AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS

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Systems of Evidence in Practice

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAAS	The American Association for the Advancement of Science
AAPR	Africa Association of Parliamentary Researchers
ACEP	African Centre for Energy Policy
ACEPA	African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs
ACET	African Centre of Economic Transformation
ACFIM	Alliance for Campaign Finance Monitoring
AEN	African Evidence Network
AfCoP	African Community of Practice
AfEA	African Evaluation Association
AFIDEP	Africa Institute for Development Policy
AfrEA	African Evaluation Association
AG	Auditor-General
AGDEN	Africa Gender and Development Evaluators Network
ANC	African National Congress
APNODE	African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation
APR	Annual Progress Report
ATC	Announcements, Tablings and Committee
ATRs	Action Taken Reports
B-CURE	Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence
CA	Constitutional Assembly
CCEDU	Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda
CDD GHANA	Ghana Center of Democratic Development
CGAs	Committee on Government Assurances
CGW	Chief Government Whip
CIMES	County Monitoring and Evaluation System
CoB	Controller of Budget
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COPE	Congress of the People
COSATU	Congress of the South African Trade Unions
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CPST	Centre of Parliamentary Studies and Training
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSRO	Committee on Standing Rules and Orders
DAP	Data for Accountability Project
DFID	Department for International Development
DGF	Democratic Governance Facility
DIRS	Directorate of Information and Research Services

DLPS	Department of Legislative and Procedural Services
DP	Democratic Party
DRS	Department of Research Services
EA	Executive Authority
EAC	East African Community
EACJ	East African Court of Justice
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
EAPI	East African Parliamentary Institute
EC	Electoral Commission
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
ESK	Evaluation Society of Kenya
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change
FES	Friedrich Ebert Foundation
FMPPLA	Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act
FPTP	First-Past-the-Post
GII	Ghana Integrity Initiative
GIJ	Ghana Institute of Journalism
GINKS	Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing
G-IPEN	Ghana Network of Independent Professional Evaluators
GMEF	Ghana Monitoring and Evaluation Forum
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HoDs	Heads of Departments
HRAC	Human Rights Advocacy Council
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICED	International Centre for Evaluation and Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDRIG	Inter-Departmental Research and Information Group
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
INASP	International Network for the Advancement of Science to Policy
INESOR	Institute of Economic and Social Research
INGSA	International Network for Government Science Advice
IPAC	Inter-Party Advisory Committee
IPS	Institute of Parliamentary Studies
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
ISSER	Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research

JEEMA	Justice Forum
KEMRI	Kenya Medical Research Institute
KEWOPA	Kenya Women Parliamentarians Association
KEWOSA	Kenya Women Senators Association
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
KLISC	Kenya Library and Information Consortium
KSG	Kenya School of Government
LEGCO	Legislative Council
LGB	Leader of Government Business
LoP	Leader of Opposition
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MED	Monitoring and Evaluation Department
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
MMS	Management Monitoring System
MNDP	Ministry of National Development Planning
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPEP	Malawi Parliament Enhancement Project
MPs	Members of Parliament
MPS	Ministerial Policy Statements
MPSI	Malawi Parliamentary Support Initiative
MPWC	Multi-Party Women's Caucus
MTBPS	Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement
NA	National Assembly
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science and Technology Innovation
NAMs	National Assembly Members
NBFP	National Budget Framework Papers
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NDC	New Democratic Congress
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NEAPACOH	Network of African Parliamentary Committees on Health
NIMES	National Monitoring and Evaluation System
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NRMO	National Resistance Movement Organisation
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme

