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**One Year on... Assessment of the UPND**

## Background

THE United Party for National Development (UPND) won the elections of August 12, 2021 after spending two decades in opposition. During their time in the “wilderness”, they made a lot of changes to their manifesto and promises while learning from the mistakes of the MMD and the Patriotic Front (PF) before them. As such, many people expected the New Dawn Government to implement some almost heavenly changes the moment they were voted into power. While in opposition, the UPND promised media freedom and free association and free speech for all. The country was reeling from some of the crass and draconian human rights abuses as well as unprecedented levels of corruption



Chishimba Milongo, TI-Z Member

The Patriotic Front Government exercised a strangled-hold on not only State-owned media organizations but also on private ones through covert and mostly overt threats. The closure of the Post Newspaper and Prime Television sent a strong message to media owners and personnel working in the media that it was unwise to rub the then ruling party the wrong way

From the time that the PF formed Government in 2011 to their ouster in 2021, they made it clear that the party and government were one. Thus, party functionaries such as their secretary general took precedence over cabinet ministers. In the media, party functionaries at Central Committee, province, district and even ward levels were considered newsmakers and forced themselves on newspapers, radio and television. Additionally, staff in State owned media were either recruited as PF supporters or were too scared for their jobs to have dissenting views.

## Communication Strategy

Like any other strategy, communication one needs to have all the aspects followed in strategic planning. The owners must have an idea of where they are coming from and where they want to be. Thus, they will have a vision, mission, objectives and activities which will lead them to the intended goal. The strategy must of course have very clear implementation plans which must be time bound and of course, backed by money.

Under the PF, the vision seemed to be focused on staying in power for years regardless of the governance record and of course using government funds and media for propaganda purposes. The chief government spokesperson, who was a Minister of Information, was backed by the party secretary general, various provincial chairpersons as well as party media directors. The “strategy” was to completely black out the opposition from appearing on any media whether free of paid for. Reports are still fresh of opposition leaders being threatened or beaten out of media outlets while trying to express their view

## UPND Approach

After winning the 2021 general elections, the UPND continued with their promises of having a free media and respecting freedom of speech and association. The Republican President Mr. Hakainde Hichilema has spoken on numerous occasions over his and

his government's desire to have a media atmosphere free from intimidation and draconian legislation.

Some positives have been scored and one can itemize but a few:



Hon. Chushi Kasanda, MP

Minister of Information and Media

- There has been a breath of fresh air in media circles where the Zambia Daily Mail, Times of Zambia, Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) can run stories featuring opposition and civil society leaders without facing dire consequences;
- Whilst it was unheard of under the two PF republican presidents the late Michael Sata and Edgar Lungu to address an open media conference where all manner of important national issues were discussed and clarified, President Hichilema has so far held two;
- Even though there were teething problems on the differentiation of roles among the chief government spokesperson, UPND party spokesperson and sometimes, State House, those hitches seem to have been smoothed out. It is now generally clear that the Minister of Information and State House are focused on Cabinet and the presidency respectively;
- Generally, the airwaves on the hundreds of radio stations across the country, the television stations and social media are open with very few reports of intimidation. Opposition and civil society can voice out their concerns without being threatened or outrightly assaulted;
- In fulfilment of promised freedom of the media, Prime TV was given back its operating license and is back on the air

### Challenges

The nation still faces challenges with regard to the communication plan of successive governing parties and the UPND is not immune to that.

