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PRELIMINARY RESULTS

For Immediate Release

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FODEP Projects Close Presidential Race: Urges Calm from all Stakeholders and Transparency from the ECZ

Preliminary results from a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) conducted by the Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP) for Zambia's 2008 Presidential By-Election show that this election is incredibly close. FODEP urges all Zambians to continue to calmly and peacefully await the final results from the ECZ. This is an election that may be in question until the last ballot is counted. In this time, it is incumbent on our political leaders, their cadres and contestants to exercise patience and respect for each other while the process continues normally to its conclusive end.

Given the closeness of this election, it is necessary that those managing the process exercise maximum transparency and accountability to instill confidence in the electorate. This will consequently lead to the generally acceptable outcome.

FODEP's projection is based on information from 840 sample points, drawn at random from all of Zambia's 150 constituencies using a statistical method that is accepted internationally and proven to be accurate. FODEP continues to process incoming information and will use this information to evaluate the final results once the ECZ finishes its work. However, additional sample points will not change FODEP's projection that this election will be decided by a very slim margin.

FODEP's PVT identified a low level of turnout in the presidential election. Only 46.7 percent of Zambia's 3.9 million registered voters casted ballots yesterday. This low figure can be attributed to a number of factors, not least of which is the use of the 2006 voters list. FODEP renews its calls for the ECZ to implement a continuous voter registration process, so that future elections can truly reflect the will of all voting age citizens. That said, while FODEP is aware of numerous instances of individuals not being able to find their name on the voting list, this was not a systematic problem. Fewer than 1 percent of polling stations saw any voter turned away who was able to produce a valid NRC and voter's card. In approximately 91 percent of polling stations all voters were properly checked.

Overall it is FODEP's conclusion that election day was administered well and largely free of intimidation and violence. The majority of polling streams, 98 percent, were free from the undue influence of security forces and traditional leaders. While a few polling stations opened late (approximately 17 percent), voting moved quickly and these delays did not significantly

disenfranchise voters. Election officials followed the procedures for counting in 86 percent of the polling streams. The ECZ was consistently supportive of civil society efforts to observe the voting process.

In its pre-election statement, FODEP expressed concern that combining the counting of multiple polling streams would decrease the transparency of the process. Of polling districts with multiple streams, 80 percent counted votes in a single counting exercise, despite assurances by the director of the ECZ that he would direct that counting be done individually at each stream. FODEP hopes that in future elections, counting will be done in the room where votes are cast as is recommended by SADC principles and guidelines for governing free and fair elections.

FODEP would like to commend the political parties for the constructive role that they played in protecting the election process and verifying that it was properly undertaken. Only 4 percent of polling streams saw a political party agent attempting to disrupt or unduly influence voting. Representatives of MMD, PF, UPND, and HP were present at 91.8 percent, 85.1 percent and 73.2 percent and 11.3 percent of polling stations respectively. In 93 percent of polling districts, all party agents present signed the count.

In conclusion, Zambians can be proud of yesterday's election. Against the challenge of a significantly shortened voting period, all stakeholders contributed to an election that was well administered and free of the isolated violence and intimidation witnessed during the campaign period.

FODEP urgently calls on the ECZ to publish national results to the polling district level to allow the contestants and all citizens to compare these numbers to those posted at the polling stations.

FODEP would like to thank the thousands of election observers and coordinators for their commitment and dedicated work. In addition FODEP is grateful for the support from DFID and technical assistance from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

May God Bless Zambia!
Thank you all.

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