

■ CHAPTER 6 ■

Conclusion

The Zambian multi-party elections were conducted in a calm and orderly manner and gave the people of Zambia the opportunity to vote for the Presidential and National Assembly candidates of their choice. The results should therefore fully reflect the will of the Zambian people. The entire election process has shown that there is a basis in Zambia for the development of multi-party democracy. There is no doubt that the events on Election Day in Zambia would provide lessons for other countries which intend to change to a plural political system.

Our conclusion was that the elections were free and fair. This conclusion was based on detailed observation of the arrangements during the week of the elections. In checking on the arrangements for the elections, we met the Electoral Commission, political parties including UNIP and MMD, police and security officials, election officials and other interested parties, as well as voters.

On polling day, we were on the scene before the scheduled commencement of the poll at 0600 hours in order to satisfy ourselves that the proper procedures for the opening of the poll were being applied. We spent the entire day making random visits to polling stations to note whether the procedures laid down by law were being followed, observing the conduct of the poll, examining the registers, making contact with independent monitors and party agents on duty in every polling station to find out whether there had been any complaints, and speaking to voters outside polling stations. We had no complaints of intimidation or of voters being prevented from exercising their right to vote.

Our observations were that the majority of election officers consistently sought, fairly and firmly, to ensure that the prescribed procedures were followed and to assist voters wherever difficulties occurred. The problems which we noted, or were reported to us, were in our view due to lack of administrative resources and predictable human error.

In all our visits, election officers were anxious to be helpful, to explain anything on which we sought information and to give us access to their documents. The process was open – an important ingredient in fairness.

Finally, we must record our admiration for the Zambian people, whose behaviour throughout the day combined maturity, patience and good humour; qualities which augur well for the stability of the Third Republic.