NSS	National Service Scheme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PBO	Parliamentary Budget Office
PC-EIDM	Parliamentary Caucus on Evidence Informed Oversight and Decision-Making
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PIC	Public Investigation Committee
PUIC	Parliamentary Union of Islamic Countries
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
PMU	Policy Management Unity
PoG	Parliament of Ghana
PoZ	Parliament of Zambia
PP	Public Protector
PPM	Public Participation Model
PRS	Parliamentary Research Services
PSC	Parliament Service Commission
PWD	Person with Disability
RPLP	Regional Peer Learning Programme
SACP	South African Communist Party
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAPST	Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust
SCoPA	Standing Committee on Public Accounts
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIU	Special Investigating Unit
SO	Standing Orders
SOSC	Standing Orders Select Committee
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TMT	Top Management Team
TORs	Terms of References
TPTTP	Taking Parliament to the People
TWGs	Technical Working Groups
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UK-POST	United Kingdom Parliamentary Office on Science and Technology
UNASA	Uganda National Academy of Sciences
UN-DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliamentary Association
VOPES	Voluntary Organisations of Professional Evaluators
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy
ZaMEA	Zambia Monitoring and Evaluation Association
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZeipNET	Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network
ZEPARU	Zimbabwe Economic Policy and Analysis Research Unit
ZIPAR	Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research
ZPC	Zimbabwe Power Company
ZSA	Zambia Statistics Agency

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ZAMBIA: PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EVIDENCE USE

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Setting the stage

The Parliament of Zambia has a constitutional mandate to represent the citizens in issues of development and human rights. Among its many other responsibilities, parliament makes laws and approves government estimates of revenue and spending. These roles and responsibilities give parliament a unique development mandate. For that reason, its mechanisms for generating and utilising evidence, including its internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) arrangements that support its operations, is increasingly crucial. Efforts being made through innovations and initiatives need to be encouraged so that functional linkages between parliament and all other levels of development are strengthened.

The Zambian system has three organs of government – the executive, the judiciary and the legislature. The National Assembly is the legislature and plays a crucial role in the governance of the country. Parliament has been in existence since 1964 when Zambia obtained its independence from Britain. The roles and responsibilities of the National Assembly are embedded in its vision and mission statements, respectively. The vision of the National Assembly of Zambia is: *To be a model legislature for democracy and good governance* while the mission statement is: *Committed to effectively and efficiently carrying out its legislative, oversight, representative and budgetary functions.*

In Zambia, Cabinet ministers are appointed by the president and are therefore part of the executive arm of government. In addition to their executive roles, these Cabinet ministers continue to represent their constituencies as MPs and are required to fulfil dual roles. MPs' roles range from attending and debating in parliamentary sessions and committees to ratifying appointments of constitutional office bearers such as the Attorney-General, Auditor-General, Solicitor-General, Director of Public Prosecution, High Court judges, Supreme Court judges and other important constitutional appointments made by the president.

MPs also oversee the executive by participating in committee work. For example, MPs work through the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to examine the accounts of appropriation of sums granted by the National Assembly to meet public expenditure and the reports of the Auditor-General on these accounts and such related accounts. The PAC also exercises the powers conferred on it under Article 117 (5) of the Constitution of the Republic of

Zambia. MPs exercise budgetary control over the executive in matters of public finances by means of parliamentary committees and debates when budget has been presented to parliament by the Minister of Finance. It is worth noting that no tax can be levied or expenditure incurred by the government without the approval of parliament.

Electoral system and parliamentary composition

The electoral system of the National Assembly of Zambia is mixed. For presidential elections, a 50% plus one threshold is required for a candidate to be declared president. For issues concerning constitutional matters, there is a two-thirds majority requirement for legislation to be passed. On all other matters, the 'winner-takes-all' arrangement applies.

In Zambia, parliamentary elections are held every five years to elect MPs in the 156 constituencies. To contest parliamentary elections, one must meet the minimum requirements set for the parliamentary seat which include being over 21 years of age and also possessing a School Leavers' Certificate (Grade 12). After the elections, the president has the constitutional privilege of nominating not more than eight MPs. Thus, the number of MPs including the Speaker, 1st Deputy Speaker and the Vice President (president's running mate) brings the total number of MPs in the Zambian Parliament to 167.

The breakdown is as follows:

- ▶ Elected MPs – 156
- ▶ Nominated – 8
- ▶ Speaker – 1
- ▶ Vice President (president's running mate) – 1
- ▶ First Deputy Speaker – 1

The nominated MPs enjoy the same rights and privileges as their elected counterparts who represent constituencies. This means that they participate in all the business of the House and have the same voting powers. The rationale behind the nomination of eight MPs by the president is to meet the needs of special interest groups which may have been excluded in the ordinary elections where most MPs are sponsored by political parties. Ideally, the nomination is intended to represent disadvantaged groups such as females, the youth and the disabled. Further, the president may nominate to parliament any person

deemed to possess exceptional skills. For example, the current Minister of Finance served in the same portfolio under a different administration from 2008 to 2011. The immediate past Minister of Labour immensely contributed to the growth of the labour movement in Zambia as a woman. These appointments were in recognition of their experience and achievements in their respective fields.