- After a year in Government, there is no clearly formulated Communication Strategy for the New Dawn administration. Strides have been made to separate various offices in the communication sector. However, without a clearly formulated and formalized Communication Strategy in place, confusion is bound to happen every so often;
- While the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) is supposed to regulate all broadcasting media in Zambia, it is toothless when it comes to ZNBC. The national broadcaster is governed by the ZNBC Act and the Ministry of Information and Media. This brings about some unfairness as it seems only private broadcasting outlets are monitored by IBA;
- The Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act of 2021 was widely criticized when it was passed under the PF. This law is still in place today and some of its provisions were seemingly targeted at opposition parties, civil society and vocal ordinary citizens. It is the expectation of many Zambians that this law will be made more user friendly in a democracy;
- The proposed Access to Information (Bill) has changed forms over time and was once known as the Freedom of Information Bill. The proposed bill has been doing the rounds since 2013 when there was some move to present it to Parliament. Under the New Dawn Government there is a move to restart "consultations" over the same. Most concerned parties feel this is a waste of time as this proposed law has been exhaustively discussed by the majority of stakeholders. It must be presented to Parliament and passed into law by the UPND government to cement their legacy as a media friendly party;

- Lastly, though not least, there is a need to put in place some form of uniform governance structure for media houses across the country where such considerations as professionalism and decent wages are agreed upon. The shocking low wages among media practitioners are blamed for unprofessionalism and petty bribery known as *blarizo*. The desire for self-regulation among media practitioners and media owners will require a spirit of give and take with other stakeholders expecting more professional conduct from the Fourth Estate.



In all, the UPND has scored a number of laudable successes in its first nine months in power, especially where citizens' freedoms and media are concerned. Zambians can speak without looking over their shoulders at meetings or on various media platforms. This freedom must be guarded jealously. In the same breath, the UPND needs to implement those easy promises they made to the people of Zambia within their current mandate.

*The author is a communications specialist who spent two decades working in media and public relations. Although he is a member of Transparency International – Zambia, he has written this article in his personal capacity.*

## TI-Z investigation on K100 million looting in Ministry of Finance

A TI-Z investigation has established a cartel at Ministry of Finance that siphoned money amounting to K100 million (\$6.5m) between 2019 and 2021 using fictitious events to draw allowances. According to sources with expert information on the IFMIS government account 0021, almost everyone within the ministry would receive fictitious money according to their positions. However, the senior officials would receive huge amounts which over the period 2019-2021 amounted to more than K100 million (\$6.5m). In one case, officer 1, described as Master for purposes of safeguarding investigations, received a total of K5,870,914.53 (\$382,724) in gratuity payment between 2019 and 2020.

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## Meet Our Members: Grace Chikumo Mtonga

### Who would you describe yourself to be?

I am Grace Chikumo Mtonga. In the professional world I have a finance background, I'm a chartered accountant, and also studied Economics and Development Studies. But one thing is, growing up, I lived in a community where I saw people being responsible and looking out for one another. I came from a family where I had spiritual-oriented parents. Listening to the word 'corruption' as a little girl didn't really make sense, but after I went to school, graduated and went into industry, the words of my mum started to ring.

### How did your journey advocating against corruption begin?

I remember my experience in university. I passed to go into the school of Natural Sciences, because my dream as a little girl was to become a doctor and I couldn't get a bursary because there was no one to speak for me. I didn't have a father figure and my mom was back home in Chipata looking after my brothers. We live in a society where you always have to know somebody [in an institution] for things to move for you.



Grace Chikumo Mtonga  
TI-Z Member

Unfortunately, I was left out while children whose parents were ministers were given full scholarships. That taught me that we live in a society that is highly partial, a world of exclusion, and that pushed me to one day contribute my voice to a cause that eliminates corruption and exclusion. At that point, people never spoke a lot about how corrupt the MMD regime was. Conversations like 'Nichekeleko' came to be. People who are supposed to benefit from certain resources are not, and this is something TI-Z has been fighting for years.

