

Delivering the Mandate?

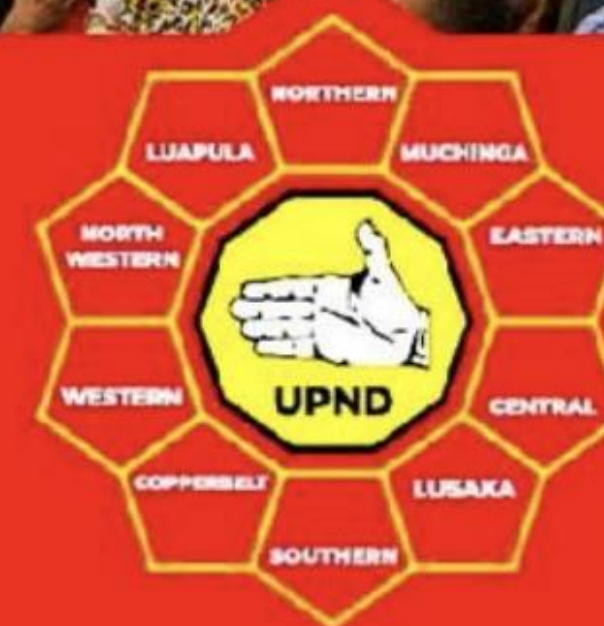
An Assessment of the Government of Zambia's Performance 2021-2025

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The Promise of a New Dawn

On August 12, 2021, the United Party for National Development (UPND), led by Hakainde Hichilema, came to power with over 59% of the vote, ending a decade of Patriotic Front rule. The victory reflected deep public yearning for economic renewal, an end to corruption, and the restoration of democratic norms.

President Hichilema campaigned on a platform emphasizing economic stabilisation, job creation, youth empowerment, and government transparency. This report tracks 248 promises made during the 2021 campaign across five key sectors: Economy, Governance, Corruption, Climate Change, and Social Services. The promises were all extracted from the UPND manifesto and other policy pronouncements.



Zambia Forward

**TIME
FOR
CHANGE**

The Crisis They Inherited

Debt Crisis

Total public debt reached US\$26.29 billion by end of 2021, with debt-to-GDP ratio at 124%. Zambia defaulted on external debt in late 2020.

Economic Strain

Inflation averaged 22% in 2021, one of the highest in the region. Over 60% of the population lived below the national poverty line.

Governance Failures

Over 9,800 "ghost workers" on government payroll costing US\$45 million. Widespread corruption and weakening democratic institutions.

The 2021 election became a referendum on Zambia's future trajectory. Citizens expressed collective desire for economic stability, accountable leadership, and restoration of democratic norms.



Our Methodology: Tracking Performance

To track and assess the Government of Zambia's performance, we utilised a combination of data-driven analysis and independent research to create the Zambia Citizens Watch Tracker. Policy promises were extracted from the official UPND election manifesto and categorized into five key sectors.

01

Data Collection

Actions tracked using government sources, national assembly records, local and international media, and international organisations.

02

Verification

All reported actions triangulated and fact-checked across multiple sources before being recorded on the tracker.

03

Scoring System

Each promise assigned a status: Implemented (14 points), In Progress (1-13 points), or Broken/Not Commenced (0 points).

