From Electoral Promises to Delivery?

An Assessment of the Government of Zambia's Performance 2021–2026

Mulife Mataa & Eddah Jowah

September 2026

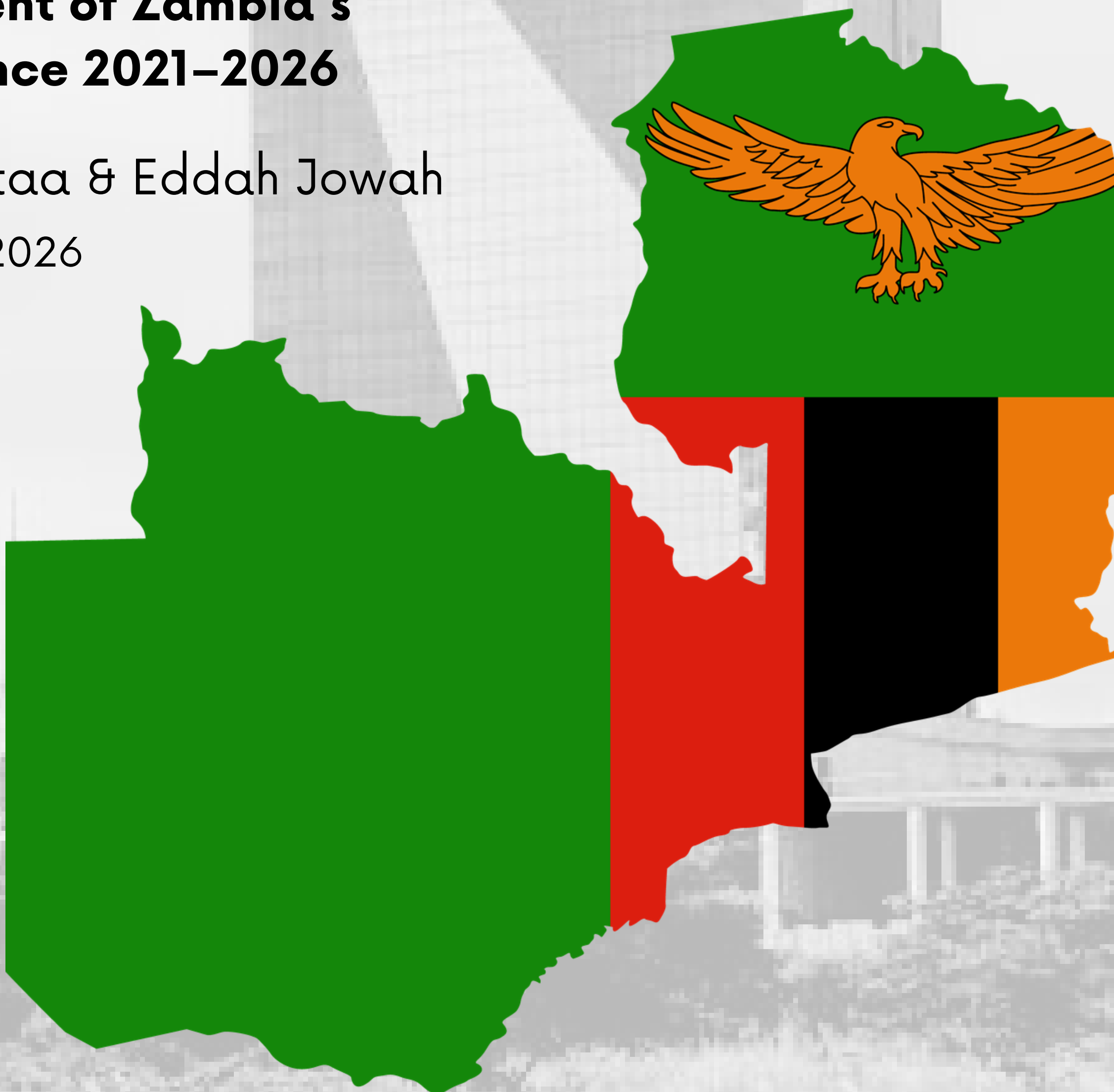


TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TEXTBOXES

LIST OF ANNEXES

KEY ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
ACW	African Citizens Watch
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
COP26	26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Conference
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
ECZ	Electoral Commission of Zambia
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Court
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
G20	Group of Twenty
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
K	Zambian Kwacha
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRC	Minerals Regulation Commission
NAPSA	National Pension Scheme Authority
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCT	Social Cash Transfer
TEVET	Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UPND	United Party for National Development
US$	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
ZAFFICO	Zambia Forestry and Forest Industry Corporation
ZAMMSA	Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency
ZAMPOST	Zambia Postal Services Corporation
ZAWAPA	Zambia Wake-up Party
ZDSP	Zambia Devolution Support Programme
ZEMA	Zambia Environmental Management Agency

INTRODUCTION

The 2026 Assessment Report is a comprehensive assessment of the extent to which the Government of Zambia fulfilled its commitments made during the general elections held in 2021. The report tracks the conversion of electoral promises into policy actions, programmes, legislative reforms, and measurable development outcomes during the United Party for National Development's (UPND) five-year term using data compiled on the Zambia Citizens Watch Tracker, a public accountability platform developed under the African Citizens Watch initiative.

It is based on data collected since 2021. The Tracker systematically monitors government performance against commitments contained in the UPND 2021 Election Manifesto and subsequent major policy pronouncements made during the administration's tenure. The Tracker seeks to (i) serve as an ongoing reminder to office holders of the promises they have made to the electorate and (ii) generate evidence that citizens, policymakers, researchers, civil society organisations, and development partners can utilise to assess the actual performance of government.

The African Citizens Watch (ACW) platform is an independent regional governance accountability initiative that tracks government performance across five African countries: Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The platform was established by SIVIO Institute to strengthen democratic accountability, transparency, and evidence-based public participation in government processes.

In the run-up to the elections, the UPND, under President Hakainde Hichilema, developed a campaign manifesto. The Tracker identified 248 promises from the manifesto and then organised these promises into five thematic sectors: Economy (143 promises), Governance (49 promises), Social Services (38 promises), Climate Change (12 promises), and Corruption (6 promises). Over the five years, the Tracker recorded 694 government actions aimed at fulfilling these commitments, allowing for systematic evaluation of implementation progress across sectors. The assessment measures whether promises have been Implemented, remain In Progress, have been Modified, have Not Commenced, or have been Broken.

Beyond measuring promise fulfilment, this report seeks to strengthen democratic governance by providing citizens with objective information on government performance over the past five years. By documenting achievements, identifying implementation gaps, and analysing factors that influenced policy delivery, the report contributes to informed public discourse and promotes greater accountability between elected leaders and citizens. Ultimately, the Barometer serves as an important democratic tool for evaluating governance performance and understanding the broader implications of policy choices on Zambia's development trajectory.

Following this introduction, the report provides a comprehensive background and contextual analysis of the political, economic, social, governance, and environmental factors that shaped policymaking and implementation during the government's five years in office (2021–2026).

The report then outlines the methodology underpinning the Zambia Citizens Watch Tracker and the criteria used to assess promise fulfilment. This section explains the data sources, verification processes, scoring framework, and analytical approach employed in tracking government commitments and implementation progress.

The core of the report assesses government performance across the five thematic sectors contained in the Tracker: Economy, Governance, Corruption, Climate Change, and Social Services. Each section examines the status of promises, key achievements, implementation gaps, and emerging trends over the review period. To enrich the analysis and provide deeper insights into government performance, the report incorporates selected case studies that highlight notable successes, persistent challenges, and lessons arising from specific policy interventions.

The report concludes by synthesising the major findings and identifying key lessons emerging from the government's five-year implementation experience. These lessons provide important reflections on policy delivery, governance effectiveness, accountability, and the factors that either enabled or constrained the fulfilment of electoral promises.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The period between 2021 and 2026 represents one of the most significant and transformative phases in Zambia's recent political and economic history. Following the August 2021 general elections, the UPND, under the leadership of President Hakainde Hichilema, assumed office after securing a decisive electoral victory with 59% of the national vote (Lusaka Times, 2021).

The election outcome reflected widespread public demand for economic recovery, improved governance, reduced corruption, greater democratic freedoms, and enhanced opportunities for citizens, particularly young people who constitute the majority of Zambia's population. The transition marked the end of a decade of Patriotic Front rule and ushered in what the new administration termed the "New Dawn" government (Al Jazeera, 2021).

The new administration inherited substantial economic challenges. Zambia was emerging from a sovereign debt default declared in 2020, with public debt reaching an estimated 120–130% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that year (African Forum and Network on Debt and Development [AFRODAD], 2024), significantly constraining fiscal space. Since President Hakainde Hichilema took office in August 2021, the government has prioritised debt restructuring and fiscal consolidation, supported by an International Monetary Fund (IMF) Extended Credit Facility approved in 2022 (Chombo & Chinanda, 2024). A 2024 agreement covering over 90% of Zambia's outstanding Eurobonds helped bring the debt-to-GDP ratio down to 66.4% by 2024 (Trading Economics, 2025), although the underlying debt stock has not shrunk in nominal terms; the improvement mainly reflects restructured terms and fiscal consolidation rather than debt repayment (Chombo & Chinanda, 2024). By 2026, Zambia had successfully concluded agreements with most of its bilateral and private creditors, with debt restructuring estimated to be over 90% complete, significantly improving prospects for long-term fiscal sustainability and macroeconomic stability (Chombo & Chinanda, 2024).

The implementation of government promises was also affected by international shocks beyond Zambia's control. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 disrupted global food, fuel and fertiliser markets. Energy prices went on to surge by about 60% for the year as a whole, before easing through 2023–2025 as supply adjusted (World Bank, 2022). Food prices followed a similar pattern: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Food Price Index reached a record annual average in 2022, then eased over the following two years, falling to 122.0 points in 2024 (FAO, 2025), before climbing again to 127.2 points in 2025 (FAO, 2026a). By June 2026, the index stood at 130.3 points, still about 19% below its March 2022 peak, but rising again as a fresh energy shock, driven by the war in the Middle East, pushed global energy prices up by a projected 24% for the year (World Bank, 2026; FAO, 2026b)

These shocks increased Zambia's cost of living and placed pressure on public finances. In 2025, the tensions between the United States and Iran also raised concerns over global oil supplies and inflation, especially because the Strait of Hormuz remains a critical route for world oil flows (International Energy Agency, 2025). Tensions escalated into the 2026 Iran War, beginning February 28, when US forces launched strikes alongside Israel. Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz on March 4, blocking roughly one-fifth of global oil shipments until the closure was paused on April 17, following a ceasefire agreement on 7 and 8 April 2026. The brief but severe disruption caused unprecedented oil market volatility and acute inflationary pressures worldwide (Al Jazeera, 2026).

At the same time, Zambia benefited from favourable developments in international commodity markets, particularly the recovery and strengthening of global copper prices. Average copper prices rose from about US$9,317 per metric tonne in 2021 to roughly US$9,500–10,000 in 2025, while 2026 market projections point to a further increase to around US$10,500–US$12,600 (World Bank, 2021; Belder, 2026). Given Zambia's position as one of Africa's leading copper producers, this favourable price environment supported export earnings, foreign-exchange inflows, investor confidence and renewed mining-sector investment. Higher copper receipts also helped strengthen the Kwacha during parts of the review period and contributed to easing imported inflation pressures, although these gains were partly offset by global fuel, food and financing shocks (Hiney, 2026).

Climate-related shocks also significantly shaped government performance. The severe El Niño-induced drought experienced during 2023 and 2024 adversely affected agricultural production, water availability, and hydroelectric power generation. Zambia experienced one of its worst electricity crises in recent history, resulting in prolonged load shedding that negatively affected businesses, households, and public institutions. Despite these challenges, government interventions, favourable rainfall patterns in subsequent seasons, and expanded support to farmers contributed to improved agricultural output and a bumper harvest in parts of the country, helping to enhance food security and moderate food inflation (Musokotwane, 2025).

Governance reforms also influenced policy implementation. The decentralisation agenda gained momentum through the expansion of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), increased local government financing, and efforts to reduce political cadre control in public markets and bus stations. These reforms were widely viewed as contributing to improved order, transparency, and citizen participation at local levels. However, concerns emerged regarding civic space and democratic governance.

Civil society organisations increasingly raised concerns about proposed legal reforms, including the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) Bill, perceived restrictions on freedoms of association and expression, and controversies surrounding constitutional reform processes, particularly Constitution Amendment Bill No. 7 of 2025. Questions also arose regarding judicial independence and transparency in the process of appointing judges to superior courts. Various governance and human rights-focused organisations argued that these developments required broader consultation and stronger safeguards to protect democratic accountability, constitutionalism, and citizen participation. These debates highlighted ongoing tensions between governance reform efforts and concerns regarding democratic freedoms and civic engagement (CIVICUS, 2025; Africa Press - Zambia, 2025; Transparency International Zambia, 2025).

Furthermore, reductions in international development assistance, particularly cuts in United States aid programmes, created additional challenges for sectors such as health and social protection that have historically relied on donor financing. The government responded by increasing domestic resource allocations in critical sectors, signalling a growing emphasis on self-reliance and domestic financing of development programmes. (Okebiorun, 2025).

Taken together, these domestic and international factors significantly shaped the environment within which government promises were implemented. While some developments created opportunities for accelerated reform and economic recovery, others imposed constraints that affected the pace and extent of implementation. These contextual dynamics provide an essential basis for a balanced and evidence-based assessment of government performance between 2021 and 2026.

METHODOLOGY

The 2026 Zambia Barometer assesses the performance of the government over its five years in office (2021–2026) using the Zambia Citizens Watch Tracker, a data-driven monitoring framework developed under the ACW platform. The methodology combines systematic policy tracking, independent verification, and evidence-based scoring to evaluate the extent to which government commitments have been translated into measurable policy actions, institutional reforms, and tangible development outcomes. The approach emphasises transparency, consistency, objectivity, and comparability, enabling government performance to be assessed against publicly stated commitments rather than subjective opinion.

