shall ensure that electoral justice processes are accessible, fair and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Election Observation Missions

Election observers shall monitor disability inclusion throughout the electoral cycle and include findings and recommendations in their reports.

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

OPDs shall:

- support election observation;
- document barriers to participation;
- assist persons with disabilities in understanding complaints procedures;
- monitor implementation of recommendations; and
- advocate for continuous improvement.

11.9 Monitoring and Reporting

The ECZ shall maintain mechanisms for monitoring:

- accessibility-related complaints;
- implementation of corrective actions;
- participation of persons with disabilities in election observation;
- stakeholder feedback; and
- compliance with these Guidelines.

Reports should be used to improve future electoral processes.

11.10 Key Performance Indicators

Implementation of this Chapter may be measured through:

- number of accessibility-related complaints received and resolved;
- proportion of complaints resolved within prescribed timeframes;
- participation of persons with disabilities in election observation;
- accessibility of complaints procedures;
- implementation of recommendations arising from observation reports; and
- stakeholder satisfaction with electoral justice mechanisms.

Chapter Summary

Accessible election observation and effective electoral justice are essential components of disability-inclusive elections. Electoral stakeholders shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate in election observation, access complaints mechanisms and obtain effective remedies where their electoral rights are infringed. Continuous monitoring and timely resolution of complaints will strengthen public confidence in the fairness, transparency and inclusiveness of Zambia's electoral processes.

CHAPTER TWELVE

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

12.1 Introduction

The effective implementation of these Guidelines requires sustained institutional commitment, adequate resources, collaboration among stakeholders and continuous monitoring. Disability inclusion shall be integrated into electoral planning, administration, budgeting and evaluation to ensure that persons with disabilities participate fully and effectively throughout the electoral cycle.

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) shall provide overall leadership for the implementation of these Guidelines in collaboration with Government institutions, the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), political parties, civil society organisations, media institutions, development partners, the general public and other stakeholders.

12.2 Objectives

This Chapter seeks to:

- establish institutional arrangements for implementing the Guidelines;
- define the responsibilities of key stakeholders;
- promote coordinated implementation;
- provide mechanisms for monitoring and reporting;
- strengthen accountability for disability inclusion; and
- promote annual and post-general-election review and continuous improvement.

12.3 Institutional Leadership

The Electoral Commission of Zambia shall have primary responsibility for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of these Guidelines.

The Commission shall:

- integrate disability inclusion into electoral policies, strategic plans and operational procedures;
- allocate appropriate financial and human resources;
- coordinate stakeholder engagement;
- promote institutional capacity building;
- monitor implementation; and
- report on progress.

Disability inclusion shall be incorporated into all levels of electoral management rather than implemented as a stand-alone activity.

12.4 Stakeholder Responsibilities

Successful implementation requires coordinated action by all stakeholders.

Electoral Commission of Zambia

The ECZ shall:

- lead implementation of these Guidelines;
- develop implementation plans;
- ensure accessibility of electoral processes;
- build institutional capacity;
- coordinate stakeholder engagement;
- monitor compliance; and
- publish implementation reports.

Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities

ZAPD shall:

- provide technical advice on disability inclusion;
- support independent and joint accessibility assessments;
- facilitate capacity building;
- monitor compliance with disability rights standards; and
- collaborate with the ECZ and other stakeholders.

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

OPDs shall:

- participate in planning and consultation;
- provide representative, lived-experience and technical expertise on meaningful disability inclusion;
- support public awareness programmes;
- monitor implementation;
- identify barriers to participation; and
- contribute to annual reviews and the comprehensive review after each general election.

Political Parties

Political parties shall:

- promote disability-inclusive participation;
- remove barriers within party structures;
- implement inclusive campaign practices; and
- encourage leadership opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Government Institutions

Government ministries, departments and agencies shall support implementation within their respective mandates by:

- improving accessibility of public infrastructure;
- supporting civic education;
- promoting inclusive public services; and
- collaborating with the ECZ on disability-inclusive electoral programmes.

Civil Society, Media and Development Partners

Civil society organisations, media institutions and development partners shall support implementation through:

- advocacy and public awareness;
- technical assistance;
- research and innovation;
- election observation;
- capacity building; and
- resource mobilisation.