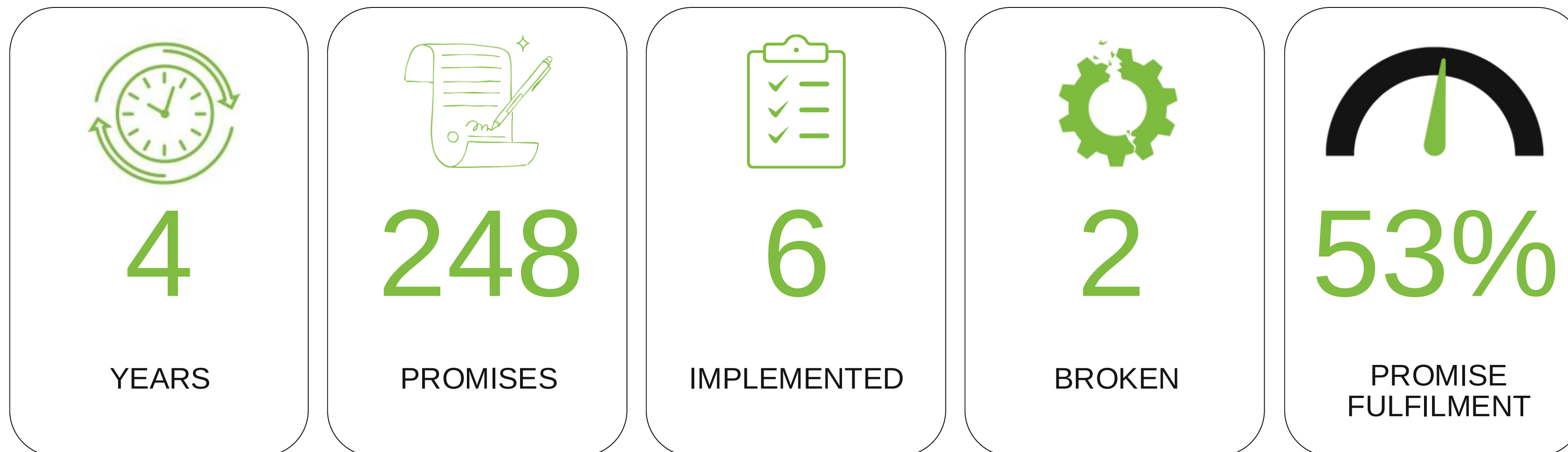
04

Sectoral Analysis

Average scores calculated by sector, enabling comparison and highlighting areas of strength or weakness.

Key Principle: We record only published developments. If the government has done something but did not publish it, our tracker will not have knowledge of the action.