The primary source of commitments tracked in this report is the UPND 2021 Election Manifesto, which formed the basis of the government's electoral mandate. Where significant policy pronouncements made during the government's term complemented or expanded manifesto commitments, these were incorporated into the Tracker to provide a comprehensive assessment of government performance. In total, 248 commitments were tracked and organised into five thematic sectors: Economy, Governance, Corruption, Social Services, and Climate Change.

Government actions undertaken in fulfilment of these commitments were monitored continuously throughout the review period using a wide range of publicly available and verifiable sources. These include official publications from the Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, parliamentary records, statutory instruments, presidential speeches, ministerial statements, annual budgets, national development reports, policy documents, and official government websites. Additional evidence was obtained from local and international media organisations, reports published by international organisations and development partners, think tanks, universities, research institutions, and civil society organisations. All reported actions were subjected to a rigorous process of triangulation, whereby information was verified across multiple credible sources before being entered into the Zambia Citizens Watch Tracker. This process ensured that the assessment was based on independently verifiable evidence rather than isolated announcements or unsubstantiated claims.

To strengthen the credibility of the assessment, evidence was drawn from four broad categories of sources (see Annex 1).

An action is recorded only where a set of activities is led by government, including in partnership with the private sector, multilateral agencies or bilateral partners and involves a direct government contribution. The Tracker will only record published developments using the sources mentioned in the annex; if the government has done something but unfortunately did not publish it, the Tracker will not recognise the action.

We have established the five categories of promise assessment as explained in Table 1.

All reported actions were triangulated and fact-checked across multiple sources before being recorded on the Zambia Citizens Watch Tracker. Each promise is assigned a status and corresponding score based on its implementation progress (see Table 1).

Table 1: Overview of Promise Assessment

STATUS	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
Implemented	Promise has been substantially fulfilled according to available evidence	14
In Progress	Measurable implementation but requires additional action before full completion	1-13
Modified	Government altered the implementation approach while retaining the original policy objective	1-13
Broken	Instances where government actions contradicted or abandoned the original promise	0
Not Commenced	No verifiable implementation activity had been undertaken	0

Commitments classified as In Progress or Modified were evaluated using a structured scoring framework designed to measure both the extent and quality of implementation. The framework assessed whether the government had introduced enabling legal and regulatory reforms, established institutional arrangements, allocated financial resources, implemented programmes, promoted inter-institutional coordination, and achieved measurable implementation milestones (see Table 3). This approach ensures that progress is assessed not merely by the number of actions undertaken, but by the degree to which those actions contribute to fulfilling the original commitment.

Table 2: Promise Assessment Scoring Framework

ASSESSMENT INDICATOR	SCORE
New strategy or programme introduced	1
Positive policy reform implemented or restrictive policy barriers removed	2
Existing legal framework supports implementation or new legislation enacted	1
Budget allocation made	1
Responsible institution established or strengthened	1
Cross-ministry or agency collaboration established	1
Implementation progressing within planned timelines	2
Tangible implementation outcomes achieved	5
Maximum Score	**14**

The scoring framework evaluates whether:

- a new strategy or programme has been introduced;
- positive policy reforms have been implemented;
- restrictive policy barriers have been removed;
- the commitment is supported by an appropriate legal framework;
- new legislation has been enacted where necessary;
- financial resources have been allocated;
- responsible institutions have been established or strengthened;
- collaboration exists across relevant ministries and agencies;
- implementation activities are progressing according to planned timelines; and
- tangible implementation outcomes have been achieved.

Individual promise scores were aggregated to generate average scores for each thematic sector. Sector performance was subsequently calculated by averaging the scores of all commitments within that sector, enabling comparisons across policy areas. The overall government performance score was derived by combining the sectoral averages, thereby providing a comprehensive measure of progress made in implementing commitments over the period under review.

Although the methodology provides a robust and transparent framework for assessing government performance, it is limited to actions that are publicly documented and capable of independent verification. Government activities that were undertaken but not publicly reported or supported by credible evidence could not be included in the assessment. The methodology remains an objective, evidence-based, and replicable approach for evaluating government performance and promoting accountability, transparency, and informed public dialogue on policy implementation in Zambia.

OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

During the five years under review, a total of 694 government actions were recorded across five thematic sectors: Economy, Governance, Corruption, Social Services and Climate Change. These actions include policy reforms, legislation, institutional reforms, budgetary allocations, infrastructure development, and programme implementation undertaken to fulfil government commitments. Since August 2021, the government has made moderate progress in implementing its commitments during its five years in office, achieving an overall Assessment Score of 57% (see Figure 1).

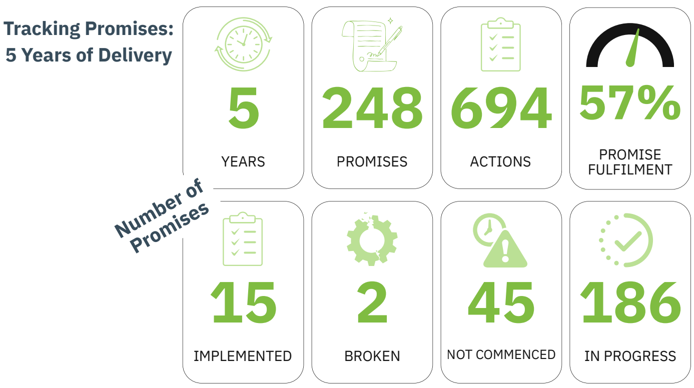


Figure 1: Overall Performance

Out of the 248 promises assessed, 15 promises (6%) had been fully Implemented by June 2026. A further 186 promises (75%) were classified as In Progress, indicating that implementation had commenced across most policy areas, although further work is required before these commitments can be considered complete. In contrast, 45 promises (18%) had Not Commenced, while two promises were classified as Broken. During the assessment period, the Tracker recorded 694 individual actions undertaken by the government. The findings indicate that the government has made measurable progress in translating manifesto commitments into action, with implementation underway for three-quarters of all promises. However, greater effort will be required to accelerate implementation, complete ongoing reforms, and convert commitments into fully implemented outcomes that deliver tangible benefits for citizens, should UPND be re-elected into office.

Government performance varied across the five sectors assessed in this report (see Table 3). The differences largely reflect the complexity of reforms, levels of investment, institutional capacity, and the pace of implementation within each policy area. Climate Change recorded the highest assessment score at 64%, despite having the fewest promises and government actions. Almost all commitments in the sector were under implementation, reflecting consistent progress in climate policy and environmental management.

The Social Services sector ranked second with an assessment score of 61% and recorded 183 government actions, making it the second most active implementation area after the Economy. It also recorded the highest proportion of Implemented promises (13%), with progress across education, health and nutrition, social protection, pension reforms, and water and sanitation.

Table 3: Government Performance by Sector

Sector	# of Promises	# of Actions	Percent of Promises					Assessment Score
			Not Commenced	In Progress	Implemented	Broken	Modified	
Economy	143	324	21%	75%	4%	0%	0%	52%
Governance	49	146	22%	67%	6%	4%	0%	49%
Corruption	6	16	17%	67%	17%	0%	0%	58%
Climate Change	12	25	8%	92%	0%	0%	0%	64%
Social Services	38	183	5%	82%	13%	0%	0%	61%
Total	**248**	**694**	**18%**	**75%**	**6%**	**1%**	**0%**	**57%**

The Corruption sector achieved an assessment score of 58%, recording one Implemented promise while most commitments remained In Progress, reflecting continued efforts to strengthen accountability and the rule of law.

The Economy sector recorded an assessment score of 52%. Although it ranked fourth overall, it remained the government's largest implementation area, accounting for 143 promises and 324 government actions. The sector also recorded the highest number of Implemented promises, although many commitments require longer implementation periods.

The Governance sector recorded the lowest assessment score at 49%. While three promises had been fully Implemented, most commitments were still In Progress, and two promises were classified as Broken, indicating that implementation of governance reforms has been comparatively slower.

Economy

The largest number of promises in the UPND Manifesto was related to the Economy, accounting for 143 (58%) of the 248 promises. The government embarked on a total of 324 government actions to fulfil the economy-focused promises. Of the 143 promises, six were fully Implemented, 107 were In Progress at the time of writing, and 30 had Not Commenced. No economic promise was classified as Broken. The sector achieved an assessment score of 52%, indicating moderate progress in implementing economic commitments (see Figure 2).

Although the government initiated implementation across almost three-quarters of its economic commitments, only 4% had been fully Implemented by June 2026. The findings suggest that while important policy reforms and programmes have been introduced, greater effort is required to translate ongoing initiatives into completed outcomes that generate sustainable economic growth, create employment opportunities, strengthen businesses, improve agricultural productivity and enhance citizens' livelihoods.

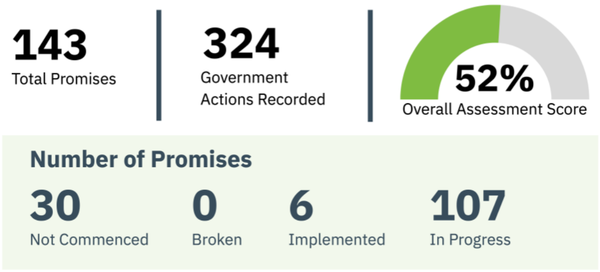


Figure 2: Overall Economy Sector Performance

The Economy sector was assessed across 16 sub-sectors, reflecting the broad range of government commitments aimed at promoting economic growth, job creation and private sector development. These sub-sectors include Agriculture and Agro-processing, Arts and Culture, Debt and Expenditure Management, Economic Management, Energy, Financial Services, Land Policy Planning, Manufacturing, Mining, Private Sector Development, Procurement, Science and Technology, Tax Reforms, Tourism, Trade Policy Reforms, and Transport and Logistics. As shown in Table 4, progress varied considerably across these areas, with some sub-sectors recording stronger implementation than others.

Table 4: Performance by Economic Sub-sector

Sub-sector	Promises	Actions	Implemented	Not Commenced	In Progress	Assessment Score
Agriculture and Agro processing	28	74	1	6	21	51%
Arts and Culture	3	2	0	1	2	40%
Debt and Expenditure Management	6	9	1	0	5	68%
Economic Management	13	51	1	1	11	60%
Energy	9	37	0	1	8	52%
Financial Services	6	8	2	1	3	65%
Land Policy Planning	7	9	0	3	4	41%
Manufacturing	5	4	0	1	4	66%
Mining	8	22	0	1	7	57%
Private Sector Development	12	28	0	4	8	44%
Procurement	6	3	0	3	3	37%
Science and Technology	7	18	0	0	7	67%
Tax Reforms	7	5	0	3	4	43%
Tourism	13	24	1	1	11	61%
Trade Policy Reforms	5	3	0	2	3	37%
Transport and Logistics	8	27	0	2	6	47%
Total	**143**	**324**	**6**	**30**	**107**	**52%**

Debt and Expenditure Management recorded the highest assessment score at 68%, followed by Science and Technology (67%), Manufacturing (66%), and Financial Services (65%). Tourism (61%) and Economic Management (60%) also recorded relatively strong progress, while Mining (57%) and Energy (52%) achieved moderate scores.

Agriculture and Agro-processing remained the largest sub-sector, accounting for 28 promises and 74 government actions, more than any other economic area. Despite this high level of implementation activity, the sub-sector recorded a moderate assessment score of 51%, indicating that most commitments remain In Progress. The sub-sector also recorded the highest number of government actions, reflecting sustained investment in agricultural transformation and food security.

The lowest-performing sub-sectors were Procurement and Trade Policy Reforms, both with assessment scores of 37%, followed by Arts and Culture (40%), Land Policy Planning (41%), Tax Reforms (43%), Private Sector Development (44%), and Transport and Logistics (47%). This indicates that the government has initiated reforms across all areas of the economy, although implementation has progressed at different rates.

Annex 2 provides examples of key actions undertaken by the government in the period under review.

Textbox 1

REBUILDING INTERNATIONAL RESERVES THROUGH DEBT RESTRUCTURING AND MACROECONOMIC REFORMS

One of the most significant actions recorded under the Economic Management sub-sector is the implementation of the promise to "Increase international reserves to create a buffer to cushion the economy against external shocks." Although this promise is classified as In Progress, the government has undertaken a series of debt restructuring and reserve accumulation measures aimed at restoring macroeconomic stability, strengthening foreign exchange reserves, and improving the country's resilience to external economic shocks.

Significant progress has been recorded since 2024. The government concluded several debt restructuring agreements with bilateral and commercial creditors while strengthening international financial partnerships. On 16 December 2024, France signed a debt restructuring agreement with Zambia (Open Zambia, 2024), paving the way for similar agreements with other official creditors under the Group of Twenty (G20) Common Framework. In March 2025, the government reported that Zambia's gross international reserves had reached a record US$4.31 billion by the end of December 2024 (Daba Finance, 2025), supported largely by multilateral financial inflows.

The government continued to make progress during 2025 by concluding additional debt restructuring agreements. On 8 May 2025, a restructuring agreement covering approximately US$320 million in central government debt and US$15 million owed by Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation Limited was signed with the Export-Import Bank of India.

On 10 June 2025, Zambia and the International Monetary Fund reached a staff-level agreement, pending final approvals, to unlock US$194 million in financing (Sichula, 2025b), confirming that Zambia had reached a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund, paving the way for additional financing to support fiscal reforms, macroeconomic stability and sustainable economic growth.

The most recent milestone was recorded on 29 May 2026, when Zambia initiated a landmark debt-for-energy conversion with the support of the African Development Bank (Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2026). The government launched a tender offer to repurchase US$1.36 billion of its 2053 sovereign notes, supported by a US$600 million African Development Bank loan on concessional terms together with government resources. The operation was designed to reduce debt servicing costs while creating fiscal space to strengthen Zambia's energy sector and broader economic recovery.