It is debatable whether the nominated MPs only represent the interests of the executive as they do not represent a particular constituency. As backbenchers, the nominated MPs, can hold the executive to account. If presented with solid data, backbenchers can participate freely in governance matters through parliament. It is clear that there may be some misgivings about their objectivity because it could be argued that, as presidential nominees, they would intrinsically be obliged to serve the interest of the executive – especially when the House is split on a particular matter. For example, conflict is bound to arise in cases where the individual MP's position does not sit well with the sponsoring party's official position. In Zambia, the whipping system requires MPs to toe the party's line.

Critics argue that party positions often supersede what evidence dictates, or what citizens want. However, it is not uncommon in the Zambian Parliament for MPs to 'rebel' and side with positions that they believe to be credible, especially in the face of proper evidence. These dynamics have implications on evidence use in parliament and, in general, on the credibility and impartiality of its oversight role.

The 1st Session of the 13th National Assembly of Zambia, which was ushered into office on 12th August 2021, is composed of the following Members of Parliament:

Table 8.1 Composition of the Zambian Parliament

No.	Name of Political Party/Office	Number of MPs
1.	Patriotic Front (PF)	60
2.	United Party for National Development (UPND)	82
3.	Party for National Unity and Progress (PNUP)	1
4.	Independent Members of Parliament	13
5.	Nominated Members of Parliament	8
6.	Vice President (PF & Leader of Government Business)	1

Table 8.1 Composition of the Zambian Parliament (continued)

No.	Name of Political Party/Office	Number of MPs
7.	Speaker	1
8.	1stDeputy Speaker	1
Total		167

Figure 8.1 Composition of Parliament by Political Party

The United Party for National Development (UNDP) commands 55 percent of the MPs. The Patriotic Front (PF) has got the second largest representation in Parliament with 60 MPs translating into 36 percent. The 13 Independent MPs account for 8 percent of parliament. The Party for National Unity and Progress (PNUP) have a 1 percent representation. As stated above, the President nominates not more than 8 Members of Parliament. Additionally, the Speaker of the National Assembly is elected together with the First Deputy Speaker (elected from outside Parliament under election of Presiding Officers) and Second Deputy Speaker. For the speakers, each party in the House floats the names of its preferred candidates.

From Figure 8.1 above, it can be noted that the uneven party representation, together with the whipping system, entails that the ruling party has a high

probability of passing bills that would be approved by Parliament given its proportion of the house. This can be attributed to the whipping system where party position supersedes individual MP's position.

The gender representation of members in the Zambian Parliament is 140 males and 24 females as shown in figure 8.2 below:

Figure 8.2 Composition of Parliament by gender

Clearly, there is poor representation of women in Parliament just like in other key positions in Zambia. In the era of advocating for gender equality, there is need for even representation by recognizing the importance of adequate women representation as being vital for policy making. Notwithstanding this, some efforts which call for better female representation in Parliament are being made to address this gender disparity.

In terms of experience in Parliamentary work, it is difficult to ascertain the actual numbers as some seats are being petitioned by losing candidates. However, 58 percent of MPs were first-timers without any experience in Parliamentary

practice and procedure in the 12th National Assembly of Zambia. Below is the breakdown of MP experience in Parliamentary work in the 12th National Assembly:

- First elected – 58%
- Second elected – 25%
- Third elected – 13%
- Forth elected – 3%
- Fifth elected – 1%

Parliament’s organogram

The National Assembly of Zambia operates on a dual system – the administrative function and the political function. The structure of the National Assembly of Zambia is shown below.

Figure 8.3 Organogram of the National Assembly of Zambia (Administrative Structure)

Figure 8.4 Organogram of the National Assembly of Zambia (Political structure)

The Vice President – the Vice President serves as the leader of government business in the House and is the sole custodian of all government activities brought before parliament.

