



JOINT CSO STATEMENT ON THE RESURGENCE OF BILL 7 DATED 11th SEPTEMBER 2025

We, the undersigned civil society organisations met President Hichilema and other senior government officials at State House on 24th June 2025. This meeting was held in a spirit of honest and mutually respectful interrogation and discussion of the concerns of civil society on the Constitutional Amendment Bill 7, and other laws that were a source of concern for CSOs. At the end of that meeting, the Republican President categorically promised civil society that broad consultation on Bill 7 would be carried out and directed that representatives of CSOs and those of government create a committee to reach consensus on the path of the proposed constitutional amendment. Further to the meeting the President announced the deferment of the Bill citing the need for broad consultation.

Following the deferment, on 27th June 2025 the Constitutional Court declared Bill 7 unconstitutional due to inadequate public consultation; a decision we believe is binding, and final. Thus, any effort to revive Bill 7 without remedying the defects identified by the Court goes against the rule of law and Zambia’s democratic foundations. We urge the Executive and the Legislature to publicly commit to implementing the Constitutional Court’s judgement, and to desist from any actions that would override or neutralise judicial authority.

The State House meeting and judgement of the Constitutional Court gave civil society the view that a healthy environment had been created for wide and inclusive citizen participation in the constitutional amendment process. Against this background, the undersigned CSOs are deeply concerned at statements of the Speaker of the National Assembly Ms. Nelly Mutti, and the Chief Whip of Parliament, Mr Stafford Mulusa, which suggest that Bill 7 will be reintroduced in the upcoming session of Parliament.

We believe transparency and genuine consultation are vital in any legislative processes especially one that speaks to the supreme law of our Land. Any approach perceived as circumventing proper procedures or lacking broad-based engagement may undermine the trust of the people. Some of our concerns on Bill 7 remain as follows:

1. The fact that Bill 7 lacked wide consultation with the citizens to whom the constitution belongs.



2. Fast-tracking constitutional change, when the country has entered the competitive electoral season, results in partisan interest informing constitutional change and public trust being corroded.
3. Multiple provisions that the government suggests are non-contentious which when interrogated are so complicated that they require sober consensus building.
4. Proposed amendments being made in such a manner that they do not make any substantive change to the problem they seek to resolve.

Constitutional reform is a sacred public responsibility that belongs to the people of Zambia. Considering the above, the undersigned civil society organisations are unequivocally against Bill 7 being reintroduced to Parliament in the next session. Therefore, we oppose any covert or overt efforts to subvert democratic norms and to impose constitutional change without genuine public consent. We therefore call upon the Republican President to use the opening of Parliament tomorrow to assure citizens that Constitutional reforms will be broad based and in line with pronouncements from the Constitutional Courts as expected by rule of law principles.

Mwamba Ngoma-Milambo (Mrs)

Acting Executive Director

Chapter One Foundation

Signed on and Behalf of:

1. ActionAid Zambia
2. Advocates for Democratic Governance Foundation
3. Alliance for Accountability Advocates Zambia
4. Alliance for Community Action
5. Chapter One Foundation



6. Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
7. Free Press Initiative
8. Law Association of Zambia
9. Non-Governmental Gender Organisations' Coordinating Council
10. Panos Institute of Southern Africa
11. Peoples Action for Accountability and Good Governance Zambia
12. Operation Young Vote
13. Transparency International Zambia
14. Zambia Council for Social Development