These reforms have important implications for ordinary Zambians. Higher international reserves and successful debt restructuring improve the country's ability to pay for essential imports such as fuel, medicines and agricultural inputs while reducing pressure on the exchange rate. Greater macroeconomic stability can help contain inflation, support a more stable cost of living, improve investor confidence and create conditions for increased private sector investment and job creation. In addition, reducing debt servicing obligations creates fiscal space for the government to invest more resources in health, education, infrastructure and social protection programmes that directly benefit citizens.

Governance

A total of 49 out of the 248 total promises made in the UPND manifesto were focused on governance issues. Between August 2021 and June 2026, a total of 146 government actions were recorded against 49 governance promises. Of these promises, three were Implemented, 33 were In Progress, 11 had Not Commenced, and two were Broken. The governance sector received an overall assessment score of 49%, making it the lowest performing of the five sectors assessed in this report (see Figure 3).

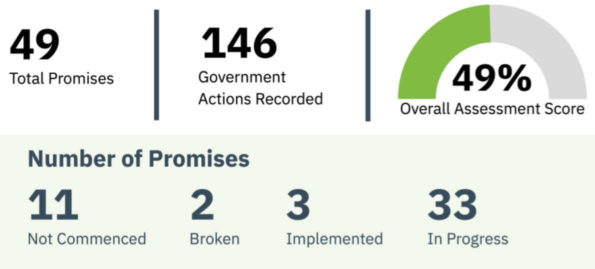


Figure 3: Overall Governance Sector Performance

The strongest progress was recorded in Decentralisation and Foreign Policy, where the government implemented reforms aimed at strengthening local governance, expanding citizen participation and enhancing Zambia's engagement in regional and international affairs. On the other hand, the promises related to the Separation of Powers recorded the lowest assessment score within the Governance sector.

The government introduced important reforms, including decentralisation measures, the Public Gatherings Bill, electoral reforms and digital public service initiatives. However, 11 promises had Not Commenced, while the promises to "Guarantee the independence of the judiciary" and "Depoliticise the public service and improve leadership, managerial skills and officials' mindsets" were classified as Broken. Although three governance promises were fully implemented during the period under review, significant reforms relating to judicial independence, electoral institutions, parliamentary autonomy, media reform and the separation of powers remain incomplete. Improving performance in these areas will be critical to strengthening democratic governance, institutional accountability and public confidence in state institutions.

Performance differed considerably across the governance sub-sectors. Decentralisation and Foreign Policy were the strongest-performing sub-sectors, each recording an assessment score of 65%. Decentralisation recorded one Implemented promise, while all three Foreign Policy promises remained In Progress. The Government sub-sector scored 56%, recording one Implemented promise, nine In Progress, and one Not Commenced. Public Order followed with a score of 54%, while Public Service achieved 49%, with one Implemented promise, one In Progress, one Broken and one Not Commenced.

Lower levels of performance were recorded in Electoral Reforms (44%), Law, Justice and Security (42%), and Media Reforms (41%). Separation of Powers remained the weakest-performing sub-sector, with a score of 25%. Of its 13 promises, six were In Progress, six had Not Commenced, and one was classified as Broken. The limited progress in this sub-sector, particularly on commitments relating to judicial independence and institutional checks and balances, significantly reduced the overall Governance sector score.

Table 5: Governance Performance by Sub-sector

Sub-sector	Promises	Actions	Implemented	Broken	Not Commenced	In Progress	Assessment Score
Decentralisation	4	9	1	0	0	3	65%
Foreign Policy	3	16	0	0	0	3	65%
Government	11	27	1	0	1	9	56%
Public Order	2	2	0	0	0	2	54%
Public Service	4	15	1	1	1	1	49%
Electoral Reforms	3	4	0	0	1	2	44%
Law, Justice and Security	7	53	0	0	2	5	42%
Media Reforms	2	9	0	0	0	2	41%
Separation of Powers	13	11	0	1	6	6	25%
Total	**49**	**146**	**3**	**2**	**11**	**33**	**49%**

Textbox 2

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE UNDER STRAIN: SECURITY OF TENURE AND THE SEPARATION OF POWERS

The promise to "Guarantee the independence of the judiciary" is one of the two governance promises classified as Broken. The promise is classified as Broken following the action in which 'President Hakainde Hichilema removed two judges from their positions as judges of the Constitutional Court' in 2022. The promise falls under the Separation of Powers sub-sector, which recorded the lowest performance of all governance sub-sectors, achieving an assessment score of only 25%.

The classification stems from developments surrounding the removal of two judges following recommendations made by the Judicial Complaints Commission. Concerns were raised by legal practitioners and governance stakeholders that the way judges were removed had weakened the constitutional principle of security of tenure (Africa Press - Zambia, 2022). Security of tenure is a fundamental safeguard designed to protect judges from arbitrary removal and to enable them to make decisions independently, free from political or executive pressure.

Annex 3 provides examples of key actions undertaken by the government in the period under review.

Corruption

The Corruption sector accounted for six of all the promises made. The promises in this sector are aimed at promoting transparency, strengthening anti-corruption institutions and ensuring that public resources are managed in the public interest.

Between August 2021 and June 2026, a total of 16 government actions were recorded against six manifesto promises, resulting in one promise Implemented, four In Progress, and one promise that had Not Commenced. The sector achieved an overall assessment score of 58%, making it the third-best performing sector (see Figure 4).

The government focused much of its effort on strengthening the Economic and Financial Crimes Court (EFCC), pursuing asset recovery through Operation Recovery, introducing unexplained wealth proceedings and expanding public access to information through the Access to Information Act. Although the sector contained relatively few promises, the actions recorded demonstrate continued efforts to strengthen anti-corruption institutions, recover public assets, improve transparency and support the investigation and prosecution of corruption.

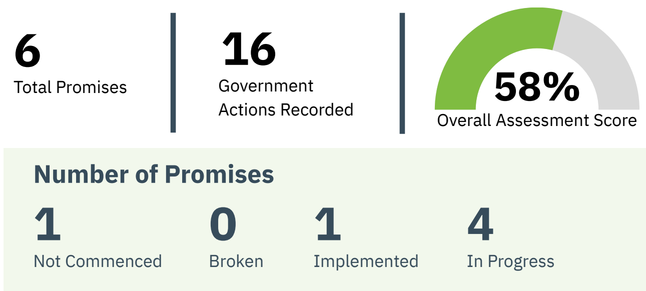


Figure 4: Overall Corruption Sector Performance

The government carried out reforms across almost all corruption-related commitments during the review period. Most actions focused on strengthening institutions responsible for combating corruption, prosecuting economic crimes, recovering public assets and improving public access to information.

Annex 4 provides examples of key actions undertaken by the government in the period under review.

Table 6: Corruption Sector Performance by Sub-sector

Sub-sector	Promises	Actions	Implemented	Broken	Not Commenced	In Progress	Assessment Score
Corruption	6	16	1	0	1	4	58%
Total	**6**	**16**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**4**	**58%**

Textbox 3

OPERATIONALISATION OF ZAMBIA'S FIRST FAST-TRACK ANTI-CORRUPTION COURTS

One of the strongest actions recorded in the Corruption sector is the implementation of the promise "Establish fast-track anti-corruption courts." The first major milestone was achieved on 11 January 2022, when Chief Justice Mumba Malila signed the Statutory Instrument No. 5 of 2022 establishing the EFCC, creating a specialised court to hear corruption, financial crime and asset recovery cases. The establishment of the court marked a significant institutional reform aimed at strengthening Zambia's capacity to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate complex economic and financial crimes.

The court became operational soon after its establishment and began handling high-profile corruption cases. On 2 March 2022, the EFCC assumed jurisdiction over the theft case involving former Zambia Postal Services Corporation (ZAMPOST) senior officials (News Diggers Media, 2024), demonstrating that the specialised court was operational and actively hearing economic crime cases.

Since then, the Court has heard a growing volume of cases spanning three broad categories.

The first category is corruption-related convictions of public officials and their associates: former ZAMPOST Postmaster General Macpherson Chanda and Director of Finance Best Mwaiche were convicted and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for the unlawful diversion of over K300 million in Social Cash Transfer funds, with the conviction later upheld on appeal by the EFCC's High Court Division in March 2024 (News Diggers Media, 2024); former Foreign Affairs Minister Joseph Malanji and former Treasury Secretary Fredson Yamba were convicted in September 2025 in the "helicopter corruption trial," involving the misappropriation of roughly K108 million (Basel Institute on Governance, 2025); and Wanziya Chirwa, wife of former Home Affairs Minister Stephen Kampyongo, was convicted on corruption-related charges in September 2024 (Sichula, 2024).

The second category is asset recovery and forfeiture proceedings against politically exposed persons, including the forfeiture of a farm belonging to Tasila Lungu, the forfeiture of 15 luxury properties belonging to former First Lady Esther Nyawa Lungu (National Prosecuting Authority [NPA], 2024a), recovery proceedings against former Defence Minister Geoffrey Bwalya Mwamba (Lusaka Times, 2024b), and a landmark ruling in Anti-Corruption Commission v. Pittscon Zambia Limited & Seven Others (NPA, 2024b), which restated international standards on non-conviction-based forfeiture.

The third category reflects the Court's expanding docket beyond high-profile political corruption into broader financial crime: two Zambia Police officers were convicted in early 2025 for possessing 24,478 forged K100 notes (NPA, 2025); the Court ordered the forfeiture of 43,903 mukula logs determined to be illegally harvested (Zambia Monitor, 2025); and, most recently, the EFCC's High Court Division imposed prison sentences on the directors of the collapsed Kamono Farming Initiatives Ponzi scheme in June 2026 (Zambian Observer, 2026).

Taken together, this body of cases demonstrates that the Court's activity has moved well beyond its initial, high-profile prosecutions to encompass a steady stream of convictions, forfeitures and precedent-setting rulings across the corruption, asset-recovery and financial crime space.

The establishment of the EFCC is significant because corruption and financial crimes often involve complex investigations requiring specialised judicial expertise. By creating a dedicated court, the government sought to improve the efficiency, consistency and timeliness of corruption prosecutions while strengthening public confidence in the administration of justice. The court has also enhanced the government's capacity to recover assets believed to have been acquired through corrupt practices, ensuring that public resources can be returned to the State.

This promise is classified as Implemented because the government successfully established the specialised court and made it operational during the review period. The subsequent convictions, asset forfeitures and financial crime judgments demonstrate that the institution has moved beyond its legal establishment to actively performing the functions for which it was created. The EFCC therefore represents one of the clearest examples of a manifesto commitment progressing from institutional reform to practical implementation in Zambia's fight against corruption.

Climate Change

Climate Change-related promises account for 5% of total commitments. A total of 12 promises were made. The promises focus on climate adaptation, environmental protection, forestry, disaster risk management, sustainable agriculture and climate finance. The government carried out 25 actions towards the implementation of 12 manifesto promises. By the end of June 2026, 11 promises were In Progress, while one had Not Commenced. None of the promises had been fully Implemented or Broken. The sector achieved an overall assessment score of 64%, making it the best-performing sector (see Figure 5). The strongest progress was recorded in climate policy integration, environmental management, climate-smart agriculture, forestry and institutional development.

Despite this positive performance, none of the promises had reached full implementation. Most promises remained In Progress. The only promise that had Not Commenced was "Strengthen the Zambia Environmental Management Agency."

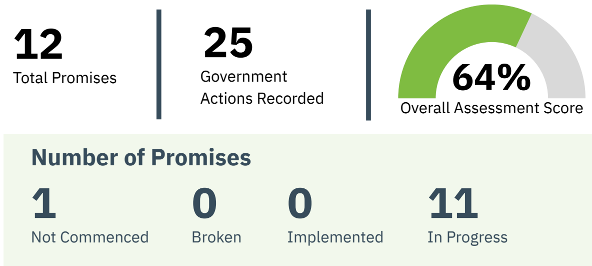


Figure 5: Overall Climate Change Sector Performance

Annex 5 provides examples of key actions undertaken by the government in the period under review.

Textbox 4

BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE THROUGH INTEGRATED POLICY ACTIONS

One of the strongest-performing promises in the Climate Change sector is "Integrate climate action into sector strategies." Between August 2021 and June 2026, four government actions were recorded under this promise, reflecting sustained efforts to mainstream climate change into national policies, forestry management, environmental governance, and regional cooperation.

The first major action was undertaken in September 2021, when the government suspended the harvesting and export of Mukula trees (Meke, 2021). The decision was intended to strengthen forest conservation, curb illegal logging, and allow for a review of the environmental and economic impacts of the timber trade. By temporarily halting harvesting and exports, the government sought to protect one of Zambia's most threatened indigenous tree species while promoting more sustainable forest resource management.

This was followed in November 2021, when Zambia signed the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use during the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) Climate Conference in Glasgow (Mwansa, 2021). Through this international commitment, the government pledged to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030, aligning Zambia's forest management policies with global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve biodiversity, and promote sustainable land use.

In May 2022, the government lifted the suspension on the issuance of timber export permits following the introduction of revised regulatory measures intended to strengthen oversight of the forestry sector (Xinhua, 2022). The decision reflected an effort to balance environmental protection with sustainable utilisation of forest resources by allowing regulated timber exports while maintaining stronger monitoring and compliance mechanisms.

Another important milestone was achieved in June 2022, when Zambia, together with Angola, Botswana, and Namibia, completed the Transboundary Governance of the Kwando/Cuando River Basin initiative (Pallett et al., 2022). The programme strengthened cooperation among the four riparian states in the sustainable management of shared water resources and ecosystems increasingly threatened by climate change. It established a framework for integrated river basin management, enhancing regional collaboration on water security, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem protection, and climate resilience.

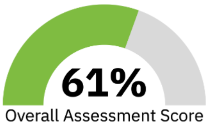
Although notable progress has been made, the promise remains In Progress because continued implementation is required to ensure climate action is fully integrated across agriculture, forestry, infrastructure, mining, water resources, and other sectors. Sustained policy implementation, stronger environmental governance, and regional cooperation will be essential to improving resilience, protecting natural ecosystems, and supporting sustainable development in the face of future climate challenges.

