



Zambia 2021 General Election
Gender Analysis base information



Women turning out in numbers to cast their Vote – Photo: Albert Ngosa

Zambia went to the polls on 12th August 2021 to elect President, Members of Parliament, Mayors/Council Chairpersons and Councillors. The elections took place after the debates on the change of the current First Past The Post (FPTP) electoral system to a mixed electoral system as tabled in the Constitution Amendment Bill 10, which unfortunately did not materialise as the bill could not go through. The assessment of women's representation in elections in Zambia is currently low and the proposed Bill 10 provided opportunities to increase women's political participation.

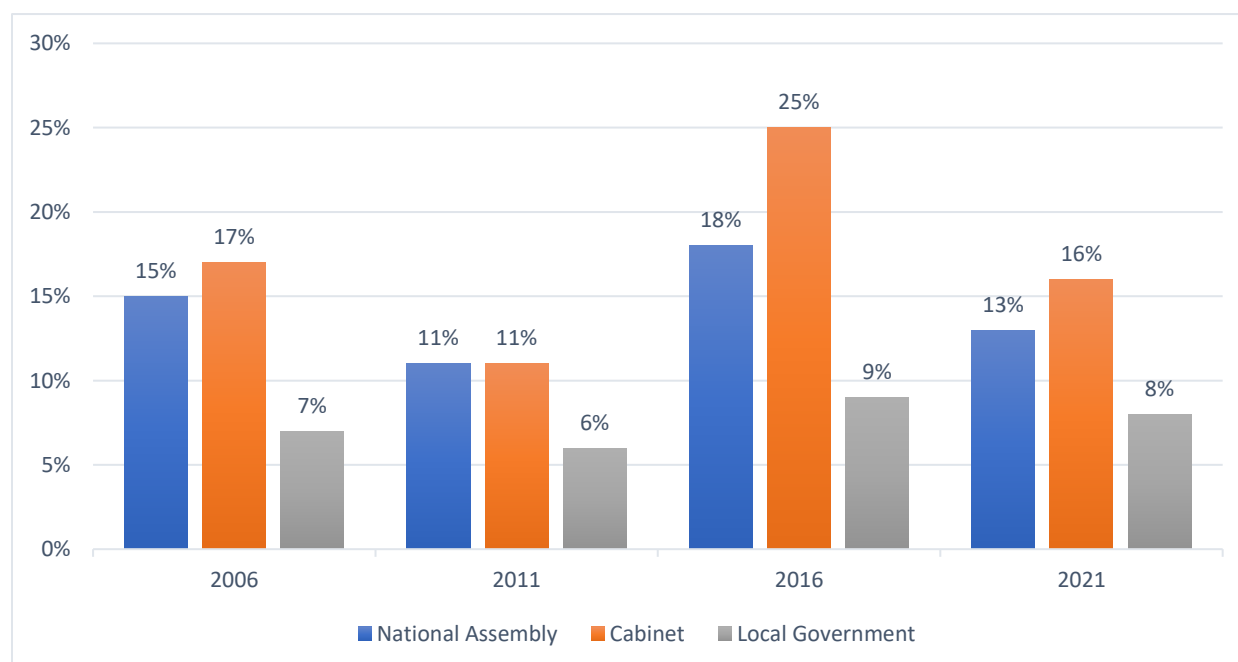
Gender Links Zambia and Zambian civil society organisation have been tracking women's political participation at all levels of governance. One of the key targets in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development is 50% women's representation in all areas of decision-making by 2030. The updated 2030 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, Article 12. 1, states that: "State parties shall ensure equal and effective representation by women in decision-making in the

political, public and private sectors, including the use of special measures.” . You can read more on Zambia’s gender and elections campaigns on: [Zambia Gender and Elections](#)

The proportion of women who contested in the just ended elections stood at 6% for Presidential, 21% for Parliamentary, 13% for Mayor/Council Chairperson and 9% for Councillor. The report provides a summary gender analysis for elected officials after the 12th August 2021 elections.

Zambia is a signatory to a number of regional and global instruments of equal women’s political participation. Key instruments include the SADC Gender and Development Protocol, the Maputo Protocol and the Sustainable Development Goals among others. The current proportions of women in political participation in Zambia is an opposite of what these instruments stand for.