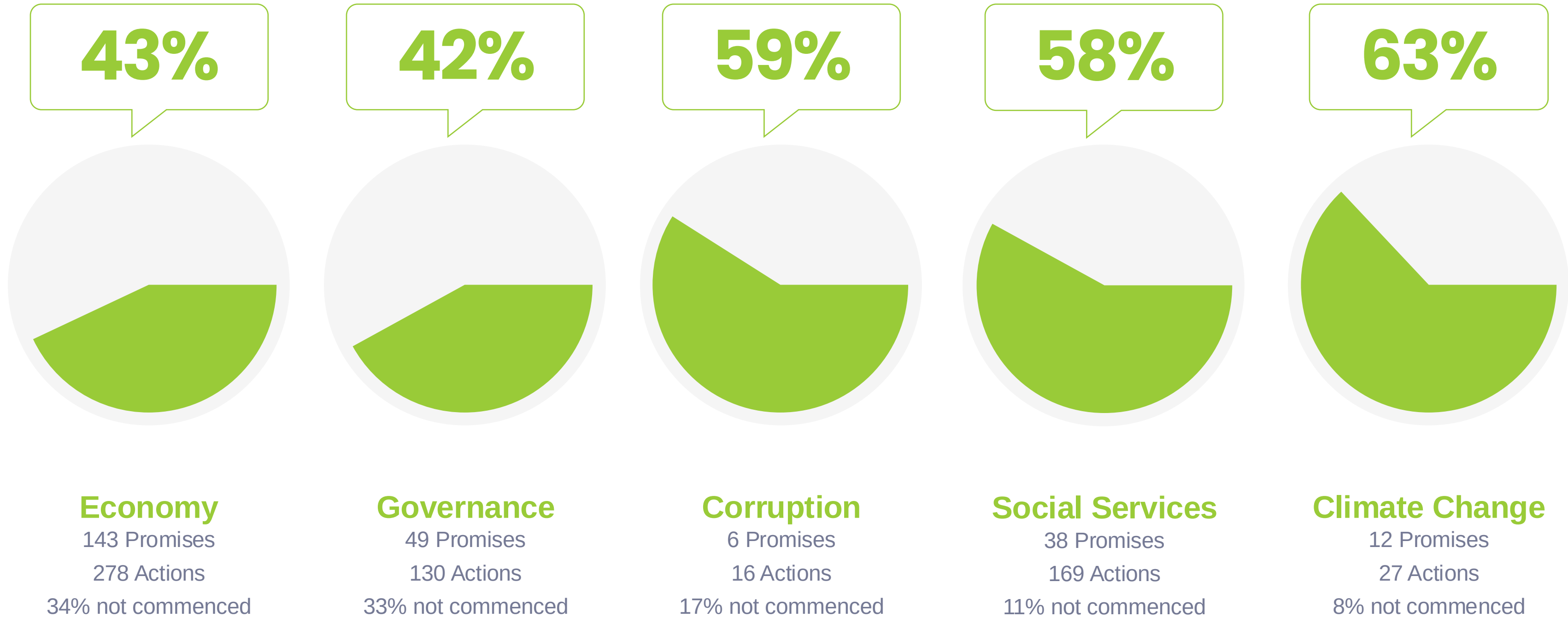
Tracking Promises: 4 Years of Delivery



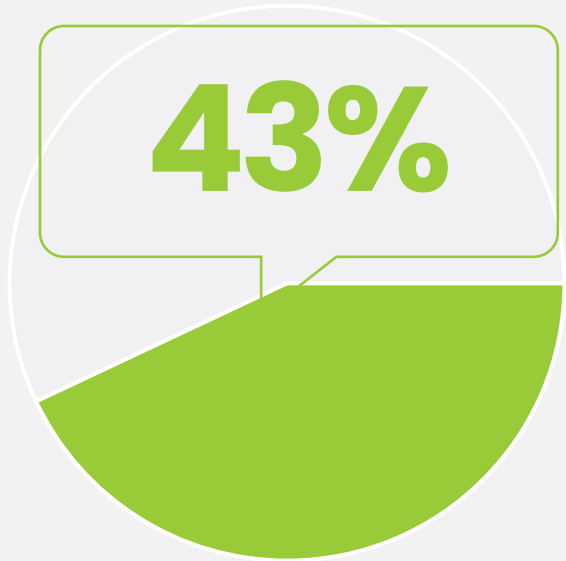
Source: African Citizens Watch

The assessment reveals a mixed trajectory: notable progress in select areas, implementation gaps in others, and structural challenges that continue to hinder full realisation of the reform agenda. High momentum in initiating reforms has not translated into completed outcomes.

Government Performance Sectoral Analysis



Economy



Economic reform accounts for the majority of government commitments, representing 58% (143) of all promises, with a strong focus on fiscal discipline, debt restructuring, and social spending. While many initiatives have been launched, only 1% have been fully implemented to date, highlighting the slow pace of structural reforms amid sustained citizen pressure for tangible economic outcomes.

Sub-sector	# Promises	# Actions	Assessment Score
Agriculture and agro-processing	28	67	<div><div>48%</div></div>
Arts and Culture	3	2	<div><div>40%</div></div>
Debt and Expenditure Management	6	5	<div><div>51%</div></div>
Economic Management	13	47	<div><div>52%</div></div>
Energy	9	29	<div><div>40%</div></div>
Financial Services	6	4	<div><div>23%</div></div>
Land Policy Planning	7	9	<div><div>41%</div></div>
Manufacturing	5	3	<div><div>57%</div></div>
Mining	8	20	<div><div>43%</div></div>
Private Sector Development	12	26	<div><div>59%</div></div>
Procurement	6	1	<div><div>15%</div></div>
Science and Technology	7	16	<div><div>58%</div></div>
Tax Reforms	7	2	<div><div>26%</div></div>
Tourism	13	20	<div><div>58%</div></div>
Trade Policy Reforms	5	2	<div><div>27%</div></div>
Transport and Logistics	8	25	<div><div>47%</div></div>

Economic Reforms: High Ambition, Slow Results



"Despite some movement under the G20 Common Framework, the debt situation remains challenging. Zambia's public debt burden continues to restrict fiscal space for vital development and social investment."



Social Services

Social services account for 15% of government commitments and show the most tangible progress, with expanded social protection, health, education, and inclusion programmes delivering visible benefits; however, while many initiatives are underway, consistent and equitable implementation across communities remains a key challenge.

	# Promises	# Actions	Assessment Score
Education	13	42	<div><div>59%</div></div>
Health and Nutrition	7	41	<div><div>52%</div></div>
Pension Reforms	6	10	<div><div>41%</div></div>
Social Protection	2	21	<div><div>65%</div></div>
Sports and Recreation	2	5	<div><div>50%</div></div>
Water and Sanitation	3	6	<div><div>64%</div></div>
Youth, Women and Persons with Disabilities	5	44	<div><div>72%</div></div>

Social Services: Relative Success Story

Social Services has recorded the highest rate of successful implementation across all sectors. The government positioned social protection at the heart of its development agenda, framing it as a driver of inclusive growth and national resilience.

Flagship initiatives include the Social Cash Transfer (SCT), Food Security Pack (FSP), and Supporting Women's Livelihoods programs. By 2024, more than 2.2 million households received assistance, with regular recipients growing from 1,027,000 in 2022 to 1,311,000 in 2024.



Education Reforms

Teachers now receive first salaries before starting work. Education-industry linkages being developed.



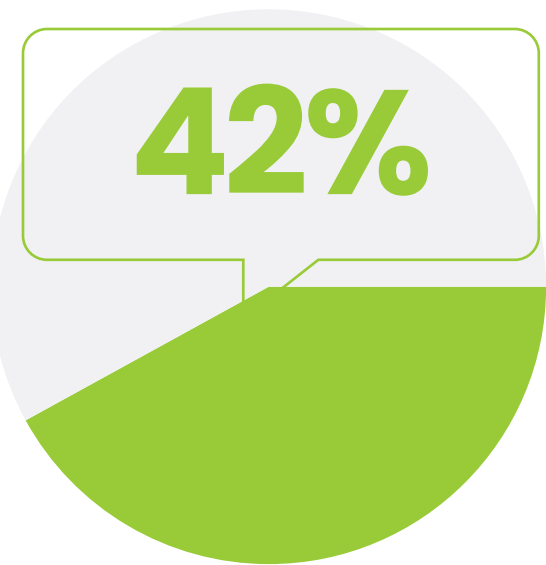
Health Improvements

Digital health strategy launched. Six doctors trained in India for kidney transplants through exchange program.