Social Services

Social Services accounts for 15% of all promises under this cluster, representing 38 out of 248 commitments. Of these, five promises were Implemented, 31 were In Progress, and two had Not Commenced. A total of 183 actions were undertaken by the government. The sector achieved an assessment score of 61%, making it the second-best performing sector after Climate Change (see Figure 6).

38 Total Promises

183 Government Actions Recorded



Number of Promises

2	0	5	31
Not Commenced	Broken	Implemented	In Progress

Figure 6: Overall Social Services Performance

The strongest performance was recorded in Youth, Women and Persons with Disabilities, followed by Social Protection and Water and Sanitation. Education and Health and Nutrition also recorded steady progress through increased investment, recruitment and expansion of public services (See Table 14). Although most commitments remain In Progress, the findings indicate that the government has made sustained progress in expanding access to essential social services while strengthening programmes that support vulnerable groups.

Performance varied across the seven sub-sectors. Youth, Women and Persons with Disabilities recorded the highest score (72%), followed by Social Protection (68%), Water and Sanitation (63%), and both Education and Health and Nutrition, which each scored 60%. Although Health and Nutrition recorded the highest number of government actions (49), Youth, Women and Persons with Disabilities achieved the highest overall performance score. Sports and Recreation recorded the lowest score (50%), while Pension Reforms achieved 53% (see Table 14).

The actions recorded across the sector show that the government prioritised strengthening and expanding existing public services through increased investment, recruitment, infrastructure development and programme implementation. With five promises fully Implemented and 31 remaining In Progress, this indicates continued progress in delivering social services, while highlighting the need to complete the outstanding commitments to achieve broader improvements in education, health, social protection and community wellbeing.

Annex 6 provides examples of key actions undertaken by government in the period under review.

Table 7: Performance by Social Services Sub-sector

Sub-sector	Promises	Actions	Implemented	Not Commenced	In Progress	Assessment Score
Education	13	42	1	1	11	60%
Health and Nutrition	7	49	1	0	6	60%
Pension Reforms	6	12	2	1	3	53%
Social Protection	2	21	1	0	1	68%
Sports and Recreation	2	5	0	0	2	50%
Water and Sanitation	3	7	0	0	3	63%
Youth, Women and Persons with Disabilities	5	47	0	0	5	72%
Total	**38**	**183**	**5**	**2**	**31**	**61%**

Textbox 5

DELIVERING PENSION REFORM THROUGH THE NAPSA PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL SCHEME

One of the most significant achievements recorded in the Social Services sector is the implementation of the promise to "Introduce partial withdrawal of pension contributions for specific purposes." This promise was fulfilled through the amendment of the National Pension Scheme Act, allowing eligible National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) members to make a one-time partial withdrawal of up to 20% of their pension contributions before retirement. The reform was introduced to give contributors greater flexibility to use part of their savings for important personal and economic needs while continuing to save for retirement.

The policy has had a significant impact since it came into effect in April 2023. NAPSA has paid out more than K10 billion in partial withdrawals since the programme was introduced (Mbewe, 2025). By April 2025, 487,389 eligible members had benefited from the scheme, receiving a combined K10.1 billion. Of this amount, K6 billion represented members' original contributions, while K4.1 billion came from interest and indexation earned on their savings. The figures also show that 76,980 women received K1.7 billion, while 104,293 young people accessed K1.2 billion through the programme.

The government introduced these changes to allow workers to access part of their pension savings while they are still economically active instead of waiting until retirement. Many beneficiaries have used the funds to complete houses, invest in farming, start small businesses, pay school fees, settle debts and improve household welfare. According to NAPSA (n.d.), some beneficiaries have also invested in government securities, poultry projects and other income-generating activities, helping to stimulate economic activity and create employment.

The government has maintained that the scheme remains financially sustainable despite the large number of withdrawals. NAPSA reported that the value of the pension fund increased from K67 billion in December 2023 to K88 billion in December 2024 (NAPSA, n.d.), demonstrating continued growth while meeting members' withdrawal requests.

This promise is classified as Implemented because the legal reform allowing partial withdrawals has been completed and the programme is fully operational. The reform represents one of the clearest examples of a manifesto commitment moving from a policy promise to practical implementation, with hundreds of thousands of Zambians already benefiting from direct access to part of their pension savings.

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND LESSONS

Reform Success Depends on Effective Implementation

One of the clearest lessons emerging from this assessment is that announcing policy commitments is only the first step towards achieving meaningful development outcomes. Between 2021 and 2026, the government introduced numerous policies, enacted legislation, established new programmes and strengthened public institutions across all sectors assessed. While these actions demonstrate considerable implementation activity, 15 promises reached full implementation during the review period. This highlights the importance of moving beyond policy formulation and institutional establishment to ensure that reforms are fully implemented and produce measurable improvements in citizens' lives.

Progress Has Not Been the Same Across All Sectors

The report also shows that progress has varied across different sectors of government. Stronger performance was recorded in areas where reforms could be implemented through programmes, policy changes and administrative decisions. These include social services and climate action, where government made steady progress through actions such as the introduction of partial withdrawal of pension contributions (Mbewe, 2025), the expansion of the Social Cash Transfer Programme (Lusaka Times, 2023; Sichula, 2025a), the signing of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use (United Kingdom [UK] COP26, 2021), and the completion of the Transboundary Governance of the Kwando/Cuando River Basin. On the other hand, slower progress was observed in areas requiring constitutional amendments, legal reforms and broader institutional restructuring, particularly within governance. For example, the promise to guarantee the independence of the judiciary was classified as Broken (Africa Press - Zambia, 2022).

Public Services Remained a Key Government Priority

Throughout the review period, the government placed considerable emphasis on improving services that directly affect citizens. Continued investment in education, healthcare, social protection and programmes supporting vulnerable groups is reflected in actions such as the implementation of Free Education through increased school grants and education funding (Lusaka Times, 2024a), the recruitment of health workers to strengthen health service delivery (Zambian Digest, 2025), the expansion of the Social Cash Transfer Programme and introduction of the Nutrition Cash Plus Programme (Sichula, 2025a), and the introduction of partial withdrawal of pension contributions.

At the same time, the government prioritised climate resilience, environmental protection and sustainable resource management through actions including the signing of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use (Mwansa, 2021), the completion of the Transboundary Governance of the Kwando/Cuando River Basin, and the creation of the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment. These efforts have strengthened the foundation for improved service delivery and climate resilience, although many programmes will require sustained financing, institutional capacity and effective implementation before their full benefits are realised across the country.

Investment in Public Services Can Deliver Tangible Benefits

Another important lesson is that sustained investment in public services can generate visible outcomes within a single electoral cycle. Throughout the review period, considerable attention was given to expanding education, healthcare, social protection and programmes supporting vulnerable populations. Progress was also recorded in climate resilience and environmental management through initiatives aimed at strengthening natural resource governance and adaptation to climate change. These experiences demonstrate that consistent investment in public services and social programmes can improve citizens' welfare when supported by adequate financing, institutional capacity and effective implementation. However, maintaining these gains requires continuous monitoring, sufficient resources and strong administrative systems.

CONCLUSION

This report shows that the government implemented several actions based on the commitments contained in the 2021 UPND Manifesto. During the period under review, the government introduced new policies, enacted laws, launched programmes, strengthened institutions and implemented a wide range of initiatives across all five sectors assessed in this report. These actions demonstrate the government's commitment to delivering on its promises and addressing national development priorities.

The findings also show that progress has not been the same across all sectors. Climate Change and Social Services recorded the strongest performance, reflecting continued investment in public services, climate action and programmes supporting vulnerable groups. The Corruption sector also showed steady progress through institutional reforms and efforts to strengthen accountability. On the other hand, the Economy and Governance sectors recorded lower scores because many of their commitments involve complex reforms that require legislation, institutional changes, long-term financing and coordination across several government institutions.

A key finding is that government has started work on most of its commitments, but relatively few have reached full implementation. Many promises remain In Progress, showing that important reforms have begun but still require additional time, resources and sustained implementation before citizens can fully benefit from them. The assessment also shows that some commitments have Not Commenced, while two governance promises were classified as Broken. These findings highlight the need to focus not only on starting reforms but also on completing them.

The report presents a balanced picture of government performance during its five years in office. It shows clear evidence of policy action and reform across all sectors while also identifying areas where implementation has been slower than expected. Going forward, priority should be given to completing the reforms already underway, implementing commitments that have not yet started, and ensuring that policies translate into measurable improvements in the lives of Zambians. Continued transparency, regular reporting and effective coordination across government institutions will be essential in achieving these objectives and strengthening public confidence in government performance.

REFERENCES

African Forum and Network on Debt and Development. (2024). Zambia debt profile. https://afrodad.org/sites/default/files/publications/Zambia%20debt%20profile.pdf

Africa Press - Zambia. (2022, April 20). Judges no longer enjoy security of tenure. https://www.africa-press.net/zambia/all-news/judges-no-longer-enjoy-security-of-tenure

Africa Press - Zambia. (2025, September 22). *John Sangwa writes to JSC on judge recruitment.* https://www.africa-press.net/zambia/all-news/john-sangwa-writes-to-jsc-on-judge-recruitment

Al Jazeera. (2021, August 16). Zambia's opposition leader Hichilema wins presidential vote. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/16/zambias-opposition-leader-hichilema-wins-presidential-vote

Al Jazeera. (2026, March 8). Iran war threatens prolonged impact on energy markets as oil prices rise. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/8/iran-war-threatens-prolonged-impact-on-energy-markets-as-oil-prices-rise

Basel Institute on Governance. (2025, September 4). Zambia convicts former foreign minister in "helicopter corruption trial" with international support. https://baselgovernance.org/resources/news/zambia-convicts-former-foreign-minister-in-helicopter-corruption-trial-with-international-support-2846/

Belder, D. (2026, June 30). Copper price trends: Q2 2026 review and forecast. Investing News Network. https://investingnews.com/daily/resource-investing/base-metals-investing/copper-investing/copper-forecast/

Chombo, B. N., & Chinanda, C. (2024, October 16). Zambia's difficult quest for debt restructuring. Development and Cooperation. https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/hichilema-government-achieves-slow-steady-progress-towards-making-burden-sovereign-debt

CIVICUS. (2025). Zambia: Civic Space Monitor. Retrieved August 2026 from https://monitor.civicus.org/country/zambia/

Daba Finance. (2025, March 21). Zambia's Fx Reserves Hit Record-High but Currency Woes Persist. https://allafrica.com/stories/202503210040.html

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2025, January 3). FAO Food Price Index dips during the month of December. https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-dips-during-the-month-of-december-month-on-month/en

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2026a, January 9). FAO Food Price Index dips in December despite higher world cereal quotations. https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-dips-in-december-despite-higher-world-cereal-quotations/en

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2026b). FAO Food Price Index. Retrieved August 2026 from https://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/foodpricesindex/en/

Hiney, F. (2026, June 24). Zambia reaps the rewards as kwacha, reforms and yields showcase strength. Forbes Africa. https://www.forbesafrica.com/current-affairs/2026/06/24/zambia-reaps-the-rewards-as-kwacha-reforms-and-yields-showcase-strength

International Energy Agency. (2025, June 17). Oil Market Report – June 2025. https://www.iea.org/reports/oil-market-report-june-2025

Lusaka Times. (2021, November 6). Zambia signs Glasgow declaration to stop deforestation by 2030. https://www.lusakatimes.com/2021/11/06/zambia-signs-glasgow-declaration-to-stop-deforestation-by-2030/

Lusaka Times. (2023, September 28). Over 700 new beneficiaries to benefit from social cash transfer in Ngabwe. https://www.lusakatimes.com/2023/09/28/over-700-new-beneficiaries-to-benefit-from-social-cash-transfer-in-ngabwe/

Lusaka Times. (2024a, August 21). Over 5,000 Lusaka Youths Benefit from 2024 CDF Skills Sponsorship. https://www.lusakatimes.com/2024/08/21/over-5000-lusaka-youths-benefit-from-2024-cdf-skills-sponsorship/

Lusaka Times. (2024b, October 10). GBM sentenced to 5 years imprisonment with hard labor. https://www.lusakatimes.com/2024/10/10/gbm-sentenced-to-5-years-imprisonment-with-hard-labor/

Mbewe, Z. (2025, April 11). NAPSA pays out K10bn in partial withdrawals. News Diggers Media. https://diggers.news/local/2025/04/11/napsa-pays-out-k10bn-in-partial-withdrawals/

Meke, P. (2021, September 24). Zambia suspends exports of endangered timber species. Namibia Daily News. https://namibiadailynews.info/zambia-suspends-exports-of-endangered-timber-species/

Ministry of Finance and National Planning. (2026). Zambia initiates a landmark debt-for-energy conversion with the support of the African Development Bank. https://www.mofnp.gov.zm/?p=8632

Musokotwane, M. (2025, May 23). It's a bumper harvest! – Projected 3.7 million tonnes of maize. Lusaka Times. https://www.lusakatimes.com/2025/05/23/its-a-bumper-harvest-projected-3-7-million-tonnes-of-maize/

National Pension Scheme Authority. (n.d.). NAPSA Pays Out K10 Billion in Partial Withdrawal to Members. https://www.napsa.co.zm/news/details?id=4f2675eb-6e50-4729-895d-1242393d597b

National Prosecuting Authority. (2024a, September 27). Court orders forfeiture of former First Lady's 15 luxury properties. https://www.npa.gov.zm/index.php/2024/09/28/court-orders-forfeiture-of-former-first-ladys-15-luxury-properties/

National Prosecuting Authority. (2024b). High Court Economic & Financial Crimes Division restates settled international standards on non-conviction based forfeiture. https://www.npa.gov.zm/index.php/2024/08/23/high-court-economic-and-financial-crimes-division-restates-settled-international-standards-on-non-conviction-based-forfeiture/