The Speaker – the Office of the Speaker is established under Article 69 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Zambia and is the custodian of parliamentary procedure, Bills and all parliamentary papers and publications. The Speaker is the guardian of the dignity and privileges of the House through whom MPs claim and enjoy their rights of access to the president. In addition to presiding over the debates of the House, the Speaker physically chairs the Standing Orders Committee and is the chairperson of all Sessional and Select Committees.

The Deputy Speakers (First and Second) – the Constitution of the Zambia allows for two MPs to deputise the Speaker.

The Government Chief Whip – the government Chief Whip is an official of the ruling party whose task is to ensure party discipline in the legislature and to ensure that members of the party vote according to party positions, rather than according to their own individual ideology. Whips are the party's 'enforcers' and some allege that this conflicts with the mandate of representing the electorate.

Leader of the Opposition – the Leader of the Opposition has the role of holding government to account. This entails questioning government on its actions and policies and proposing alternatives.

Cabinet Ministers – hold ministerial leadership positions in the various ministries to which they are assigned, and they are part of both the legislature and the executive. There are currently 30 Cabinet ministers in Zambia.

Provincial Ministers – there are 10 provinces in Zambia and activities in these provinces are under the provincial leadership of provincial ministers.

Members of Parliament – under the Zambian electoral system, one may serve as an MP through party sponsorship, nomination by the president, or by running as an independent candidate.

Political party dynamics, temporality, and incentives for evidence use

The Zambian parliamentary system has undergone three stages since Zambia's political independence from Britain on 24 October 1964. The three stages are:

- ▶ Multiparty system (1964 to 1972);
- ▶ One party system (1972 to 1990); and
- ▶ Multiparty system (1991 to date).

Prior to independence, two main political parties existed in Zambia and these played a vital role in the process of obtaining independence. This was the beginning of the first multiparty system. At the time, the Zambian Constitution provided for 80 MPs of which 75 were directly elected and 5 were presidentially nominated seats. By 1972, the so-called First Republic came to an end and advent of the Second Republic ushered in a one-party state which rendered redundant the political parties existing at the time. In 1991, pressure from trade unions and the creation of a political party called the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), resulted in a revolution which led to the re-introduction of the multiparty system which exists to date. Since 1964 the number of parliamentary seats has continuously increased with the current number standing at 156.

Political parties continue to play vital roles in advancing the development agenda in Zambia. Despite the notable changes in the political systems, political parties adhere to their party manifestos and constitutions and this is maintained by the whipping system in parliament. The opposition and the government have distinct whips who ensure that discipline prevails and that the agendas of the respective parties are adhered to. This means that

parliamentary business and accountability mechanisms predominantly follow party lines. Consequently, it can be argued that individual member's desire to pursue and use evidence is, to some extent, undermined.

While it is evident that some MPs are motivated to hold the executive accountable on many public issues, it is also notable that other matters requiring serious interventions by the parliament do not receive the necessary attention from MPs. This could be attributed to the low motivation and incentive system for evidence provision and use by the National Assembly. While efforts have been made to boost the supply side of evidence, the demand for evidence from MPs remains low. Thus, the inability to achieve an appropriate equilibrium is a concern in the Zambian Parliament.

Systems of evidence use in the Zambian parliament

The demand for the use of evidence by the MPs in the Zambian Parliament is typically low. According to the Evaluation Report of the National Assembly of Zambia Strategic Plan 2015-2019, some of the reasons advanced for the low demand include:

- ▮ Lack of appreciation of evidence leading to low utilisation, especially when MPs are of the view that such evidence is unlikely to be used to inform decision- and policy-making;
- ▮ Lack of skills to identify which evidence would be useful; and
- ▮ Lack of sufficient time to scrutinise Bills owing to the prevailing system.

Significant efforts have been made by government and its stakeholders to enhance the demand for and use of evidence in the Zambian Parliament. The first deliberate step was to ensure that evaluation benefits were realised through the introduction of the M&E functions across government institutions. In that regard, the government, through the Ministry of Finance and, more recently, through the Ministry of National Development Planning, established the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System (G-M&E system). The G-Wide M&E system is a robust public sector institution-wide system whose main objective is to help monitor, track, evaluate and measure various multi-sectoral changes arising from development interventions implemented across government.