General Public

Members of the general public should use these Guidelines as an advocacy and awareness tool, challenge stigma and discriminatory attitudes, promote respectful disability-inclusive communication and support the full participation of persons with disabilities in electoral processes.

12.5 Implementation Planning

The ECZ shall prepare an implementation plan that includes:

- priority activities;
- responsible institutions;
- implementation timelines;
- performance indicators;
- resource requirements; and
- monitoring arrangements.

Implementation should be integrated into existing electoral planning processes and reviewed regularly.

12.6 Resource Mobilisation

The successful implementation of these Guidelines requires adequate financial, technical and human resources.

The ECZ and relevant stakeholders should:

- incorporate disability inclusion into annual budgets;
- make explicit provision for personal assistants or support persons and for qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters where required;
- prioritise accessibility investments;
- mobilise support from cooperating partners where appropriate;
- strengthen institutional capacity; and
- promote efficient use of available resources.

Resource mobilisation should support long-term institutional sustainability.

12.7 Monitoring and Reporting

The ECZ shall establish a monitoring framework to assess implementation of these Guidelines.

Monitoring should include:

- accessibility audits;
- implementation reviews;
- stakeholder consultations;
- collection of disability-disaggregated data, where appropriate;
- progress reporting, including aggregate data on persons with disabilities recruited, trained and deployed by the ECZ; and
- documentation of lessons learned.

Implementation reports should identify achievements, accessibility gaps, time-bound corrective actions and recommendations for improvement, and should publish aggregate, privacy-protective data on persons with disabilities engaged, employed, trained and deployed in electoral processes.

12.8 Evaluation

The ECZ should evaluate implementation at least annually and comprehensively after each general election by assessing:

- accessibility of electoral processes;
- participation of persons with disabilities;
- implementation of reasonable accommodation;
- institutional capacity;
- stakeholder satisfaction; and
- overall impact on disability-inclusive electoral participation.

Evaluation findings should inform future electoral planning and policy development.

12.9 Review of the Guidelines

Implementation of these Guidelines should be reviewed at least annually, with a comprehensive review after each general election, to ensure that they remain relevant and responsive to:

- legislative reforms;
- technological developments;
- emerging international standards;
- lessons learned from electoral practice;
- evolving accessibility requirements; and
- feedback from stakeholders.

Reviews should be undertaken through an accessible and inclusive consultative process involving ZAPD, OPDs at every stage, and all other key stakeholders, with a published record of recommendations and responses.

12.10 Risk Management

The ECZ should identify and manage risks that may affect the implementation of these Guidelines.

Potential risks include:

- inadequate funding;
- limited institutional capacity;
- inaccessible infrastructure;
- insufficient stakeholder coordination;
- technological barriers;
- inadequate public awareness; and
- emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances.

Appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated into implementation plans.

12.11 Key Performance Indicators

Progress in implementing these Guidelines shall be measured against an approved baseline and time-bound targets using the following indicators. Data shall be collected consistently, disaggregated where appropriate and lawful, and reported in aggregate form to protect privacy and the secrecy of the vote:

- percentage of electoral activities complying with accessibility standards;
- proportion of ECZ staff trained on disability inclusion;
- implementation of accessibility improvements;
- participation of persons with disabilities as voters, candidates and election observers, measured by: (a) the number and percentage of registered voters who voluntarily self-identify as persons with disabilities and, where lawful and practicable, the aggregate turnout rate among them; (b) the number and percentage of nominated candidates and elected representatives who voluntarily self-identify as persons with disabilities; and (c) the number and percentage of accredited election observers who voluntarily self-identify as persons with disabilities;
- participation of OPDs in electoral planning and monitoring, measured by the number and diversity of OPDs engaged, the stages of the electoral cycle at which they are engaged, attendance at consultations and monitoring activities, the accessibility measures provided, the recommendations submitted, and the proportion of recommendations adopted or formally responded to;
- number and percentage of persons with disabilities who apply, are shortlisted, recruited, trained and deployed as electoral personnel, and publication of the corresponding aggregate report;
- percentage of ECZ recruitment advertisements issued in accessible formats, expressly encouraging applications from qualified persons with disabilities and disseminated through OPD-supported channels;
- number and coverage of continuous accessible sensitisation activities conducted with OPDs throughout the electoral cycle;