National Prosecuting Authority. (2025). Betrayal in uniform: Two police officers jailed for possessing counterfeit currency. https://www.npa.gov.zm/index.php/2025/02/03/betrayal-in-uniform-two-police-officers-jailed-for-possessing-counterfeit-currency/

News Diggers Media. (2024, March 16). High Court upholds 2-yr sentence slapped on ex-ZAMPOST bosses. https://diggers.news/courts/2024/03/16/high-court-upholds-2-yr-sentence-slapped-on-ex-zampost-bosses/

Okebiorun, O. (2025, October 9). US aid cuts 'long overdue' Zambia's president says. Business Insider Africa. https://africa.businessinsider.com/local/leaders/us-aid-cuts-long-overdue-zambias-president-says/48xy3lw

Open Zambia. (2024, December 9). Zambia and France sign landmark debt restructuring Agreement. https://www.openzambia.com/economics/2024/12/9/zambia-and-france-sign-landmark-debt-restructuring-agreement

Pallett, J., Mukumbuta-Guillemin, I., & Mendelsohn, J. (2022). Cuando State of the Basin Report. Namibia Nature Foundation; WWF Zambia. https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/cuando-state-of-the-basin-report/

Sichula, A. (2024, October 9). Justice O' Metre: Recap of cases involving politically-exposed persons, others; September, 2024. Zambia Monitor. https://www.zambiamonitor.com/justice-o-metre-recap-of-cases-involving-politically-exposed-persons-others-september-2024/

Sichula, A. (2025a, March 2). Govt reportedly disburses K159.5 million in drought emergency cash transfer to 66,000 households in Northern Province. Zambia Monitor. https://www.zambiamonitor.com/govt-reportedly-disburses-k159-5-million-in-drought-emergency-cash-transfer-to-66000-households-in-northern-province/

Sichula, A. (2025b, June 10). IMF, Zambia reach staff-level agreement, pending final approvals to unlock $194 million in financing. Zambia Monitor. https://www.zambiamonitor.com/imf-zambia-reach-staff-level-agreement-pending-final-approvals-to-unlock-194-million-in-financing/

Trading Economics. (2025). Zambia government debt to GDP. Retrieved August 2026 from https://tradingeconomics.com/zambia/government-debt-to-gdp

Transparency International Zambia. (2025). Corruption Perceptions Index 2025. https://tizambia.org.zm/cpi/corruption-perceptions-index-2025/

UK COP26. (2021, November 2). Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use. https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230418175226/https://ukcop26.org/glasgow-leaders-declaration-on-forests-and-land-use/

World Bank. (2021, October 21). World Bank Commodities Price Forecast (nominal US dollars). https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/ff5bad98f52ffa2457136bbef5703ddb-0350012021/related/CMO-October-2021-forecasts.pdf

World Bank. (2022). Commodity Markets Outlook: Currency depreciations risk intensifying food, energy crisis in developing economies [Press release]. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/10/26/commodity-markets-outlook

World Bank. (2026). Commodity Markets Outlook, April 2026 [Press release]. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2026/04/28/commodity-markets-outlook-april-2026-press-release

Xinhua. (2022, May 12). Zambia lifts suspension of issuance of timber export permits. https://english.news.cn/africa/20220512/509c3c70eba6427b90fc73d1cac845a3/c.html

Zambia Monitor. (2025, April 12). Justice O' Metre: Recap of cases involving politically-exposed persons, others; March, 2025. https://www.zambiamonitor.com/justice-o-metre-recap-of-cases-involving-politically-exposed-persons-others-march-2025/

Zambian Digest. (2025, March 19). Recruitment of 4,200 Teachers Transparent & Merit-Based. https://www.zambiandigest.net/2025/03/19/recruitment-of-4200-teachers-transparent-merit-based/

Zambian Observer. (2026, June 24). High Court rejects subordinate court leniency, imposes prison sentences on Kamono directors. https://zambianobserver.com/high-court-rejects-subordinate-court-leniency-imposes-prison-sentences-on-kamono-directors/

ANNEXURE

Annex 1: Sources Used to Track Government Performance

Government Sources	Local Media
Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies	Zambia Daily Mail Limited
Cabinet Office	News Diggers Media
National Assembly of Zambia	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation
Bank of Zambia	Lusaka Times
Zambia Statistics Agency	Zambia Monitor
Zambia Revenue Authority	Diamond TV
National Pension Scheme Authority	Money FM Zambia
Anti-Corruption Commission	Mwebantu
Electoral Commission of Zambia	Kalemba News
Zambia Environmental Management Agency	Zambia Reports
Official Government Websites	
International Media	**International Organisations and Research Institutions**
Reuters	World Bank
Al Jazeera	International Monetary Fund
Bloomberg	African Development Bank
BBC News	United Nations Development Programme
Voice of America	United Nations Children's Fund
Xinhua	Food and Agriculture Organization
Africanews	Transparency International
AFP	Institute for Security Studies
AP News	OECD
Financial Times	Policy Monitoring and Research Centre

Annex 2: Key Actions Taken by Government to Fulfil Economy Promises

Create a robust tourism marketing strategy

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- Reduced the cost of tourist visas by 50% as of 1 January 2022. (January 2022)
- Launched the Zambia Tourism Domestic Strategy and Investment Guide to boost domestic tourism (December 2021)
- Launch of Brand Zambia: Zambia launches the brand corporate day (March 2026)

ANALYSIS

The three actions are not one continuous strategy but three different tools four years apart: a pricing lever (the 2022 visa cut), a domestic-travel guide (2021), and a broad national identity campaign (2026) that covers investment and citizenship as well as tourism, rather than a dedicated tourism marketing strategy. Sector performance has been strong regardless of how the actions link together: international arrivals rose 35.3% in 2024 to 2,199,820, and tourism-linked non-tax revenue reached K319.5 million, 59% above target. Brand Zambia's own messaging leans heavily on tourism ("Victoria Falls, its diverse wildlife, and vibrant communities") but is explicitly framed as a wider nation-branding exercise for investment and reputation, not a tourism-specific plan.

Create an autonomous national debt management office

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- The Government of Zambia enacted the Debt Management Act No. 15 of 2022 which establishes the Debt Management Office (August 2022)

ANALYSIS

Since the Office was created, Zambia's fiscal trajectory has genuinely improved: public debt is projected to fall from 123.9% of the GDP in 2024 to 91.9% in 2025 and 69.4% by 2027, and government reported its debt restructuring process was 94% complete by end-2025, with total public debt at US$28.9 billion; two years after the Act established the Office, the IMF still had to run a dedicated technical mission: a Data Quality Assessment for Public Sector Debt Statistics in September–October 2024, pointing to persisting gaps in the reliability of Zambia's own debt figures. The Debt Management Office has coincided with a real improvement in Zambia's debt trajectory, but the country's capacity to independently verify and fully disclose its own debt position is still catching up to the institution meant to manage it.

Enact legislation aimed at improving the corporate governance environment in the country

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- Enacted the corporate transparency legislation that fundamentally transforms beneficial ownership disclosure requirements and corporate governance obligations. (January 2026)
- Enacted the Companies (Amendment) Act No. 23 of 2025, introducing far-reaching reforms to the country's corporate regulatory framework. The amendments significantly strengthen transparency, expand the enforcement powers of the Registrar of Companies, and introduce stricter governance and compliance obligations for all registered entities. (December 2025)

ANALYSIS

The Companies (Amendment) Act, assented in December 2025, is the vehicle that created the beneficial-ownership transparency legislation giving Zambia one of the more detailed beneficial ownership frameworks in Africa. Despite Zambia's Corruption Perceptions Index score falling from 39 to 37 its first decline in five years; driven mainly by a rise in reported abuse of office and a drop in the World Economic Forum's business bribery survey. This means the country passed its strongest corporate transparency law in years just as perceived corruption was moving in the wrong direction, which suggests the legislation is a foundation rather than evidence of governance already improving. This means that whether the beneficial ownership register meaningfully closes this gap depends on the Patents and Companies Registration Agency enforcement and uptake, which is not yet observable this soon after the law took effect.

Enact strong investment banking regulations

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- Enacted the Banking and Financial Services Act No. 9 of 2026 which reforms the country's financial regulatory landscape by centralising oversight under the Bank of Zambia (BoZ). (May 2026)

ANALYSIS

The Act delivered is broader than the promise's specific wording: rather than a dedicated investment-banking regime, the Banking and Financial Services Act No. 9 of 2026 repeals both the previous Banking and Financial Services Act and the separate Money-lenders Act, folding virtually all lenders including new community banking, virtual banking, and faith-based alternative-finance categories into a single Bank of Zambia-supervised framework. This closes a longstanding gap where non-bank and informal lenders operated with lighter oversight than deposit-taking banks, and it is backed by serious enforcement teeth: unlicensed lending now carries fines of up to K1.2 million or up to thirty years' imprisonment - Zambia's financial sector now has more unified, better-resourced oversight.

Implement programmes to improve youth and women's access to land

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- The government secured US$300 million from the World Bank for the development of farming blocks to grow agricultural production. (October 2022)

ANALYSIS

The US$300 million is Zambia's Growth Opportunities Program (ZAMGRO), and at least 160,000 women are meant to receive climate-smart agriculture training, roughly 600,000 farmers overall are targeted for extension services, and an estimated 5,000 jobs are expected from irrigation investment. This works well together with the June 2021 National Land Policy (though not developed by the UPND government) opened the door, reserving 50% of alienated land for women and 20% for youth, and lowering the ownership age to 18, but a quota only creates eligibility, not capacity to farm. ZAMGRO's US$300 million supplies exactly that missing piece, funding extension services, climate-smart training and irrigation for the women and youth the policy newly qualifies. Read together, one expands who can hold land, the other helps them use it productively once they do.

Introduce targeted policy incentives to attract large capital inflows

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- The government began implementation of the Investment Trade and Business Development Act No. 18 of 2022 making investors qualify for incentives under the Act when investing in a special economic zone, a business operating in a designated priority sector (November 2022)

ANALYSIS

FDI evidence since the Act suggests genuine but narrowly-based momentum: inflows jumped from US$86 million in 2023 to US$1.24 billion in 2024, a 1,339% rise that UNCTAD ranked as Africa's fastest FDI growth rate that year.

Accelerate the integration of transmission projects to improve access to regional power markets

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The Kariba Dam Rehabilitation Project, funded by the African Development Bank, the European Union (EU) with counterpart funding by Zambia and Zimbabwe, which has two work components – the plunge pool reshaping, and the spillway refurbishment is now at 74% completion with a disbursement ratio of 75%. (April 2023)
- The government commissioned the resumption of operations at Ndola Energy Corporation (July 2024)

ANALYSIS

FDI evidence since the Act suggests genuine but narrowly-based momentum: inflows jumped from US$86 million in 2023 to US$1.24 billion in 2024, a 1,339% rise that UNCTAD ranked as Africa's fastest FDI growth rate that year.

Progress on Kariba has moved well past the 74% mark recorded in the Action(s) column: the Zambezi River Authority reported the US$294 million rehabilitation at 94% complete by May 2026, with only the spillway's second phase (about 70% finished) outstanding and full completion targeted for the fourth quarter of 2026. This matters for regional integration specifically because Kariba underpins hydropower for both Zambia and Zimbabwe, so a dam operating below capacity or under flood-risk restrictions constrains cross-border power trade through the Southern African Power Pool regardless of how many interconnectors exist on paper.

Actualise the abundant job, innovation and business opportunities in the arts sector

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The Presidential Arts Development and Empowerment Scheme released K30 million for 152 beneficiaries. (January 2022)

ANALYSIS

K30 million split across 152 beneficiaries is a real but small-scale injection into a sector that has received less than 1% of the national budget in any of the past four years, and whose contribution to GDP has stagnated around 0.3%, with an employment share around 0.6%. This shows that the scheme shows government is willing to make direct grants to individual artists, but it has not yet translated into the structural budget commitment that would meaningfully grow job and business opportunities across the sector as a whole.

Amend existing laws relating to illicit financial flows

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Anti-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation (Amendment) Act No. 30 of 2024 - this directly amends the 2018 Anti-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation Act and is now the legal basis for terrorism and proliferation-financing sanctions screening in Zambia sanctions screening in Zambia
- The government rolled out the Anti-Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) Policy Tracker Assessment. (November 2023)

ANALYSIS

The Tracker measured the problem; the 2024 Act is the first concrete legislative amendment addressing it, closing sanctions and proliferation-financing screening gaps under the 2018 Anti-Terrorism law. Together they show diagnosis moving to action. But the amendment targets terrorist and proliferation financing specifically, not the broader trade-mispricing and mining-related outflows the Financial Intelligence Centre's own US$3.5 billion loss estimate points to. Zambia's clean Financial Action Task Force (FATF) listing status (June 2026) suggests the technical framework is credible, yet the promise's core channels, commercial Illicit Financial Flows remain unamended. This shows there is a real legislative progress, but on a narrower slice of illicit flows than the promise's evidence base implies.

Apply science and technology to all aspects of government

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- National Electronic Government Plan 2023–2026 — launched. (August 2023)
- The Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security through the Department of National Registration, Passport and Citizenship in Muchinga province launched the Integrated National Registration Information system. (March 2022)

ANALYSIS

The two actions sit at very different scales: the Muchinga registration pilot was one department's rollout in one province, while the National Electronic Government Plan 2023–2026, launched 30 August 2023 by the Vice President Mutale Nalumango through the SMART Zambia Institute is the whole-of-government digital strategy that registration system, and everything else, now sits under, complete with its own Strategic Plan and Service Delivery Charter setting service standards across ministries. Together they show a pilot maturing into policy: what began as one province's registration system now has a national framework and a coordinating institution behind it, backed by US$100 million in World Bank funding through the Digital Zambia Acceleration Project, with digital ID cards targeted for all citizens by the end of 2026. But the scale of the underlying gap the Plan is meant to close is still large: as of 2024, only 14% of births in Zambia were registered and just 6% of registered children had a birth certificate among the lowest rates in Africa. There is both the institutional architecture and the flagship use case needed to apply technology across government, but by its own targets, roughly half of all Zambians would still lack a registered identity even at the 2026 deadline, so the framework is in place, but its most basic application, knowing who citizens are, is still years from complete.