The 2018 National M&E Policy instructs all government institutions to create M&E structures responsible for the function of M&E. In compliance with the National M&E Policy, the National Assembly of Zambia set up a M&E department in 2019 as part of the parliamentary reforms. The department’s mandate is confined to monitoring and evaluating the institution’s internal performance. The M&E Department also acts as a bridge in reporting to the broader government-wide M&E system which attempts to track progress of National Development Plans (NDPs). However, as the M&E Department is still at a developmental stage, it has many limitations in terms of human, technical and infrastructural capacities which prevent it from fulfilling its designated M&E mandate across the institution. Currently, the M&E Department is understaffed with a staff complement of three. These include the Principal Clerk (Head of Department), the Deputy Principal Clerk and an M&E Officer.

The proposed (yet to be approved) organogram of the ideal M&E structure for the Zambian Parliament is shown below.

Figure 8.5 Organogram of the ideal M&E structure for the Zambian Parliament

The research department of the Zambian Parliament also plays a significant role in supporting evidence use. The 13 researchers that serve the National Assembly of Zambia have the mandate of coordinating and undertaking

research tasks that feed into parliamentary processes. The breakdown of staff in the Research Department is as follows:

- ▮ Principal Clerk – Research – 1
- ▮ Deputy Principal Clerks – 2
- ▮ Senior Research Officers – 2
- ▮ Research Officers – 6
- ▮ Research Assistants – 2

Six (6) researchers directly support the work of eleven (11) portfolio committees and two (2) general purpose committees. The support includes providing administrative and technical services to the committees with data and information from internal and external sources as demanded by various committees being collected and shared by the research department. However, as the case is with the M&E Department, the research department remains too under-staffed to perform its work effectively.

The primary democratic function of parliament is that on behalf of the electorate it oversees government administration and subjects its activities to detailed scrutiny. To fulfil this important function, parliamentary committees scrutinise the administration of government to ensure accountability. Parliament probes any maladministration and makes recommendations for improvement.

The Zambian parliamentary committee system is established within the laws of Zambia. Article 80 of the Zambian Constitution and Standing Order 165 provide for the formation of parliamentary committees in the National Assembly. The current committee system has been in existence as far back as the pre-independence era. This system brings the legislature face-to-face with bureaucrats, thus increasing the information available to parliament on governmental issues. Through committees such as Public Accounts, the line ministries and other wings of the executive appear before parliament as witnesses

Committees are at liberty to call any person and/or request any document that will assist in their work. The feedback from these engagements is used to improve public sector decisions, policymaking and practice.

As can be seen in Table 8.2 below, there are various committees with different mandates in the Zambian Parliament. Of particular interest to evidence use in Zambia is the “Committee on Government Assurances as well as the Budget

Committee. The Committee on Government Assurances is mandated to scrutinise all assurances, promises and undertakings made by the Vice President and Cabinet Ministers on the floor of the House, with the objective of ensuring that these are implemented, and to comment on delays in implementation and also the adequacy of the action taken" (Parliament of Zambia, 2020).

The Budget Committee is mandated to report on economics, organisational improvement, and the efficiency of administration reform consistent with the policy underlying the estimates, and to examine whether financial resources are allocated according to the limits of policy implied in the estimates. It also studies matters related to coordination, control and monitoring of the national budget (Parliament of Zambia, 2020).

The 13th National Assembly consists of a total of fifteen (15) portfolio committees, as shown in Table 8.2 below.