Women’s political representation at different levels of governance in Zambia

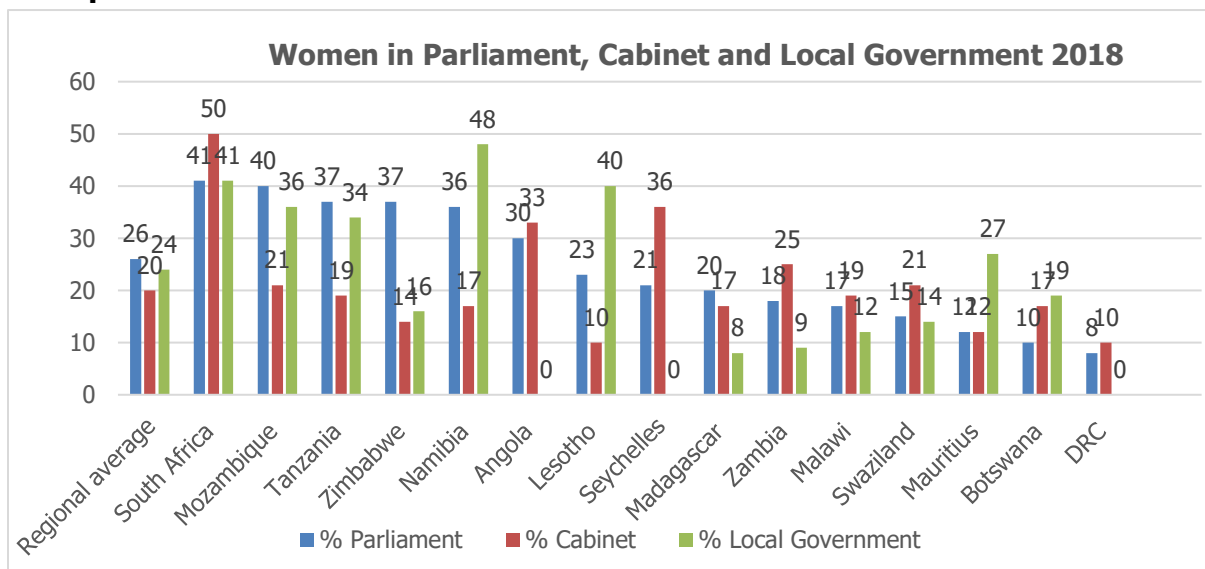


The graph tracks women’s participation in political decision-making in Zambia over the last four elections. Following the adoption of the amendment of the country’s Constitution in 2016, the proportion of women in the national assembly increased from 11% to 18% and in the Cabinet from 11% to 25%. In the 2016 Zambian elections political parties fielded only 16% women as parliamentary candidates and 9% women in the local government elections. The 2021 Elections have recorded a reduction in women’s representation at Local Government, Cabinet and National Assembly level. Zambia still ranks at 115 in the Inter Parliamentary Union’s ratings of women in parliament. Women’s representation in local government increased from 6% in 2011 to 9% in 2016. Zambia is well behind the 50/50 target in all three areas.

Key Issues in Zambia:

- Women are underrepresented in decision making positions including politics.
- Currently women representation at local government level stands at 8% and 17.5% at parliamentary level. This is despite the good provisions in the Constitution, Gender Equity and Equality Act and government commitments through the 7th National Development plan, sustainable development goals and the SADC protocol on Gender and Development among others
- The Gender Equality and Equity Act of 2015 has progressive provisions which unfortunately are not being fully implemented.
- The political environment has not been conducive for women to participate. Key barriers include: Political Violence, Hate speech and lack of Economic Empowerment.
- Participants also acknowledge that the adoption process has disadvantaged female aspirants and existing candidates, through the amounts required to be paid within the parties and the electoral commission.
- Mentorship from fellow experienced female politicians is lacking
- Education curriculum lacks political mentorship to inspire interest of joining politics by the girl child

SADC experience



The 2019 SADC Gender Barometer shows that:

- Performance continues to be mixed in different areas of political decision-making.
- Only South Africa achieved over 40% in parliament, cabinet and local government.
- Only eight countries have exceeded the 30% mark in one or more areas including South Africa (parliament, cabinet and local government); Mozambique (parliament, cabinet and local government); Tanzania (parliament, cabinet and local government); Angola (parliament); Namibia (parliament, local government); Zimbabwe (parliament), Lesotho (local government) and Seychelles (cabinet).

The table shows that:

- At 38%, countries with quotas have a far higher representation of women than those without quotas (16%).
- Consistent with global trends, countries with the PR system (38%) have a much higher representation of women than the FPTP (16%).
- Women's representation in the mixed system (34%) is more than double the FPTP system.
- Quotas used in combination with the PR system (38%) and mixed system (37%) result in the highest representation of women.