Address the proliferation of regulatory and licensing fees that increase compliance costs and corruption

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action recorded here means Zambia has neither reviewed the actual number and cost of the regulatory and licensing fees businesses face, nor produced updated evidence on how burdensome the current system is. Zambia is currently flying blind on this specific promise: without a recent audit of fees and licences, government cannot show whether the compliance burden it pledged to reduce has gone up, down, or stayed the same.

Consult with all key stakeholders in addressing the various challenges affecting the growth of the manufacturing industry

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No formal, promise-linked consultation has been recorded, even as the sector itself has quietly become one of Zambia's better economic performers: manufacturing reached 9% of GDP in 2025, its highest share since 1990, on the back of over US$12.2 billion invested since 2021 and more than 68,000 jobs created across manufacturing, mining and agriculture. Industry voices, including the Zambia Association of Manufacturers, have publicly flagged infrastructure and border management as constraints, but this reads as ad hoc commentary rather than a structured, government-convened consultation process addressing the sector's challenges as the promise specifies.

Create a pathway to use more soil friendly organic farming and natural soil enhancement methods

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action has been recorded against this specific promise, but a related reform is underway that touches the same problem from a different angle: Zambia has begun converting its Farmer Input Support Programme from fixed fertiliser/seed packages to an e-voucher system, explicitly because the old one-size-fits-all model "contributed to reduced productivity and soil degradation" by pushing farmers towards maize monoculture regardless of local soil conditions. This Farmer Input Support Programme reform is about input choice and market diversification, though, not organic farming or natural soil enhancement methods as such there is no evidence yet of a dedicated organic-farming pathway, certification system, or natural soil enhancement programme.

De-risk investments in communal infrastructure and scale up investments in off-grid solutions

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action recorded, despite the scale of unmet need being well documented: roughly half of Zambia's population up from about 30% in 2017 still lacks grid electricity access, and government's own target is 200 operational solar mini-grids by 2030 to reach an estimated 8.5 million currently unelectrified Zambians.

Annex 3: Key Actions Taken by Government to Fulfil Governance Promises

Decentralise service delivery with an increased CDF and accountable local government service providers

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- The government through Indo-Zambia Bank commenced the disbursement of loans under the CDF in Mwandi District of Western Province after conducting a financial literacy training for loan empowerment beneficiaries. (April 2023)
- The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and Local Govt Ministry embarked on CDF guidelines awareness campaign. (April 2022)
- CDF Increased from K1.6 million to K25.7 million per constituency. (October 2021)
- The government increased the CDF allocation to each of the country's 156 constituencies from K36.1 million in 2025 to K40 million in the 2026 National Budget. (September 2025)

ANALYSIS

CDF has grown fast on paper: from K1.6 million to K40 million per constituency since 2021 but 2024 execution lagged the ambition: of K4.78 billion allocated across 156 constituencies, only K2.63 billion was actually funded, K771 million sat unspent at year-end, and the Auditor-General confirmed K1.5 million misused by 63 beneficiaries for personal spending. Bigger allocations without matching funding discipline or absorption capacity risk making "decentralisation" a budget-line increase rather than better service delivery.

Ensure that decentralisation by devolution is implemented

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development disbursed a K256 million capital grant to 95 councils across Zambia as part of the Zambia Devolution Support Programme (ZDSP). (November 2024)
- President Hakainde Hichilema launched the National Decentralisation Policy and commissioned the ZDSP, signalling the government's commitment to bringing government services closer to the people and promoting accountability and transparency among local authorities. (May 2023)

ANALYSIS

The May 2023 launch of the National Decentralisation Policy and the US$210 million ZDSP wasn't just an announcement: Transparency International Zambia's independent July 2025 review found 13 public service functions, including education, health and agriculture, have since been transferred to councils, alongside over 4,000 civil servants moved to local government payrolls, and Cabinet separately confirmed transport-related operating assets (including Road Transport and Safety Agency functions) handed to local authorities. TI Zambia still flags fiscal decentralisation at only 57% progress, with councils lacking digital financial systems and a fair CDF allocation formula. The devolution is genuinely underway, not just promised, though the fiscal and capacity side lags the functional handover.

Improve Government's capacity to make better decisions at the local level

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- The government Issues new guidelines to Streamline Approval and Implementation of CDF Projects. (January 2023)
- The 2024 CDF ACT redefined the roles of Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs) and introduced Provincial Constituency Development Fund Committees to streamline project approvals at the provincial level, reducing delays caused by central government oversight. These measures were presented as part of the government's broader efforts to decentralise decision-making to boost development, reduce poverty, and create economic opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalised populations. (April 2024)
- The government launched the Decentralisation Policy which priorities community engagement, citizen-driven local development and inclusiveness in the implementation of decentralisation in Zambia. (May 2023)

ANALYSIS

The 2024 CDF Act is the more distinct, substantive step: it created Provincial CDFCs specifically to approve projects locally rather than routing them through central government a direct structural response to this promise.

Complete the constitutional reform agenda, anchored on national consensus

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government signed the law to end the death penalty in Zambia towards constitutional reforms. (May 2022)
- The government commissioned a technical committee to conduct consultations with society on the constitution amendment bill No. 7 of 2025 (October 2025)

ANALYSIS

A piecemeal reform passed, but through a process its own critics call executive-driven rather than the national consensus this promise demands.

Develop more effective leadership and management and ensure sectoral management capacities are strengthened

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government terminated the concession contract for the management of the Dry Port facility at Walvis Bay due to poor performance and underutilization of the facility. (January 2023)
- The government implements measures to curb malpractices among agro dealers: The government has introduced mechanisms to monitor agro dealers' performance. (October 2024)

ANALYSIS

The Walvis Bay termination was meant to fix poor management of a strategic trade asset, but the same file resurfaced as a governance problem two years later: Public Accounts Committee hearings in November 2025 revealed government signed a follow-up Walvis Bay Dry Port Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) without Attorney-General approval, a basic procedural safeguard. The agro-dealer monitoring measures remain light on public detail regarding scale or outcomes. The government acts against poor management once it surfaces, but oversight discipline within its own dealings on the same asset is still inconsistent.

Enacting a consultatively established Freedom of Information Act

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- President Hichilema signs the Access to Information Act. (December 2023)
- Independent Broadcasting Act Enacted. (October 2025)
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services renamed and realigned. (September 2021)

ANALYSIS

Despite the signing of the Access to Information Act on 15 December 2023, ending over two decades of civil society advocacy and empowering the Human Rights Commission to sanction non-compliant public bodies; Legal experts flagged that the Act still lets the responsible minister create further exemptions and regulations.

Elaborate ECZ's roles in conducting legal and electoral reforms

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government enacted the Electoral Process Act No. 12 of 2026. (May 2026)
- Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) unveiled and launched the 2026 General Election Roadmap, including a nationwide delimitation exercise for 70 new constituencies, with stakeholder consultations in all 116 districts and online voter register inspections. (February 2026)

ANALYSIS

The two actions work together: the Electoral Process Act No. 12 of 2026 supplies the legal framework, while the ECZ's February 2026 Roadmap operationalises it — a nationwide delimitation adding 70 constituencies (156 to 226), stakeholder consultations in all 116 districts, and online voter register inspections. But the delimitation drew real transparency complaints: opposition Zambia Wake-up Party (ZAWAPA) accused the ECZ of a process that "raised questions about whether the newly delimited constituencies were intended to benefit a particular political party," demanding the full constituency list just 30 days before Parliament's dissolution. The legal and institutional machinery is more developed than before, but its credibility depends on transparency of the ECZ in delivering on its mandate.

Depoliticise the public service and improve leadership, managerial skills and officials' mindsets

BROKEN

KEY ACTIONS

- ACC Arrest Clever Mpoha over a Single Sourced Contract for Zambia National Service (ZNS) Military Uniforms. (August 2022)
- President Hichilema appointed his younger brother Muzoka Hichilema as Zambia's Deputy Ambassador to Malaysia. His brother is reported to be a Sales and Marketing professional with no background in diplomacy. (July 2022)
- The Anti-Corruption Commission arrested the former Special Assistant for Economics for corruption. (August 2022)

ANALYSIS

The three actions cut in opposite directions within the same month: two arrests by the Patents and Companies Registration Agency show real anti-corruption enforcement reaching people close to government, while appointing the President's own brother a sales and marketing professional with no diplomatic background as Deputy Ambassador to Malaysia is itself the kind of insider appointment this promise commits to ending. Enforcement and patronage are running side by side rather than one replacing the other consistent with the "Broken" rating.

Guarantee the independence of the judiciary

BROKEN

KEY ACTIONS

- Removal of two Judges from their position as Judges of the Constitutional Court by the President. (June 2022)

ANALYSIS

The timing of the dismissal of the two judges was "problematic" given the president's personal stake despite the formal process having been followed, the direct conflict of interest is exactly what "guaranteeing independence" is meant to prevent.

Domesticate key international and regional conventions to uphold good governance

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action recorded, and Zambia's legal system makes this promise structurally necessary rather than symbolic: as a dualist state, ratifying a convention does not make it enforceable domestic law separate domesticating legislation is required under the Ratification of International Agreements Act, 2016. Without that step, conventions Zambia has signed onto internationally carry no direct weight in its own courts. The governance gains claimed elsewhere in this report exist without the deeper legal architecture this promise would provide, leaving international commitments symbolically strong but practically unenforceable.

Ensure all cabinet ministers are appointed based on competence

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action recorded, and the gap is not merely theoretical, it is lived: the President's appointment of his own brother, a sales and marketing professional, as Deputy Ambassador to Malaysia, drew exactly the "competence versus loyalty" criticism this promise is meant to prevent. Without a published, independent criterion for cabinet or senior appointments, there is no public mechanism to check whether ministerial picks are judged on competence at all.

Ensure minister's role provides strategic leadership and policy direction not day-to-day operations

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action recorded. This is a machinery-of-government reform redefining what ministers do versus what permanent secretaries and technical staff do and it typically requires a public service reform instrument or cabinet office directive to take effect, neither of which appears to have been issued. Without it, the boundary between political direction and administrative operation remains whatever practice, rather than policy, dictates.

Ensure regular engagement between the president and leaders of opposition parties to solidify Vision 2030 consensus

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action recorded, and without an institutionalised channel for regular president-opposition engagement, this promise's inaction leaves Vision 2030 dependent on the current administration's own continuity rather than a negotiated national consensus.

Establish an independent electoral commission

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action recorded and without institutional reform to how commissioners are appointed and insulated from the executive, perceptions of bias will keep attaching to the ECZ's individual decisions, however technically sound.

Annex 4: Key Actions Taken by Government to Fulfil Corruption Promises

Establish fast-track anti-corruption courts

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- Chief Justice Mumba Malila signed a statutory instrument (SI) for creating an economic and financial crimes court. (January 2022)
- The EFCC took over the theft case involving ex-ZAMPOST bosses. (March 2022)

ANALYSIS

Establishing a dedicated economic and financial crimes court, and immediately assigning it a high-profile case like the ZAMPOST theft matter, signals that government wanted corruption prosecutions removed from the slow-moving general court calendar and treated with urgency. That institutional separation is itself a statement of political will, distinguishing this promise from purely rhetorical anti-corruption commitments. But a fast-track court's real contribution to Zambia's corruption fight depends less on its creation than on whether it stays insulated from political interference over time. The structure for faster justice now exists; sustaining it is the harder test.

Conduct lifestyle audits, with any civil servant found wanting being suspended until a court ruling

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Parliament endorses law to introduce lifestyle audits. (December 2021)

ANALYSIS

Four years on from Parliament's endorsement, there is no public evidence lifestyle audits have started. In Zambia, the problem has rarely been passing wealth-monitoring laws but enforcing them. There is no evidence that the lifestyle audit law has the enforcement powers it would need.

Ensure all unclassified public records are available and open to the public

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Parliament passed the Access to Information Bill. (December 2023)
- The government has not published the Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency (ZAMMSA) forensic audit report. (May 2025)

ANALYSIS

The Access to Information Act was actually signed into law in December 2023, giving this promise a genuine legislative anchor. But the ZAMMSA case shows the practical test failing in real time: the Drug Enforcement Commission's own Director-General stated the ZAMMSA forensic audit report "is not meant for the public," prompting the Zambia Institute of Chartered Accountants and Transparency International Zambia to publicly demand its release. The legal right to unclassified records now exists on paper, but the instinct to withhold politically inconvenient reports evidently persists inside government.

Ensure government officials declare any new wealth annually

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No new action recorded and this promise inherits an old problem: the Parliamentary and Ministerial Code of Conduct Act has required annual declarations since 1994, yet compliance stayed weak for decades. A 2021–2024 civil society review found compliance rising 18%, but ZCLU warns many declarations still omit income and liabilities, undermining verification. Three decades of a legal requirement with no enforcement mechanism shows rising paperwork isn't the same as accountability.

Build resilience to climate change by changing agricultural practices

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Implementation of a climate-smart agriculture project in Zambia. (April 2022)
- The government launched the El Nino Emergency Response for Smallholder Farmers. (April 2025)

ANALYSIS

The 2022 Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) project and the 2025 El Niño response together show government engaging on two fronts – building longer-term farming resilience and stepping in when a shock hits. The emergency response reached 182 farmers directly, which is small on its own. It sits alongside a much larger body of government-linked climate-smart agriculture work: 98,102 farmers trained and 190,304 hectares brought under CSA management in Eastern Province through the Ministry of Agriculture's Zambia Integrated Forest Landscape Project programme.