Table 8.2 Committees in the Zambian Parliament

Type of committee	Committee name
House Keeping (internal affairs)	Standing Orders Committee
	House Business Committee
	Parliamentary Reforms and Modernisation Committee
	Committee on Privileges, Absences and Support Services
General Purpose (watchdog /investigatory)	Public Accounts Committee
	Planning and Budgeting Committee
	Committee on Delegated Legislation
	Committee on Government Assurances
	Public Accounts Committee
Portfolio (scrutinising functions of government)	Committee on Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources
	Committee on Media, Information and Communication Technologies
	Committee on Education, Science and Technology
	Committee on Energy, Water Development and Tourism
	Committee on Health, Community Development and Social Services
	Committee on Legal Affairs, Human Rights and Governance

Table 8.2 Committees in the Zambian Parliament (continued)

Type of committee	Committee name
	Committee on National Guidance and Gender Matters
	Committee on Local Government Accounts
	Committee on Local Governance, Housing and Chiefs' Affairs
	Committee on National Economy, Trade and Labour matters
	Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
	Committee on Parastatal Bodies
	Committee on Cabinet Affairs
	Committee on Transport, Works and Supply
	Committee Sport, Youth and Child Affairs
Select (ad hoc)	Expanded Budget Committee
	Select

In terms of composition, these committees typically consist of 10 MPs drawn from different political parties. In constituting the committees, the Standing Orders Committee ensures that there is equitable representation across the political divide. Gender balance, professional/academic qualifications and experience are additional factors considered. Membership to committees is for the full life of each parliament. Chairpersons and vice chairpersons are elected at the first meeting of each committee. A quorum requires half of the committee members to be present at a meeting.

The functioning of each committee is supported by a Clerking Officer who is responsible for its day-to-day administration. The Clerking Officer coordinates the programme of work for a particular committee. Once endorsed, the programme of work becomes binding, and MPs follow it to guide the implementation of annual activity.

Parliamentary staff prepare background papers, briefing notes and draft recommendations/reports for use by MPs in committees. All summoned witnesses are asked to prepare memoranda to guide deliberations. Except for the House Keeping Committee meetings which are held in camera, recordings of the proceedings of all other committees are broadcast nationally.

Evidence for the committees comes from several sources which include government documents, research papers, and think-tanks who hail from across sectors such as academia, research institutions, professional associations, civil society, etc. In the Zambian Parliament, various players contribute to evidence – both for demand and supply. In terms of demand, MPs make the most calls for evidence to support their work. On the supply side, think-tanks such as the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR) and the University of Zambia Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR) are the chief providers of evidence. Cooperating partners, faith-based organisations, other interest groups and individuals either provide or demand evidence for use in the Zambian parliament. For instance, parliament has the power to summon witnesses to make submissions on specific issues. Overall, it is also important to mention that when it comes to evidence use by parliament, the citizens of Zambia also have a role to play. Parliament always invites witnesses to submit evidence on matters of national importance.

The committee system in Zambia does not operate without some challenges. For instance, the Standing Orders do not provide for minority reports. This means that consensus must be reached at committee stage or the report falls away. This system can potentially suppress dissenting views if they are in minority. The other challenge is high turnover of MPs. After the 2016 general elections alone, 40% were returning MPs, 56% were new MPs while 4% were new constituencies. Further, the conduct of business in committees is time-bound and this tends to create an impression that the scrutiny of Bills, national budgets and other development processes are rushed. Similarly, the fact that committees have fixed programmes of work renders the ability to respond to emerging issues ineffective. For example, despite the outbreak of Covid-19 and the compelling evidence pointing to significant emerging challenges, committees of parliament continued work on issues as outlined in original work programmes. Few committees, including the Budget Committee, deviated from their original programmes of work to consider supplementary budgets associated with Covid-19.

The National Assembly of Zambia includes parliamentary caucuses whose role in evidence use is vitally important. These caucuses are voluntary groups of MPs with interests in specific subject areas. They operate outside the normal committee system, but the emphasis of their work is to allow MPs to interrogate in detail various matters such as climate change, development evaluation, women's issues and so on.

Technical capacity and practice of the parliamentary support function

The National Assembly of Zambia has various support functions from different departments and committees. For instance, the Research Department plays a key role in providing relevant data and information (evidence) to the institution. However, this section focuses on the technical capacity and practice of the M&E parliamentary support function.

Prior to 2019 the M&E Department did not exist. The responsibilities of the department include monitoring the National Assembly's departmental activities, providing data on the progress of activities implemented, and communicating regularly with decision makers, potential funding bodies, and local internal stakeholders. M&E increases the efficiency of the planning process and implementation of measures to monitor and assess performance of parliament. Thus, the department assists in optimising the use of resources through provision of empirical evidence to inform future planning, budgeting and implementation.

