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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**Former President Jimmy Carter** and other members of the international pre-election delegation, sponsored jointly by the **National Democratic Institute for International Affairs** and the **Carter Center of Emory University**, announced their findings in Lusaka on September 24, 1991. At the invitation of the Zambian government and opposition parties, the Carter Center and NDI have jointly organized the election monitoring effort, called the Zambian Observation Team, or Z-Vote. A first pre-election mission, led by Swedish MP Maria Leissner, visited Zambia in August.

Members of the delegation included **Richard Joseph**, the Carter Center's fellow for African Governance; **C.K. Bakwesegha**, senior political officer for the OAU Secretariat; **Larry Garber**, NDI Senior Consultant for Election Processes; **Michelle Kourouma**, executive director of the National Conference of Black Mayors; and **Adele Jinadu**, a representative of the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria.

**President Carter will return to Zambia to lead an international election observer delegation for the October 31 elections.**

On behalf of the pre-election delegation, President Carter made the following statement:

**President Kaunda, the government and people of Zambia deserve great credit for making the decision to accept multiparty democracy as the basis for the election to be held on October 31. Substantial progress has been made in achieving this goal.**

**It is the responsibility of the International Monitoring Team (Z-Vote) to carry out the mandate of President Kaunda, supported by leaders of the opposition parties, to help insure that the election will be conducted successfully and that the results of the election will accurately represent the will of Zambian voters who carry duties as citizens. Lacking any authority and desiring none, we can only describe to officials and to the general public our early concern about possible obstacles in achieving this goal, and then give our assistance as requested.**

**Having consulted with President Kaunda and leaders of the incumbent United National Independence Party and the opposition parties, Election Commission officials, representatives of the churches, students, lawyers, the news media, women's groups, the business community, trade unions, and other interested citizens, we have come to share some common concerns:**

1. The Election Commission, still lacking one of its three members, seems to be seriously understaffed, underfunded, and without adequate transportation and other resources to carry out its enormous duties before and during the election.

2. During the last month of the campaign there is a need for maximum freedom of movement and expression of ideas. With relative stability within contiguous nations and among the peaceful people of Zambia, the State of Emergency should be lifted. President Kaunda has repeated to me and authorized me to announce his promise to lift the State of Emergency on September 30 if the country seems to be committed to stability and there is no serious threat to the peace.

3. In order to avoid any unnecessary tension or fear among the people, we urge all those in authority or involved in the election to refrain carefully from any statements that might imply threats or intimidation. Following the election, victors and vanquished must come together to form a united populace, mutually committed to an even greater and more progressive Zambia.

4. There is a threat of substantial disenfranchisement of qualified voters. The election law guarantees that anyone whose name is on the voter's list has a right to vote provided they can produce adequate evidence of their identity. However, the Elections Commission has contemplated the additional requirement that everyone must produce not only identification but also the voter's documents received in 1987 or 1990. Many qualified voters have lost or misplaced these documents. The Chairman of the Elections Commission has promised to take steps to alleviate this concern.

5. There is clear evidence that favored treatment is being given to one party in preference to the others in some of the news media. Although substantial progress has been made in the print media, radio and television broadcasts have not equaled this degree of equity. Top officials who make these decisions are, in some cases, highly partisan leaders in the political arena. The Elections Commission, legal officials, and the general public should demand fairness in these vital media.

6. There can be a serious opportunity for ballots, once cast, to be lost, exchanged, or otherwise rendered unreliable as an accurate and unchallengeable expression of the will of the voters. We strongly recommend that votes be counted at the individual polling places, at least in a preliminary way. Subsequently, the final and official count can be made at central sites. Present plans to transport ballots from almost 3,500 polling places to a few central counting sites before they are counted creates enormous logistical problems and opportunities for violations of the integrity of the election. If this procedure will not be changed, elaborate precautions must be taken to insure that the votes counted are exactly the same as those cast:

- a) the procedures must guarantee specific and permanent identification of each box by number with its own polling place;
- b) individual and foolproof seals affixed by all major parties on each box;

- c) the absolute requirement that every box be accompanied by representatives of the major parties at every step in its transport;
- d) the counting of ballots in each box separately before they are mixed, and
- e) the witnessing of the entire process by qualified observers

In rejecting the simple counting of ballots at polling places, these formidable burdens are added to the already difficult task of providing supplies, training of poll officials, and massive transportation needs on election day.

7. It is necessary for citizens to know that the secrecy of their ballots will be preserved. If the numbers cannot be deleted from the ballot itself, no examination of the ballots should be submitted except by high court officials in response to an official challenge of the ballot's integrity.

Some other concerns of less significance have been shared with the appropriate officials.

We have been pleased and thrilled at what seems to be a unanimous commitment to hold a free and fair election. President Kaunda and others are to be congratulated on initiating this multiparty election and bringing the process this far. We are confident that, with a concerted and unified effort, the concerns enumerated above can be alleviated.