- percentage of required interpretation assignments filled by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters;
- completion of the annual implementation review and the comprehensive post-general-election review within approved timelines;
- percentage of accessibility audit findings implemented, calculated as the number of audit recommendations fully implemented divided by the total number of applicable audit recommendations, multiplied by 100;
- implementation of recommendations arising from monitoring and evaluation; and
- stakeholder satisfaction with disability-inclusive electoral processes, measured through an accessible and standardised post-activity or post-election survey of persons with disabilities, OPDs and other electoral stakeholders. Results should report the percentage rating accessibility and inclusion as satisfactory or better, together with qualitative feedback, and should be disaggregated by stakeholder category, disability type, sex, age and location where appropriate, lawful and statistically safe.

12.12 Continuous Improvement

Disability inclusion is a continuous process requiring sustained commitment and innovation.

Electoral stakeholders should:

- share good practices;
- promote institutional learning;
- strengthen partnerships;
- adopt emerging technologies where appropriate;
- invest in capacity development; and
- continuously improve accessibility across all electoral processes.

Chapter Summary

The successful implementation of these Guidelines depends on strong institutional leadership, effective coordination, adequate resources and continuous monitoring. The Electoral Commission of Zambia shall lead implementation in collaboration with Government institutions, ZAPD, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, political parties, civil society organisations, media institutions, development partners, the general public and other stakeholders. Through coordinated implementation, regular monitoring and review at least annually and after each general election, these Guidelines will contribute to an electoral system that is increasingly accessible, inclusive and responsive to the rights and needs of persons with disabilities.

Annex 1: Summary of Institutional Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Key Responsibilities
Electoral Commission of Zambia	Lead implementation, develop implementation plans, ensure accessibility, coordinate stakeholders, monitor compliance and report on progress.
Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities	Exercise statutory and technical oversight; advise on accessibility and reasonable accommodation; support assessments and capacity development; and monitor compliance without displacing ECZ responsibilities.
Organisations of Persons with Disabilities	Participate meaningfully at every stage of the electoral cycle; provide representative and technical expertise; co-design and test accessibility measures; support sensitisation; monitor implementation; and advocate for corrective action.
Political Parties	Promote inclusive participation, accessible campaigns and leadership opportunities for persons with disabilities.
Government Ministries and Agencies	Support implementation through accessible infrastructure, public services and inter-agency collaboration.

Civil Society Organisations	Conduct civic education, advocacy, monitoring and election observation.
Media Institutions	Disseminate accessible electoral information and promote disability-sensitive reporting.
Development Partners	Provide technical assistance, capacity building, research support and resource mobilisation.
General Public	Use the Guidelines as an advocacy and awareness tool, challenge attitudinal barriers and support the full participation of persons with disabilities.

Annex 2: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Objective	Indicator	Means of Verification	Responsible Institution
Improve accessibility	Percentage of accessible polling stations	Accessibility audit reports	ECZ
Strengthen capacity	Number of officials trained	Training records	ECZ
Improve participation	Participation of persons with disabilities as voters, candidates and observers, measured in accordance with section 12.11	Electoral statistics	ECZ
Enhance communication	Accessible voter education materials produced	Communication reports	ECZ
Improve stakeholder engagement	Meaningful participation of OPDs in electoral planning and monitoring	Consultation records, recommendation-response matrix	ECZ / ZAPD

		and monitoring reports	
Promote accountability	Annual implementation reports produced	Published reports	ECZ
Promote inclusive electoral employment	Number and percentage of persons with disabilities applying, shortlisted, recruited, trained and deployed	Accessible recruitment notices, recruitment records and published aggregate workforce report	ECZ
Strengthen communication access	Percentage of required interpretation assignments filled by qualified and accredited Zambian Sign Language interpreters	Contracts, accreditation records and broadcast or event reports	ECZ / ZAPD

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