The M&E Department focuses on the promotion of evaluation practices through the annual tabling of departmental performance reports and strategic-level reports. The Clerk, as Chief Executive Officer, is the overseer of departmental activities and is custodian of all records and documents through which the performance on planned activities is tracked. However, the M&E Department faces challenges such as:

- ▶ Lack of experience and skills in M&E in Parliamentary setups;
- ▶ Limited financial and human resources;
- ▶ Gaps in technical knowledge with regard to defining performance indicators; and difficulties in the retrieval, collection, analysis, preparation and interpretation of data due to limited data availability from the departments; and
- ▶ Inefficient and inadequate M&E practices.

To tackle these issues, key recommendations regarding evaluation procedures, context and communication between departments, and measures that could be considered include:

- ▶ Ensuring that the Government of the Republic of Zambia facilitates effective and efficient evaluation practices by reviewing of all monitoring, evaluation and research activities to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the responsible managers;
- ▶ Building capacity for discharging roles effectively to optimise data collection and reporting practices;

- ▶ Employing more staff in the M&E Department;
- ▶ Sensitising staff of the National Assembly on the importance of evaluation practices and the potential benefits for planning processes and desired results of these processes;
- ▶ Improving the financial capability of the M&E Department; and
- ▶ Equipping the M&E Department with sufficient ICTs to function effectively in the Covid-19 era.

Role of Parliament within the Government-wide (G-wide) M&E system

The role of parliament is acknowledged in the G-Wide M&E system as that of providing legislation and oversight. However, there is no alignment with parliamentary control and oversight procedures. Parliament, as the arm of government tasked with overseeing the legislation system and approval of government estimates of revenues and expenditures (that is, national budgets), could play a significant role in the successful implementation and strengthening of the G-Wide M&E system (Government of Zambia, 2016; 2017).

The Annual Progress Reports (APRs), however, and other M&E-related documents, do not mention parliament's role in strengthening M&E functions in the public sector. It is not clear how parliamentary control and oversight procedures are being undertaken in the context of national M&E (Government of Zambia, 2009; 2010; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2016; 2017).

Furthermore, other than mention of the way that parliament is planning to participate in cluster advisory groups, there is currently no clear evidence of parliament's M&E-strengthening role. While parliament performs its traditional role of oversight through committees and debates on the floor of the House, visits to selected project and programme sites could serve to engage parliament in a more interactive way.

The G-Wide M&E efforts remain uncoordinated and fragmented in terms of linkages and contribution to the functionality and operational arrangements of the system (Government of Zambia, 2015; 2017). For example, although parliament is involved in discussions on National Development Plans (NDPs), there is scant evidence on how this engagement takes place. Parliament participates in the development planning process through parliamentary

constituency offices at ward and district levels during the NDP consultative process, though to a limited extent. Further, parliament's participation is critical in providing oversight during the implementation of NDPs, especially through annual budgetary hearings and approvals.

The G-Wide M&E system does not have a strategy in place for disseminating M&E outputs on poverty to parliament. Instead, there is only a general dissemination of poverty data to all national stakeholders through the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZSA) reports, APRs and related reports. Presentations and reports to Parliament are unstructured and are typically voluminous and do not have user-friendly summaries for easier reference by parliamentarians. In that regard, the G-Wide M&E system is weak because parliament plays an oversight role in the governance system of the country.

A stronger G-Wide M&E system should be structured in such a way that parliament and its committees would play a dual role of supplying M&E data/information and demanding M&E outputs to enhance its participation in the development process of the country. On the supply side, this means parliament should elicit evidence from within the institution or collect it from other external sources and make it available for use by stakeholders within the operations of the National Assembly. Parliament could gather evidence from a wide range of sources including evaluation reports, research studies, surveys, etc in order to hold the executive arm of government accountable.

