

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 2, 1991

**STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL Z-VOTE DELEGATION
TO THE ZAMBIAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS**

The Z-vote delegation congratulates the Zambian people on their demonstration of a profound commitment to democratic values. They displayed great patience and fortitude on election day, despite certain administrative and logistical difficulties. Our observers have been deeply impressed by the high degree of professionalism shown by the electoral officials and by the cooperation and goodwill that prevailed throughout the exercise.

On the eve of the election, President Kaunda, in an act of the highest statesmanship, reminded his fellow Zambians that elections are just "a means to an important end," namely that of "a good government for the people." Mr. Chiluba responded with equal generosity and dignity by acknowledging Dr. Kaunda's exceptional contributions as the father of the nation and asking his supporters to seek reconciliation rather than confrontation with the opposition.

Credit for the successful conduct of the election will be widely shared. In addition to the dedicated work of the Electoral Commission, despite its insufficient resources, it is important to acknowledge the contributions of the various groups of independent monitors, national and international. Above all, we will never forget the great determination of the Zambian people to express their voting choice calmly and patiently. The nation has decided that it wanted changed. By awaiting the moment when such a change could be affected via the ballot box, Zambians have sent out a message that will reverberate throughout the rest of Africa and around the globe.

The October 31 elections were not only the first multiparty election to take place in Zambia in more than two decades, they were also the first that were so carefully monitored. It was not easy for the former ruling party to accept the meticulous scrutiny to which the electoral procedures were subjected or to be pleased with the various suggestions made for improvements. Nevertheless, they eventually accepted even what they sometimes did not appreciate.

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The beneficiaries of the cooperative attitude were the Zambian voters who went to the polling stations with great confidence. From now on, independent monitoring will be seen as an integral part of the electoral process in Zambia. Moreover, the exemplary behavior of the ZEMCC and ZIMT monitors at polling stations and counting centers throughout the country should make it easier for other African countries to accept national and international observers.

After the celebrations, Zambians will confront many hurdles in the consolidation of plural democracy. There are many expectations for immediate material improvements that cannot be satisfied. The implementation of needed economic restructuring will require increased austerity in the short run. Moreover, recent gains involving widened freedoms of expression will have to be entrenched. Finally, a ruling party that has governed for three decades will be challenged to transform itself into an effective but loyal opposition, as Dr. Kaunda indicated in his televised address today.

Our commitment to plural democracy in Zambia cannot, therefore, end with the announcement of the winners of this election. Many African countries have experienced multiparty elections only to see the new systems crumble as the new governments proceeded to disregard the very constitutional provisions they had fought to introduce. In some cases, the democratic system is undermined by the gravity of the economic situation or by serious abuses of power, especially in the resumption of corrupt practices. We will offer to assist the Zambian people as they seek to realize the benefits of their arduous crossing to the Third Republic. How can we contribute?

-- We will share with the new government all that we have learned about the electoral system during the past several months, especially regarding the voter register. Many desired changes were introduced, such as additional requirements to ensure the security of the ballot boxes. Some were unfortunately rejected, such as the desirability of counting the ballots at the polling stations, thereby eliminating the costly, complicated and cumbersome procedures for transporting the ballot boxes.

-- We will extend our assistance to the members of the new government and parliament as they implement the provisions of the new constitution. These leaders and officials were groomed in a single-party system. They have to adapt to the demands and give-and-take of a multiparty democracy. We are ready to assist in that learning process in a spirit of true partnership.

-- We will work to strengthen the capacity of Zambian institutions such as the political parties, the judiciary, and the press, which are essential to the functioning of a democratic system.

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-- We will encourage the Zambian civic organizations that played such an important role in providing an infrastructure for the national monitoring teams to remain actively involved in the nation's political life, especially in view of the overwhelming victory of the MMD. Zambia should not substitute one single-party system for another. A vigorous civic society, composed of dynamic, vigilant and autonomous organizations, is an essential component of a healthy democracy.

-- We will bring our collective influence to bear on all international and bilateral financial agencies to ensure that Zambia is given most favored treatment in the handling of its external debt, its receipt of new capital inflows, and its access to world markets for its products. The Zambian economy has to be restored to its former health and we, as international observers who have been deeply impressed by the democratic commitment of the Zambian people, will insist that the world community provide the appropriate level of financial support during the entire period of economic reconstruction.

We leave Zambia profoundly moved, and even changed, by what we have seen and experienced. We thank the Zambian people for permitting us to share in this historic moment and to witness an extraordinary display of civic virtue. We will never forget that we were invited to Zambia by Dr. Kaunda and that he called on Zambians to assist us in our work, even in the face of opposition within his own party. In a democratic system, as he reminded all of us, there are no permanent winners or permanent losers. Those in power today could be clearing their desks a few years hence: it is the people who decide.

Wherever we go, we will be ambassadors of the new Zambian democracy. Whenever we speak of democracy, we will recall the exemplary Zambian model of a peaceful transition. Once again, we express our profound thanks for the great hospitality and courtesy accorded to us and we extend our best wishes for a successful and enduring Third Republic.

Jimmy Carter
Chairman

Brian Atwood
Vice-Chairman

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