

**ARRIVAL STATEMENT
BY THE CHAIR OF
COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER GROUP TO ZAMBIA**

**Statement by HE Dr Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, former President of the
United Republic of Tanzania**

Lusaka, 8 August 2021

I am greatly honoured to have been asked by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, to lead the Commonwealth Observer Group for Zambia's General Elections, scheduled for 12 August 2021.

The Group was constituted following an invitation from the Electoral Commission of Zambia and includes 12 other eminent persons drawn from the Commonwealth. This follows a visit of a pre-election assessment team to Zambia in April 2021. The Group brings together a wealth of experience from across the social and political spectrum including civil society, women's and youth groups, human rights organisations, and the media. We are here to observe the electoral process and will act impartially and independently as we assess its organisation and conduct.

We recognise the significance of these elections to the people of Zambia, the region and the global community - and appreciate the challenges they present, especially at a time when the world is battling the Coronavirus pandemic.

Our mandate is to observe and evaluate the pre-election environment, polling day activities and the post-election period against the backdrop of Zambia's national legislation and regulations, as well as regional and international commitments. We will then report on whether the elections have been conducted in accordance with the standards to which Zambia has committed itself, including its own laws. In this



context, we look forward to the Presidential candidates acting in accordance with the peace pledge, which was signed by political leaders on 14 July, where they reaffirmed their commitment to peaceful elections. This is a welcome development, facilitated by the Coalition for Peaceful Elections in Zambia (CPEZ), which is consistent with Commonwealth values.

Our planned briefings, which began today, are wide-ranging, encompassing the Electoral Commission of Zambia, political parties, the media, citizen observers, women's groups, and youth. We have also been briefed by our Advance Observers, who have been on the ground since 25 July.

From Monday 9 August, our observers will be deployed to locations across the country. They will be in small teams and will arrive to observe preparations ahead of polling day and meet with political parties, the police, election officials and other stakeholders in their respective locations.

On Election Day, they will observe the opening, voting, closing, counting and the results management processes. We will issue an interim statement on our preliminary findings on 14 August 2021. A final report will then be prepared and submitted to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, and subsequently shared with relevant stakeholders and the public.

Our presence here affirms the support of the Commonwealth to Zambia and its democratic processes, and we hope that our Group's presence will confirm Commonwealth's solidarity with the people of Zambia.

The Group will depart Zambia by 17 August 2021.

On behalf of the Group, I wish the people of Zambia well, as the nation exercises its right to vote on 12 August.