Women comprise 37% of parliamentarians in countries with a mixed system and quota, compared to 23% in countries with a mixed system and no quota

Analysis of elected officials (2016 vs 2021 General Elections)

	Last election	No of Men	No of women	% Women	Current Election	No of Men	No of women	% Women
Councillors	2016	1516	126	8%	2021	1701	140	8%
Mayors	2016	15	2	12%	2021	14	5	26.3%
Council Chairperson	2016	93	7	7%	2021	87	10	11.5%
National Assembly	2016	167	30	18%	2021	135	20	13%
Presidential elections Candidates	2016	16	1	6%	2021	16	1	6%

Key Issues related to reduction in numbers of women participating in politics

- Lack of quotas
- Inadequate/lack of financing for female candidates caused women candidates to drop out of the contest at all levels.
- The adoption process did not favour women in all political parties.
- Intimidation and abuse pre and post elections towards women.

Wins and Opportunities from the 2021 Elections



- Presidential Commitments to gender equality as can be seen from the Presidents interview on BBC that can be accessed via: <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AhYqbtXR5qDBzXUEROHbXGHtCMvd?e=AwtP3B>
- Appointment of First female speaker of National Assembly and subsequent tweet by the President through his official Tweeter account.
- Women participation at local government level has increased as can be seen from the actual numbers of women holding positions, i.e., from 126 to 140 for councillors, 7 to 10 for Council Chairpersons and 2 to 5 for Mayors.

Call to Action

- Urgent action is required to ensure the amendments to the 2019 Constitution include the change to a mixed electoral system, and inclusion of a 50% quota for women in both PR and FPTP seats. (Promising from the presidential pronouncements)
- Lobbying should be around implementation of already existing policies and constitutional provision.
- Implementing a multi-sectorial approach in enhancing women's political participation by formulating intra and inter-party networks across political parties.
- Advocating for increased women's political participation in decision making within all party structures
- Holding issue-based campaigns by female candidates.
- Engage media to write stories and profile women in leadership positively.
- Mentoring upcoming female politicians from tender age and new entrants
- Capacity building for aspiring and existing candidates.

Recommendations

Electoral systems and quotas: The Zambia National Gender Policy (2014) highlights the following measures to increase women's representation in decision-making:

"Creating platforms for women's participation in decision making

- i) Review the electoral system to ensure participation of women.
- ii) Review and revise Political Party Manifestos to promote adoption of women candidate.
- iii) Lobby for a quota system of allocation of seats during local and parliamentary elections."

Political parties: The Electoral Act and Political Parties Bill would need to be updated in line with such a Constitutional amendment. In particular, the amendments should require that parties field equal numbers of women candidates in FPTP seats; adopt a one woman, one man "zebra" in the lists; ensure an even spread of provide equal financial, mentorship and other support to women candidates; as well as ensure the safety and security of women candidates.

- Political party manifestos to be gender inclusive.
- Adoption process to be exclusive on women's participation. Political party, National, Provincial and district structures to be engaged in 50/50 campaigns.
- Women candidate financing should be provided at party.

Electoral Act

- Reflect inclusive, gender aware language.
- Ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all electoral practices.
- Reduce the costs of standing for elections.

Election Management Body: The ECZ should

- Work together with stakeholders involved in legislative reform to advocate for changes in the electoral systems and TSM to enhance women's political participation.
- Mainstream gender in the Electoral Commission of Zambia (Amendment) Bill 2019 before this is passed.
- Develop and adopt a gender policy that governs its own internal practices, the development of gender aware voter education materials and regulations for the conduct of elections.
- Ensure safety and security of all candidates and voters, especially women.

Civil society organisations

Should mount sustained 50/50 campaigns to:

"Strengthen capacities of women and men to take up leadership roles

- i) Train women and girls in leadership.

ii) Develop mentorship programmes for girls and young women.

iii) Organise training for women and men to participate effectively in local governance.

Advocate for increased participation of women in decision- making

i) Undertake sensitisation campaigns for women to participate in decision making.

ii) Lobby for women's participation with selected stake holders through meetings, letters, press statements, websites, social media, focussed group discussions and role modelling.

Key mitigation factors

1. Implementing a multi-sectorial approach in enhancing women's political participation by formulating intra and inter-party networks across political parties.
2. Advocating for increased women's political participation in decision making within all party structures
3. Holding issue-based campaigns
4. Engage media to write stories and profile women in leadership positively.
5. Mentoring upcoming female politicians from tender age and new entrants