Create income-earning opportunities for rural communities and roll out a national framework to reduce emissions under the REDD+ initiative

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government awarded a K1.3million grant to Nguleta Community Sub-Grant Project. (December 2021)
- Launched the National Green Growth Strategy (2024-2030) to transition the country into a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and climate-resilient economy. (April 2024)

ANALYSIS

The 2021 grant funded a single community project before the 2024 national strategy existed to guide this kind of work. This means early REDD+-type activity happened on an ad hoc basis, and the 2024 strategy has since given it a formal home. What has not yet emerged is a defined pathway from strategy to income – the 2024 strategy sets direction but does not specify how rural communities are expected to earn from it. The practical implication is that rural communities cannot yet point to a specific programme or payment mechanism delivering income under this promise.

Integrate climate action into sector strategies

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Launched its Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Framework, taking an integrated approach to climate action across eleven sectors, with 135 measures and 158 key performance indicators costed at US$17.2 billion (2023–2030) *(*May 2023*)*.
- President Hakainde Hichilema assented to the Green Economy and Climate Change Act No. 18 of 2024, establishing a Council of Ministers chaired by the Vice President to guide climate policy across government, a national Climate Change Fund, mandatory National Adaptation and Mitigation Plans, and rules regulating carbon markets. *(December 2024)*
- Zambia submitted its Third Nationally Determined Contribution to the UNFCCC, shifting to an economy-wide approach across ten sectors — expanding coverage to infrastructure, tourism and water, and introducing more structured adaptation indicators for climate-smart agriculture, forest management and water catchment planning, alongside just-transition provisions for mining-dependent regions. *(October 2025)*

ANALYSIS

Passing three major laws in three years, including a dedicated Climate Change Fund, means climate action now has real legal footing across government – ministries are formally required to plan for it, and a funding vehicle exists to pay for it. However, national budget data shows the money has not followed the law yet: climate/environment's budget share moved only from 0.6% to 0.7% between 2022–2025, and forestry funding fell over the same period. The government has built the legal and institutional machinery for integration but has not yet backed it with matching budget allocations.

Invest and empower institutions that have been established to coordinate and implement climate change programmes

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government created the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment. (October 2021)

ANALYSIS

Creating the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment gave climate change a permanent, formal seat in government for the first time, rather than leaving it scattered across other ministries. Since 2021, the Ministry has moved from a coordinating body into a legislating one: it published Zambia's National Green Growth Index (2022), led development of the National Green Growth Strategy 2024–2030, and secured passage of the Green Economy and Climate Change Act (2024), which created the Climate Change Fund and domesticated the Paris Agreement into Zambian law. In 2025, it published Zambia's Carbon Market Framework, positioning the country to regulate and benefit from carbon trading.

Investing in schemes such as afforestation, catchment area conservation and improved landscape management, especially at the local level

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government allocated K971 million in their National budget to strengthen climate change and mitigation. (October 2021)
- The government of Zambia launched a Green Jobs Programme supported by the ILO and other United Nations (UN) agencies. (June 2022)
- Zambia for Agroforestry, Biodiversity and Climate project launched. (January 2023)
- The Ministry of Green Economy and Environment, Wilderness and Carbon Ark signed a Memorandum of Understanding to launch a carbon storage and sequestration project. (April 2023)
- Zambia signed a road map for implementation of the EU and Zambia Forest partnership - Global Gateway: EU and Zambia sign Road map for the implementation of the Forest Partnership. (November 2023)
- Zambia and UK sign Green Growth Compact agreement. (November 2021)

ANALYSIS

Five different actions with five different partners (ILO, EU, a private carbon firm, and others) show government spreading this work across multiple fronts rather than running it through one central programme. The results so far: Zambia Forestry and Forest Industry Corporation (ZAFFICO) planted 3,320 hectares in 2022 and now manages 54,482 hectares of plantation, and a newer US$34.65 million Climate Investment Funds plan is set to build further on this, with US$220 million in expected co-financing.

Mobilise private resources to climate action through blended financing and climate finance facilities

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Zambia and UK sign Green Growth Compact agreement (November 2021)

ANALYSIS

The 2021 UK Green Growth Compact set the terms for closer financial cooperation, and this appears to have opened the door to further agreements – including the five additional UK MoUs signed in 2024. More broadly, Zambia has drawn down substantial climate finance during this period: the Green Climate Fund alone has approved 12 projects worth US$184 million in the country. This means government has been able to convert financing diplomacy into real capital inflows, strengthening its ability to fund climate programmes – though much of this is concessional/multilateral finance rather than strictly private capital, so the promise's specific goal of mobilising private resources is less clearly demonstrated than climate finance mobilisation in general.

Promote climate-resilient public infrastructure and disaster risk management frameworks

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Zambia, UK sign five MoUs to deepen partnership. MoUs include ones on Green Growth Compact, energy and climate finance. (December 2024)

ANALYSIS

The MoUs formalised a partnership on infrastructure-related cooperation, but an MoU is an agreement to work together, not infrastructure itself. Four years after this promise was made, no specific infrastructure project or disaster risk management framework has been delivered under it. This means that Zambia's exposure to climate shocks – laid bare by the 2023/24 drought, which affected over 1 million households – has not yet been reduced by anything produced under this particular promise; the groundwork for cooperation exists, but the resilience-building it is meant to enable has not yet reached citizens.

Scale up activities of ZAFFICO to increase the hectarage of land under sustainable management practices

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- ABSA Partners With Forestry Department and ZAFFICO to Address Adverse Impacts of Climate Change. (March 2024)
- ZAFFICO signs MoU with the French Development Agency (AFD) and TEREA, backed by a €390,500 AFD grant, specifically to expand plantation footprint, strengthen industrial operations, and support agroforestry. (November 2025)

ANALYSIS

Partnering with a private bank brought in a new type of partner for ZAFFICO, signalling government's interest in mobilising private capital alongside its own forestry operations.

Both actions show government moving from stated ambition to a funded delivery mechanism. The AFD–TEREA MoU is a materially stronger signal than a typical partnership announcement: it comes with a €390,500 AFD grant, a named technical partner (TEREA) mandated to lead implementation, and critically an explicit numeric target of expanding ZAFFICO's plantation footprint by 50,000 hectares by 2028. This directly answers the promise's own metric (hectarage), rather than leaving it implied.

Strengthen climate resilience through improved farming methods, climate resilient seed varieties and irrigation

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- 1300 farmers have been trained – the government trains farmers on climate smart agriculture. (October 2023)
- The government launches 2023/2024 input distribution for farmers. (October 2023)

ANALYSIS

Training and input distribution landing in the same month reflects normal seasonal delivery ahead of a planting season, not a one-off event. On its own, 1,300 farmers trained is modest. However, this sits within a much larger national system: the Farmer Input Support Programme has scaled from 221,899 farmers in 2023/24 to 739,266 in 2024/25, with 1,024,434 targeted for 2025/26. The implication is that government has built durable, expanding national infrastructure for getting inputs including climate-resilient seed varieties to farmers every season, meaning the practical reach of this promise is likely far larger than the specific training figure suggests.

Strengthen institutions to effectively implement regulation and clean-up efforts from mining activities

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Minerals Regulation Commission (MRC) established by Act No. 14 of 2024.

ANALYSIS

Establishing MRC created a dedicated legal authority for minerals regulation, separate from the ministries that previously handled it alongside other responsibilities. This is a structural upgrade, mining oversight now has its own institution with its own legal powers, rather than being one function among many elsewhere in government. The implication is that the foundation for more consistent, specialised regulation and clean-up enforcement is now in place; whether that translates into stronger oversight and actual clean-up of mining sites depends on the Commission becoming fully operational.

Strengthen the Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA)

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action at all since 2021 means ZEMA's capacity today is the same as it was when this promise was made. This matters beyond ZEMA itself: it is the body responsible for enforcing several of the reforms recorded elsewhere in this table, including mining regulation and the new Green Economy and Climate Change Act. The implication is that government has strengthened the laws and institutions that create climate and environmental obligations, without yet strengthening the regulator responsible for enforcing them leaving a gap between what the law now requires and the state's capacity to make sure it happens.

Annex 6: Key Actions Taken by Government to Fulfil Social Services Promises

Increase the share of education in the national budget

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- The government has reaffirmed its commitment to transforming education by allocating K33.0 billion, representing 13% of the 2026 National Budget, to the sector. (October 2025)
- The government released K442.2 million to all schools, the final grant allocation under the free education programme. (October 2022)
- The government increased Education budget by 32%. (December 2021)

ANALYSIS

Trend data undercuts the "increase" framing: education's nominal allocation did rise from an estimated K27.4 billion in 2024 (15.4% of that year's K177.9bn budget), to K31.5 billion in 2025 (14.5%), to K33 billion in 2026 (13%) but its share of the total budget fell steadily over the same period, the lowest in four years. UNESCO's Incheon benchmark recommends 15–20%, a target ZANEC says Zambia should hit given its Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Cairo Protocol commitments. Real classroom ratios reportedly reach 1:110 in early childhood and 1:226 in primary, far above the official 1:35 figure. This means that in nominal terms the growth is real, but it is being outpaced by the growth of the overall budget masking a shrinking share and a widening quality gap.

Improve social cash transfers

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- The government launched revised Social Cash Transfer (SCT) and Public Welfare Assistance Scheme guidelines and handed over a K47.4M fleet to 17 districts for service delivery. (January 2026)
- The Zambian government disbursed K159,484,800 to 66,452 vulnerable households in the Northern Province under the Drought Emergency Social Cash Transfer program. (July 2024- July 2025)
- Under the SCT program, the Ministry of Infrastructure Housing and Urban Development is collaborating with the Department of Community Development on a project to build 50 senior citizen housing units. (May 2024)
- The government through the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services has introduced the Urban Price Shock Emergency Cash Transfer to alleviate economic challenges faced by vulnerable communities which was launched in Kabwe. (January 2024)
- The government has taken a significant step to expand its Social Cash Transfer Scheme, adding over 700 vulnerable individuals to the program in Ngabwe district, Central Province. The move was announced by Provincial Permanent Secretary Milner Mwanakampwe during the official launch of the expansion in Ngabwe (September 2023)

ANALYSIS

These actions describe expansion, not redesign of continuous registration, digitised payments, and scale-ups sit within the existing SCT architecture. By the June 2026 payment cycle, beneficiaries stood at 1.56 million households, up from 1.3 million in 2024, with K4.3 billion disbursed since January against an K8.5 billion full-year allocation. Yet total social protection spending fell 3% year-on-year to K15.7 billion, meaning the caseload grew inside a shrinking envelope. The growth and improvement to the SCT scheme is real, adequacy isn't.

Introduce partial withdrawal of pension contributions for specific purposes

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- The Government of Zambia, through NAPSA, has disbursed K10 billion in partial withdrawals to members since the inception of the Programme in 2023, marking a significant step in providing access to funds amid financial challenges. (April 2025)
- Enacted the National Pension Scheme Act No. 1 of 2023.
- The Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema announced the National Pension Scheme Amendment Bill 2023 permitting citizens to make a one-time partial withdrawal of their pension funds, which can be reinvested to create jobs and support economic development. (April 2023)

ANALYSIS

The K10.6 billion now covers 518,183 members, rising from the previously reported K10.1 billion and 487,389 members less than three years after its 2023 launch. The latest confirmed breakdown of targeted uptake—K1.7bn among women and K1.2bn among youth—relates to the earlier K10.1bn total and has not been updated since.

Introduce policies to improve health financing resources

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- The government increases in the domestic health budget share from 8.1% of the national budget in 2021 to 10.3% in 2026, with the shillings-and-pence figure now at K26 billion in 2026 (up from K23 billion in 2025), and essential-drugs funding specifically up 30% (K4.9bn to K6.4bn). (June 2026)
- Minister of Health launched the 2022-2026 digital health strategy to reform digital health governance and develop digital workforce capabilities. (October 2022)
- Cabinet approved Zambia's accession to the Treaty on the establishment of the African Medicines Agency. (August 2022)

ANALYSIS

Zambia's health budget share climbed from 8.1% of national spending in 2021 to 10.3% in 2026, lifting domestic health funding from K23 billion to K26 billion and essential-medicines financing by 30%, to K6.4 billion. That additional money financed concrete, traceable gains: 51 medical oxygen plants, 111 new mini-hospitals, 36 new health posts, and sustained full availability of vaccines, antiretrovirals, TB and malaria medicines. The shortfall is that even after five consecutive years of increases, the share still sits well below the 15% Abuja Declaration benchmark Zambia signed in 2001 meaning the infrastructure and supply gains are genuine, but the underlying financing base remains thinner than the country's own commitment requires.

Reform diversification of retirement income sources

IMPLEMENTED

KEY ACTIONS

- President Hakainde Hichilema assented four significant Pension Bills the Public Service Pensions Bill, the National Pension Scheme Bill, the Local Authorities Superannuation Bill, and the Pension Scheme Regulation (Amendment) Bill, all from 2026. (June 2026)

ANALYSIS

This is a legislative overhaul of NAPSA's core rules, not yet a delivered improvement: the four bills raise the minimum monthly pension from K1,708 to K2,135, let roughly 30,000 retirees draw an advance lump sum from their savings while keeping their monthly pension intact, lift the replacement rate from 40% to 45% of pensionable earnings for NAPSA's 1.2 million members, replace one-off dependent payouts with an ongoing monthly survivors' pension, and open a structured pathway for Zambians abroad to contribute. None of this has been tested in practice yet: the bills have only just been signed, with no published regulations or rollout timeline, so as the source itself frames it, the measure of success won't be the signing ceremony but "the experience of ordinary citizens months and years from now."

Align the content of the educational curriculum with the needs of industry

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The Ministry of Education is currently in the process of developing a comprehensive syllabus for implementation in schools under the new curriculum. This follows the recent announcement of the government's plans to introduce a new curriculum aimed at improving the quality of education and equipping learners with skills for the modern world. (September 2024)

ANALYSIS

Zambia's curriculum overhaul restructures secondary education itself, not just the syllabus: it extends secondary school from five to six years, phased in over four years, and broadens subject pathways into business, finance and the arts. What the available reporting doesn't show if any specific employer-partnership or workforce-alignment mechanism connecting those new pathways to actual jobs, the overhaul changes what students study, not how they're absorbed into work. That gap matters against the scale of the problem: the 2022 Labour Force Survey counted over 3.3 million youth not in employment, education or training, and employers "frequently complain that graduates are not ready for work". Broader subject choice alone won't close that mismatch without a direct industry-linkage mechanism built into the reform.

