



Zambia 2020 People's Assemblies

PRESS RELEASE

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National People's Assembly in Zambia Demands Rights for Marginalized Groups

A group of civil society organisations in Zambia have organised a national-level People's Assembly on 26 September 2020 where more than 100 representatives of various marginalized people participated and raised their voices and concerns in virtual meeting.

The key demands include:

- *Include the voice and participation of marginalized groups in national development.*
- *Government together with civil society must collaborate to strengthen the national SDGs forum to accelerate the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs by 2030.*
- *Make available resources to implement national development programs such as the SDGs*
- *End political violence before the 2021 which has characterise most bye elections lately in Zambia.*
- *Government must support inclusive community action on covid19*
- *The government of Zambia must establish a more inclusive process for CSO participation and feedback on the SDGs.*
- *In order to reduce vulnerability and poverty, government must increase social sector spending.*
- *Government must redefine its criteria of selecting CSOs participating on the SDGs in Zambia.*
- *Government must put in place processes and mechanism to ensure the "leave no one behind" principle is fully implemented*

The groups of people included Youth, Children, Women, old people; people living with disabilities, small scale farmers and representatives of community based organisations trade unions etc. The assembly was coordinated by Civil Society SDGs Campaign/GCAP Zambia.

In Zambia, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis has led to loss of jobs and livelihood especially among the poor and vulnerable groups and it has weakened an already struggling economy which in the last couple of years has been battling with the debt crisis

“Glenda Mulenga Executive Director of Sight Savers Zambia emphasized the need for the government to include marginalized groups such as people with disabilities on the stimulus package which the Bank of Zambia announced to cushion the impact of covid19 among Zambian businesses and citizens” said.

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit poor and marginalized people the worst. Poor people are starving and it has further widened inequalities and has had vast impacts on the wider social, economic and environmental fabric of the world. These inequalities have been further magnified due to a glaring lack of access to health care and social protections, an alarming rise of violence against women and girls, and millions of workers in losing jobs, especially in the informal sector. Women, children, older people, persons with disabilities, indigenous communities, persons discriminated based on work and descent, transgender people, and migrants and refugees are suffering in multiple ways due to the pandemic as the world looks on helplessly.

This mobilisation is part of a global movement of #PeoplesAssembly2020 organised by civil society, grassroots and marginalized peoples and communities across the globe to raise voices and key issues to influence policies from the local to global levels. They mobilisations are also part the Global Week of Action, which in 2020 marks the 5th anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - [#Act4SDGs on 25 September 2020](#), and their demands will be sent to the Heads of State meeting for the UN General Assembly.

These voices will also feed into the 2nd [Global People's Assembly](#) organized by the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) and a coalition of civil society organisations.

Our full list of demands is:

Issues

- Government announced a 10 billion kwacha stimulus package to help businesses and vulnerable groups after the shocks and challenges that various groups are facing such as loss of business and job losses. What criteria or how are vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities especially Women and girls benefiting from this initiative.
- Collaboration between civil society and government on matters of national development was also highlighted as one of the challenges civil society is facing in fully participating in matters of national development. In most cases it appears civil society is merely called in to endorse government position.
- Also lack of unity and collaboration among civil society in Zambia *Issues of inclusion of the voice of marginalized groups*
- *Civil Society participation in national development issues on time as opposed to just inviting them to endorse government positions but they must listen to the voice of Civil Society and the people*
- *Greater need for political tolerance among political players as we head towards the general elections next year*

Demands

Our demands for the Zambian government are as follows;

- *Include the voice and participation of marginalized groups in national development.*
- *Government together with civil society must collaborate to strengthen the national SDGs forum to accelerate the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs by 2030.*
- *Make available resources to implement national development programs such as the SDGs*
- *End political violence before the 2021 which has characterised most by elections lately in Zambia.*
- *Government must support inclusive community action on covid19*
- *The government of Zambia must establish a more inclusive process for CSO participation and feedback on the SDGs.*
- *In order to reduce vulnerability and poverty, government must increase social sector spending.*
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- *Government must put in place processes and mechanism to ensure the "leave no one behind" principle is fully implemented.*

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For more information see:

- People's Assemblies website: <https://gcap.global/peoples-assembly>
- #Act4SDGs website: <https://act4sdgs.org>