Cash Transfers

K159.5 million disbursed to 66,000 households in drought emergency. Regular SCT raised to K800-K1,200.



Governance

Governance reforms make up 20% of government commitments and focus on decentralisation, institutional strengthening, and democratic accountability; however, progress has been uneven, with few promises fully implemented and critical areas such as constitutional and electoral reforms largely stalled despite clear policy intent.

	# Promises	# Actions	Assessment Score
Decentralisation	4	9	<div><div>63%</div></div>
Foreign Policy	3	12	<div><div>68%</div></div>
Government	11	25	<div><div>55%</div></div>
Law Justice and Security	7	49	<div><div>31%</div></div>
Media Reforms	2	11	<div><div>51%</div></div>
Public Order	2	2	<div><div>43%</div></div>
Public Service	4	13	<div><div>49%</div></div>
Separation of Powers	13	9	<div><div>17%</div></div>
Electoral Reforms	3	0	<div><div>0%</div></div>

Governance, Corruption and Climate Change

Governance (42%)

- Progress on decentralisation and CDF reforms
- Slow movement on constitutional & electoral reforms

Corruption (59%)

- EFCC established
- CPI score improved (33 → 39)
- Concerns about independence and slow legal reform

Climate Change (63%)

- Green Economy & Climate Change Act (2024)
- Strong policy frameworks, uneven implementation

Key Lessons and the Path Forward

1	High Momentum, Low Completion 169 promises marked "In Progress" but only 6 fully implemented. The government has commenced work but struggles to translate initial momentum into tangible, completed outcomes.
2	Economic Focus with Slow Results Despite 58% of commitments focused on economy, only 1% implemented. Reflects complexity of structural reforms like fiscal consolidation and debt restructuring.
3	Relative Success in Social Services 8% completion rate in social services suggests interventions with clear, measurable outputs achieve higher completion than broader structural reforms.
4	Stagnation in Critical Governance Corruption (0% completion), Climate Change (0% completion), and Governance (2% completion) remain largely unaddressed in tangible outcomes.
5	Sustained Commitment Despite Low Output Only 2 promises broken, none modified. UPND maintains formal commitment to original pledges, highlighting gap between policy intent and actual delivery.

The tracking reveals that while Zambia's governance under the UPND has shown responsiveness and intent, sustained effort, targeted interventions, and enhanced capacity are essential to convert policy promises into impactful results. Continuous monitoring, transparency, and accountability mechanisms remain critical to ensure government actions align with citizens' expectations.

Accountability strengthens democracy

The 2025 Assessment Report for the Government of Zambia is important because it:

- Bridges the gap between **campaign promises and delivery**
- Supports **citizens, CSOs, policymakers, and media**
- Informs **2026 electoral dialogue**
- Promotes **transparency, performance, and evidence-based debate**

Stay up to date with the latest happenings using the Zambia Citizens Watch tracker

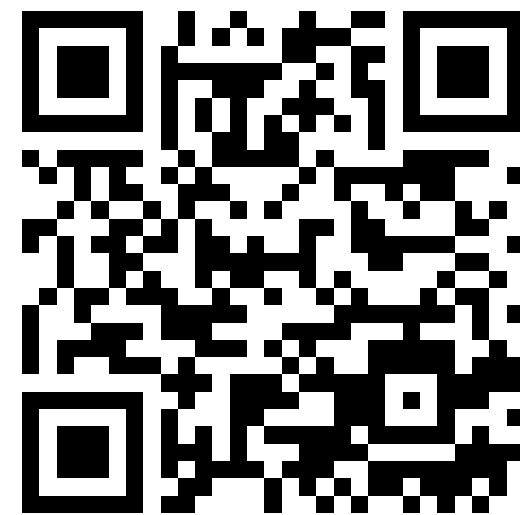
African Citizens Watch

an independent platform that tracks the performance and effectiveness of African governments based on the pledges made in the manifesto and other important policy pronouncements.

				
Malawi MCP 2020-25	Zambia UPND 2021-26	Zimbabwe ZANU-PF 2023-28	South Africa GNU 2024 - 29	Botswana MCP 2024 - 29

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<https://africancitizenswatch.org/zambia>



Read the full report

The full report with all the findings is found on the SIVIO Institute website
(www.sivioinstitute.org/insights)

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