Build sustainable sports structures and programmes in line with UNDP 2030 Agenda

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The ministry of sport has engaged parliament on plans to use part of the CDF to develop sports infrastructure as the ministry seek to tap into the CDF funds to help increase access to sports infrastructures especially in rural areas and improve infrastructures in general. (March 2024)
- Minister of Sports, Youth and Arts Elvis Nkandu said that the government is in the process of rehabilitating and constructing mini sports stadia at national, provincial and district level. (February 2024)
- Minister of Sports, Youth and Arts launched the rehabilitation of Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula Stadium in Monze and declared the project a major step towards decentralising sports infrastructure and unlocking youth potential across Zambia. (April 2026)

ANALYSIS

CDF-funded stadia, mini-stadium rehabilitation, and the April 2026 Nkumbula Stadium groundbreaking put real money and ceremony behind the sports-infrastructure promise, but the benchmark government is measuring itself against is softer than it sounds: the UN's 2030 Agenda treats sport as a general development "enabler," not a measurable target Zambia can actually be scored against. The funding vehicle carries its own credibility problem CDF implementation has documented gaps elsewhere, including one constituency that recorded zero CDF expenditure in 2023 and the Monze stadium's cost and completion date remain undisclosed. Ground has been broken and funds allocated, but there's no public accounting yet of what's actually been built, what it cost, or when it will be finished: announcements are outpacing verification.

Create centres of specialisation locally through partnerships with private sector

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government invested K250 million towards the building of a national drug rehabilitation and skills development centre in Lusaka. (August 2025)

ANALYSIS

The centre itself is substantive on paper: a K250 million public-private facility offering medical care, psychological support, vocational training in six trades (carpentry, agriculture, tailoring, ICT, plumbing, entrepreneurship), and structured reintegration into society. What undercuts it is the financing model. Vice President Nalumango's call for the business community to help mobilise resources came at a stakeholders' breakfast meeting held two years after President Hichilema first directed the centre's establishment in 2023, which means the private capital that a public-private partnership depends on was still being solicited, not secured, at that point.

Develop education-industry linkages and foster innovation and entrepreneurship

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government secured internships for 600 students in the US. (October 2023)
- Ndola City Council handed over K 2,425,000 to institutions that enrolled students who applied for skills development bursaries. (August 2022)
- The government signs a €6.5 million youth skills development contract for with EU and UN to support skills development among Zambian youths. (May 2022)

ANALYSIS

Measured against the scale of the problem, these actions are modest. Six hundred internships is a narrow intervention set against a Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) system that had grown to nearly 96,000 enrollees by 2023, and the placements themselves were in psychosocial counselling rather than the technical fields, data, ICT, finance, where Zambia's skills gap is most acute. The deeper problem sits beneath these individual programmes rather than within them: a 2024 World Bank review found Zambia's TEVET system chronically underfunded and fragmented, with most training institutions rated lowest quality and not aligned to industry demands. Internship and bursary schemes, however well intentioned, cannot substitute for fixing the quality and industry relevance of the training system they sit on top of.

Depoliticise the social cash transfer scheme

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Community Development and Social Services Minister undertook a fact-finding mission in Monze and Bweengwa districts of Southern Province to monitor cash transfer programme. (June 2022)
- The government develops a draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan for scaling up shock responsive social protection in Zambia initiative. (May 2022)
- The government resolved to pay funds using the Zambia Integrated Social Protection Services. (March 2022)
- The government released K1.46 billion for social protection programmes. (February 2022)

ANALYSIS

The listed actions a field visit, a draft engagement plan, a digital-payment resolution, and a funding release are all from early 2022 and mostly procedural; none is a structural safeguard against political capture. Zambia has prior precedent of a minister facing criminal proceedings tied to SCT conduct, and in mid-2026 civil society warned government against turning cash transfers into "a political gift to voters" ahead of elections. The government's corruption risk assessment of the SCT programme, referenced in its "strengthening" commitment, implies problems not yet disclosed.

Empower Zambian women and young people through providing free education, access to land, business opportunities, meaningful employment and participation in governance

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government has approved and introduced in parliament the Education (Amendment) Bill of 2026. (March 2026)
- The government through the Department of Community Development has begun the selection process of potential beneficiaries for the livelihoods program in Mpulungu District in Northern Province. (August 2025)
- Zambia's Ministry of Education finalised the recruitment of 4,200 teachers for 2024, aiming to improve the teacher-pupil ratio and overall education quality. Minister Syakalima announced the completion, noting the process utilized an existing applicant database instead of requiring new applications. (March 2025)
- The government allocated K44,976,462.40 to sponsor 5,441 youths in Lusaka under the 2024 CDF skills bursary program. (August 2024)

ANALYSIS

This promise bundles five distinct goals, education, land access, business support, employment, and governance participation, but the recorded actions address only two: education and youth livelihoods. No land-access or governance-participation action shows up here. Context matters: Zambia's female labour force participation sits at 53.85%, and the headline youth unemployment rate of roughly 10% understates the real distress once Not in Education, Employment of Training (NEET) status and underemployment are counted. One detail stands out on its own: the 2024 teacher recruitment drive did not advertise the positions at all, instead reusing an old applicant database, a shortcut that saved cost but narrowed who could actually benefit. Fragments of empowerment exist, but nothing yet ties them into a coherent strategy that matches the promise's full scope.

Encourage the young generation to see their value and prevent then from being used for violence during elections

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- President Hichilema launches the National Youth Policy at the National Youth Indaba on 16 March 2024 at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre. (March 2024)
- Minister of Community Development and Social Services launched the community case management guidelines and statutory case management handbook and information management system. (February 2023)
- Industrial Training Centre together with Trans aid provided equipment to support the youth in skills training. (February 2022)

ANALYSIS

The two actions on record, the case-management handbook (February 2023) and the Trans Aid training equipment (February 2022), sit alongside a period in which political violence involving party cadres continued rather than receded. In April 2023, ruling-party supporters attacked opposition leader Fred M'membe and his supporters at a Serenje by-election rally, serious enough that M'membe discharged a firearm to disperse the crowd. Three years after the promise was made, political violence involving youth cadres was still being documented, by the media, by rights monitors, and by election observers, not resolved.

Enhance M&E for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) expenditures

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The Zambian Government launched an almost US$6 billion Water Investment Programme, aimed to provide access to clean water and decent sanitation. (July 2022)

ANALYSIS

Even though the action commits to spending money, not to monitoring how it's spent, and Zambia's own audit record shows why that distinction matters. The Auditor-General found uncollected utility fees, unremitted PAYE liabilities, non-revenue water running as high as 72 to 75% against a 25% benchmark, and stalled projects such as Mpulungu's water system, only 17% complete four years after it began. The programme itself is now four years past its 2022 launch and has since been reframed as a US$5.75 billion effort carrying a US$1.27 billion financing gap, yet basic water access sits at just 62% and sanitation at 37%. Money is being announced faster than it is being tracked, let alone delivered.

Ensure secure, utilised, accounted for health care inputs to eventually be self-sufficient

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government is currently working on replacing old radiotherapy equipment with new advanced diagnostic equipment. (October 2023)
- The government purchased bulk medical supplies from Egypt to improve accessibility of medicines in Zambia's hospitals. (October 2023)

ANALYSIS

The two actions produced measurable but lopsided effects. Importing bulk medical supplies from Egypt appears to have moved the needle where it counts most directly: ZAMMSA now reports medicine availability recovered to roughly 70%, up from crisis-era shortages, meaning more patients are finding drugs on the shelf at public facilities. But the same supply chain delivering that improvement was, over the same period, losing control of what passed through it. A PwC forensic audit of ZAMMSA found a US$5.2 million shipment that went untracked in its warehouse system, tender rules bypassed on other purchases, and drugs procured at markups as high as 1,613% over ZAMMSA's own cost estimate. So the practical effect of these two actions together is a genuine rise in medicine availability, bought at a cost, both financially and in accountability, that the government's own auditor found the supply chain could not account for.

Ensure training of health personnel meets international standards

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Six Zambian doctors travel to India to conduct kidney transplants as part of a government exchange program aimed to facilitate the transfer of skills. (November 2022)
- CHAI is partnering with the Ministry of Health to identify, train, and equip health workers (April 2022)

ANALYSIS

Training six doctors abroad barely registers against the scale of the shortage it was meant to address. Zambia's doctor-to-patient ratio still sits around 1:12,000, against a roughly 1:5,000 acceptable benchmark, and nurse staffing is near 1:14,960 versus WHO's recommended 1:700, with an estimated 80,000 more trained health workers needed against only about 4,000 planned annual hires. Six additional doctors change that picture by a fraction too small to move any of those ratios. Where the effect actually shows up is on the retention side, not training: Africa CDC reports Zambia has reversed 15 years of health-worker brain drain through salary increases, and is now the highest-paying African destination for health jobs. So the workforce is leaking less than it used to, that part is working, but almost nothing is being added to it at the rate the shortage requires, which means the ratios above are unlikely to move much in either direction from these two actions alone.

Identify and develop support mechanisms, strategies and programmes to achieve 2020-2030 sport policy framework

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- Sports minister launches 2022 National Youth Sports Festival which will be hosted annually. (May 2022)
- Football Association Zambia (FAZ) and the Confederation of Africa Football (CAF) promote early talent identification of football. (October 2021)

ANALYSIS

The absence of both a settled policy and a recurring flagship programme compounds rather than just sits side by side. Without an approved, current sports policy (the last confirmed version dates to 2006, with a revision still pending Cabinet approval as of 2024, there is no framework against which youth sports spending can be planned, justified, or measured, so whatever does get funded has no benchmark to answer to. And because the 2022 National Youth Sports Festival never recurred after its first edition, any momentum or talent pipeline it built in that one year had nowhere to go the following year, no national platform to carry those young athletes forward. The practical effect, four years into the promise's stated 2020 to 2030 window, is that Zambia has neither a governing policy nor a continuous programme to show for it. That means the promise hasn't just moved slowly, it has effectively reset at the same starting point each time it resurfaces, rather than building on what came before.

Improve the quality and availability of micro community level care and health services

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- The government is on Phase One renovations at Solwezi General Hospital, with three of six wards completed and in use since January 2024. The hospital has also received state-of-the-art digital equipment including a CT scan and digital X-ray machine. (May 2026)
- The government has successfully procured all the 156 ambulances under the constituency development fund. (May 2026)

ANALYSIS

The practical effect of both actions is investment landing well above the level the promise actually named. Solwezi General Hospital is North-Western Province's main referral facility, not a local clinic, so upgrading it improves provincial-level care without touching community-level access at all. The CDF ambulance rollout reaches further down, but what it actually delivered was two years late and cost US$288,000 per unit, criticised as inflated and awarded to non-accredited suppliers, and Zambia's own Health Minister framed the distribution as "a gift to members of parliament before the 2026 elections" rather than as a health-systems investment. So the money spent on both actions produced visible, high-cost assets, a referral hospital upgrade and a fleet of ambulances, while the workforce that delivers micro-community-level care saw no comparable investment: community health assistants still serve roughly one per 5,000 rural residents. The effect is a health budget that shows up in ribbon-cuttings and vehicle handovers rather than in the staffing ratios that would indicate the promise's stated target, primary, local-level care, is being met.

Increase budget allocation for water and sanitation and release such allocation timely

IN PROGRESS

KEY ACTIONS

- WASH funding in the 2026 national budget rose only slightly to K2.6 billion, representing just 1% of the total budget. (September 2025)
- The government has begun building three stand-alone toilet complexes at the University of Zambia (UNZA) and one at Evelyn Hone College. The facilities will improve the entire campus experience while also contributing to the improved sanitary and personal well-being of students and staff. (May 2024)
- The government through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development disbursed K5,057,939.83 to three Local Authorities for the purpose of construction, development and maintenance of sanitary facilities. (September 2022)

ANALYSIS

WASH funding rose only slightly to K2.6 billion in the 2026 budget, just over 1% of total spending, against the 8th National Development Plan's own 3.5% target and the international eThekwini Declaration's 0.5%-of-GDP sanitation benchmark.

Develop incentives for industry players to take on students and graduates

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action recorded, and this isn't a neutral gap: Zambia's official tax incentives schedule covering agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism and general investment contains no incentive for hiring graduates, funding internships or apprenticeships, confirming the absence is structural, not just unreported.

Reform investment mandates to avoid white elephant projects

NOT COMMENCED

KEY ACTIONS

- No actions recorded yet

ANALYSIS

No action recorded, and without a functioning investment-appraisal mandate, Zambia risks repeating exactly the vices this promise is meant to end.

Authors: Mulife Mataa and Eddah Jowah
Editor: Thokozani Galaffa and Rebekah Cross
Design and Layout: Rebekah Cross
Publisher: SIVIO Institute

Date Published: September 2026
DOI: 10.59186/SI.3EKX2G7S

About SIVIO Institute

SIVIO Institute is an independent organisation focused on ensuring that citizens are at the centre of processes of socio-economic and policy change. It aims to contribute towards Africa's inclusive socio-economic transformation. It is borne out of a desire to enhance agency as a stimulus/ catalyst for inclusive political and socio-economic transformation. The Institute's work entails multi-disciplinary, cutting edge policy research, nurturing citizens' agency to be part of the change that they want to see and working with communities to mobilise their assets to resolve some of their immediate problems.

The Institute has three centres/programs of work focused on: (i) civic engagement, (ii) philanthropy and communities and (iii) economic development and livelihoods. In the process, the Institute addresses the following problems:

- Inadequate performance of the existing political and economic system
- Increasing poverty and inequality
- Limited coherence of policies across sectors
- Ineffectual participation in public processes by non-state actors
- Increased dependence on external resources and limited leveraging of local resources