



**TRANSPARENCY  
INTERNATIONAL  
ZAMBIA**

Plot No. 128, Mwambula Rd  
Jesmondine  
P.O. Box 37475  
Lusaka, Zambia  
Tel: +260 1 293649  
E-mail: [info@tizambia.org.zm](mailto:info@tizambia.org.zm)

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## **TI-Z Statement on President Hichilema's Inauguration Speech**

TI-Z followed President Hakainde Hichilema's inauguration speech and in our view, it was largely consistent with the UPND's revised manifesto for the period 2026 to 2031.

The President stated that the fight against corruption will be intensified and that public resources will be protected. He also called upon public officials to put national interest before their own personal interests, stating that prioritizing national interest will also ensure that personal interest is taken care of.

While TI-Z generally agrees with the President's pronouncements in that respect, it is important that the context within which the pronouncements are rooted be taken into account.

Firstly, just as we noted in our analysis of the UPND's manifesto, which analysis we conducted prior to the elections, the anti-corruption agenda appears to no longer be a key priority, as it is an auxiliary goal. Relating this to the President's speech, it appears that the UPND is only interested in fighting corruption as a means to improving public service delivery, and there is no longer an ethical imperative to the fight. It is also concerning that the current manifesto, which provides the broad context within which the UPND's policy direction in the anti-corruption agenda will operate, no longer contains clear measurable targets as the case was in the previous manifesto.

We further noted that the President is also suggesting that as long as what is deemed "national interest," is prioritized, the personal interest of public officials will also be

maximized. This is an erroneous assumption as there is usually a tradeoff between maximizing national interests and personal interests. In many cases, doing what is right for the country will mean getting less personal benefits.

The inauguration speech further did not address the issue of Zambia lacking key legislative and regulatory frameworks to keep these personal interests in check. We also still do not have a comprehensive declaration of assets, liabilities and interests legal framework, neither do we have one to regulate political party financing.

Therefore, although TI-Z appreciates and commends the President for including anti-corruption in his speech, it is our considered view that as the UPND administration embarks on its second term, it needs to rethink its approach in light of the seemingly reduced focus on corruption in the current manifesto.



**Maurice K. Nyambe (Mr.)**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**