### What are some of the hurdles you have had to endure to get to where you are today?

Growing up, especially after my father passed away, I struggled with my education due to financial constraints. When I began doing accounts, I did not have money to pay for my school fees. I ended up studying from home and just paying for the exams. As gracious as God is, I was managing to pass and I applied for an internship at PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) to become an auditor. I also encountered someone who wanted to open up an [auditing] firm and invited me, and things fell in place from there on. Because of the determination I have to fight no matter how painful it is and realizing that I have no one to speak for me but me, it gave me a focused attitude towards everything I did. In my auditing career, I rose through the ranks and my supervisors exposed me to different accounting systems and firms. At some point I even audited the Zambia Army, helping them with systems in the credit and savings union where I helped them set up systems, and they were very happy with them. I moved on to start auditing different NGOs, and it was along that path that someone who at the time was chairing Civic Forum while it was struggling and donors were threatening to pull out because certain things weren't right, I was

invited to set up the system for the organization. Little did I know I would stay there for years and impact the lives of over 87,000 people.

### **What are some life lessons you go by every day?**

"Tell the truth, even if it hurts, it's still the truth." I grew up in a home where I was taught, what is not mine is not mine, and if I need it, I have to ask the owner and wait for authorization. It's something I've even adopted in my home raising my children. The corruption we are fighting in Zambia is more of a systemic issue. We've had one government come in and go out but we are not seeing the levels of corruption decreasing. We keep seeing the divide between the rich and the poor. That made me think of how, in my own little ways, I can play a part in stopping corruption, changing the world we live in and even giving hope to a poor girl and assuring her that the sun still shines beyond the dark clouds.

### **Where are we missing it as a country, in terms of corruption?**

Unfortunately we live in a society where people want to be told what they want to hear. Because if you're truthful about certain weaknesses or gaps about a person and also of course respecting this person's feelings and rights. Unfortunately we're living in a world today where there is so much deceit, the truth has actually been overshadowed. The news carried today is not really reflective of what society is presenting but it presents what people want to listen to. Coming from such a background, I'm currently oriented differently and certainly I do not conduct myself the way everyone expects. Whether the people around me like it or not, I have to be who I am. It goes back to how I was brought up. My father was a businessman and I saw how he went out to defend people oppressed, while my mother, being a nurse, would tend to these people as a community nurse. Because of that upbringing, I'm someone who believes in fighting for something and following the prescribed channel that is acceptable by law and also is truthful to the world. In that way, I began to feel that at one point or the other I have to defend the rights of the poor. I tell people, 'If you say you're hungry, I know what it's like to live without food, to live without clothing, to not have shelter. So, I fight for the rights of the poor people in Zambia and fight against corruption, because what corruption does is it creates a reserve of resources for a small group of people while those that are befitting of those resources lose out.

### **Why did you join TI-Z?**

I joined TI-Z because I saw the inequalities, I lived them. All the injustices that happened to people around me within my sector. Even when you read the recent Auditor General's Report, if the country can lose millions of kwacha lost by government to 'ghost' workers, how much change would that money have brought to the lives of vulnerable people in Shang'ombo? How many mothers are struggling to feed their children in Kanyama and Bauleni? How many boys and girls are on the streets looking for money to get into University or just start a business? For any positive change to come through, we need to move with the masses and not sideline them. The affected citizens are part of the communities and those exist even beyond the lifetime of TI-Z. What we need to do is get into contact with the communities and allow them to voice their concerns. We need to get duty bearers more in contact with their constituencies and let them tell the communities what kind of resources they are holding and how they intend on making those resources benefit everyone.

### **Any concluding words?**

Remember, the members of parliament including the president himself are not our bosses but our servants. It's just that we have lived in a society where our minds have been tuned to give so much respect and fear to our leaders. They are accountable to us, it's our tax payers' money. Yes, they live in better homes and live better comfortable lives, but at the end of the day it's the poor Zambian woman who is trying to get to Shoprite, buy one or two things... Remember everything in this country is taxed. So we need to get the communities to have the mindset where they feel, 'I need to be told what I'm entitled to'. So, we must enhance these civic engagements and accountability mechanisms, where the electorate accounts to the people that put them in office. We need to make sure to empower the marginalized with a voice to be able to speak. Remember, for them to be enjoying these offices, someone had to queue up at 2am on Election Day to vote for them. That's the person they need to honor as they serve the country.

