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**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

**AU COMMISSION PRE-ELECTION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION  
COMMENDS JUDICIARY OF ZAMBIA'S ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION  
PREPAREDNESS**

**Lusaka, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026** – The African Union Commission's Pre-Election and Needs Assessment Mission to Zambia, led by its delegation head His Excellency Demeke Mekonnen Hassen, has expressed satisfaction with the Judiciary of Zambia's level of preparedness ahead of the August General Elections, particularly in relation to Electoral Dispute Resolution.

Speaking during the meeting, His Lordship the Chief Justice, Dr. Mumba Malila, SC, stated that the Judiciary's preparedness is anchored on its constitutional mandate to adjudicate electoral disputes within prescribed statutory timelines. He emphasised that the Judiciary remains committed to ensuring that all election-related disputes, both pre-election and post-election, are handled efficiently, fairly, and in accordance with the law.

The Chief Justice reaffirmed the Judiciary's commitment to determining all election-related matters within the statutory 90-day period. He noted that during the previous electoral cycle, all election petitions were concluded within the prescribed timeframe despite numerous challenges. He further observed that the recent constitutional amendment increasing the number of constituencies may

result in a higher number of petitions, making continuous judicial training and the swift induction of newly appointed judges essential upon parliamentary ratification.

Speaking at the same meeting, the President of the Constitutional Court, Hon. Lady Justice Prof. Margaret Munalula, stated that the Court has refined its election petition rules to improve the handling of presidential election petitions and ensure the timely delivery of substantive justice.

Additionally, the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Elections Management, Hon. Lady Justice Maria Mapani Kawimbe, stated that the Committee, established in 2023 by the Chief Justice, has been spearheading key activities in preparation for the 2026 elections.

She stated that the Committee's primary focus is on strengthening adjudicator preparedness for electoral dispute resolution. Since its establishment, the Committee has undertaken several initiatives, including continuous training programmes for adjudicators on electoral dispute resolution, the revision of the High Court election petition rules dating back to 1968, which have now been modernised to respond to the current demands of the electoral dispute resolution system. She further indicated that similar improvements have been made to Local Government election tribunal procedures to enhance access to justice.

Lady Justice Kawimbe also highlighted the development of a Handbook for Adjudicators and a Digest of Election Law Cases, which will provide adjudicators with access to relevant jurisprudence and guidance. These tools are intended to support both newly appointed and experienced judges in handling election petitions effectively.

Further, she noted that the Committee has also developed Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on electoral dispute resolution to improve understanding of

court processes from filing to final determination, including the appeal stages before the Constitutional Court.

The AU Mission noted that its engagement with the Judiciary formed part of its consultative and supportive mandate under the African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. The Mission commended Zambia for its long-standing reputation for peaceful political transitions and expressed confidence in the country's electoral preparedness.

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