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## TI-Z and DEC Sign MoU

TI-Z and the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work jointly on fighting corruption and money laundering in Zambia. The two organizations, whose collective resolve is to rid Zambia of the evils of corruption, drug abuse and maladministration among other vices, are cognizant of the need to work collaboratively in order to leverage on collective strengths and abilities in the quest to contribute to the betterment of Zambia.



## TI-Z and Zambia Police Service Launch Police Ethics Training Module

On a daily basis, Police Officers are confronted with difficult decisions involving conflicting notions of what is right or wrong. TI-Z in collaboration with Zambia Police Service produced a Police Ethics Training Module aimed at enhancing integrity and professional standards among recruits in different police training colleges. In this module, police officers will learn how to examine the moral and ethical issues that exist within the policing practices. The long awaited police ethics training module at Lilayi Police College.

The Ethics Training Module was launched at Lilayi Police College in the attendance of the Inspector General of Police Lemmy Kajoba, TI-Z Programmes Manager Mr. Raymond Mutale and Democratic Governance Lead Mr. Chimuka Nachibinga.



## TI-Z and TI-Kenya SANCUS Investigative Journalism Training

Vertical accountability is premised on the assumption that citizens have both the information as well as skills necessary to hold duty bearers accountable in the utilization of public funds and decisions made on their behalf that ultimately affect service delivery in their communities. An important source of the information required for vertical accountability is the media. Journalists have a unique role in shaping the national discourse on issues of public interest including public resource management. For this reason, TI-Z, under its SANCUS project trained 20 local investigative journalists on public finance management, investigative journalism techniques and data security in order to improve reporting on public finance management issues to better inform the public as a backdrop for vertical accountability.



## Publications



Public sector auditing when conducted by supreme audit institutions, remains a significant factor in improving the lives of citizens by focusing the custodians of public resources on how well they utilize those resources (INTOSAI, 2019). According to the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), supreme audit institutions promote the efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency of public administration. Other international financial institutions such as the World Bank further attest to the view that supreme audit institutions are useful in managing public spending, ensuring financial accountability and strengthening public institutions [Read More...](#)

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is provided for in Article 162 of the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016 and is operationalized by the Constituency Development Fund Act No. 11 of 2018. The provisions in these two pieces of legislation provide the legal framework for CDF in collaboration with other laws such as the Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019, the National Planning and Budgeting Act No. 1 of



2020, the Public Finance Management Act No. 1 of 2018 and the Public Procurement Act No. 8 of 2020 and now the Constituency Development Fund Guidelines as launched by the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Rural Development in February, 2022, etc. [Read more...](#)



Institutionally, TI-Z recognizes that the 2022 Zambia National Budget has implications for each of its operational programmes and projects. This calls for an in-depth analysis of the budget to delve into its context, the changes in the budget and the implications the 2022 budget will have for the institution and for the nation at large. Thus, this budget analysis will follow this format:

- Macroeconomic analysis
- The budget process
- Democratic governance, anti-corruption and governance issues
- People engagement and accountability
- Environment and natural resource governance

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There is wide international consensus that a gender perspective is necessary for the identification and implementation of effective anti-corruption strategies<sup>1</sup>. A gender perspective can help in the designing of effective anti-corruption mechanisms in order to mitigate the gendered impact of corruption and promote policies that address both gender inequality and corruption<sup>2</sup>. Like many developing nations, Zambia has been grappling with both gender inequality and corruption. Corruption is endemic in Zambia and affects people's access to essential public services, such as health and education. Zambia ranked at 117 out of 180 countries on the 2020 Corruption Perception Index and ranked 137 out of the 162 countries on the 2019 Gender Inequality Index with an index of 0.5394. [Read more...](#)





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