The G-Wide M&E system recognises parliament as one of the major M&E information users. However, there appear to be fragmented issues of appropriateness, timing, timeliness and the format of the necessary M&E outputs required to meet the needs of parliament. Although general reports are disseminated to parliament, there is need for more innovative data presentation and visualisation, rather than the current format of bulky reports (APRs, etc). Further, M&E data and information would be more useful to parliament if it was produced at constituency level. Currently, data is produced only at provincial and national level even though the National Assembly collects some data for its internal use (programming) (Kanyamuna, 2019). In addition, the G-Wide M&E system would benefit from a well-defined framework for engaging parliament. For example, there should be a way to link what happens in parliament and constituencies with government programmes across the country. If such information is harmonised and synchronised within a functional G-Wide M&E

system, parliament could operate more effectively with improved evidence-based policy and decision-making processes. Parliament would then be better placed to demand proper accountability and transparency from the executive branch of government based on evidence and real-time information supplied by a stronger G-Wide M&E system. Similarly, additional evidence would be drawn from other sources such as universities, CSOs, citizens and others and could be used to cross-check information provided through the executive arm, including the G-Wide M&E system.

In terms of parliament's use of information from the G-Wide M&E system, no clear evidence is available to prove the practice. The debates by parliamentarians are guided mainly by topical issues (usually popular media subjects) and some reports tabled by the executive. However, parliament has been using data from the statistical office (ZSA) to inform policy and to obtain information on various projects being implemented in the country. In the absence of a functional G-Wide M&E system, parliamentarians use various sources of information and these include the media and other unsubstantiated sources. Thus, when reliable internal and external information sources are established, it becomes easier for researchers in parliament to be able to provide valid, relevant and reliable evidence and effectively synthesise it for MPs' uptake and use. This highlights prevailing concerns regarding credibility, reliability and relevance.

Through Action Taken Reports (ATRs), parliament asks for explanations from the executive on various topics of interest. In such cases, the executive is compelled to respond by providing evidence on issues raised. In this regard, it can be argued that parliament has the capacity to use M&E information effectively. However, before being used by parliamentarians, such information must be appropriately packaged, presented, simplified and consistent. The M&E Department is required to package the evidence as required by various stakeholders in parliament. Needless to say, this is currently not done to the required standard (Kanyamuna, 2019).

Networks and other innovations to facilitate evidence use in the parliament of Zambia

Since the establishment of the M&E Department in 2019, the National Assembly of Zambia has taken a keen interest in improving and promoting evaluation practices within parliament. For example, the Zambian Chapter of

APNODE has been formed with the M&E Department as its Secretariat. The formation of APNODE may help bridge the gap between stakeholders in relation to evidence use as the Zambian chapter will attempt to address both the supply and demand aspects. It would be ideal to reach the level where evidence is made available to parliamentarians who appreciate its importance in the development process. National Assembly management is committed to this cause as it sees APNODE as a vehicle for improving government capacity for transparency and accountability.

The National Assembly of Zambia also collaborates with the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results-Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) in the area of promoting M&E in parliament. To cement this relationship, the two institutions have signed a 5-year MoU which will guide the partnership. The two institutions are in the process of developing and implementing a programme of capacity strengthening, technical assistance, research and knowledge sharing in accordance with the principles of evaluation and research.

Parliament is strengthening ties with the Ministry of National Development Planning (MNDP) which has the responsibility of coordinating the G-Wide M&E system. As a starting point, it has been proposed that parliament staff be oriented in its Management Monitoring System (MMS) which is being rolled out as a data collection and reporting tool across government. Further, parliament is part of the cluster advisory group on governance and participates in activities coordinated by the secretariat (Ministry of Justice) which culminate in quarterly reports to the president on progress made regarding the implementation of activities in the 7th National Development Plan.

In the recent past, the National Assembly of Zambia has forged strategic partnerships with M&E institutions such as the Zambia Monitoring and Evaluation Association (ZaMEA), the African Evaluation Association (AfREA), and the African Community of Practice on Managing for Development Results (AfCoP). Efforts are also being made to establish a working relationship with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the SADC M&E network for possible support. These collaborations are all aimed at strengthening M&E processes and promoting evidence use which will, in turn, consolidate and strengthen evaluation practices in parliament.

Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated that in terms of adopting, implementing and strengthening the supply and demand for and use of evidence internally and externally, the National Assembly of Zambia has shown commitment at both organisational and leadership level. As could be appreciated from the structural and organisational arrangements, there are many stakeholders within and outside parliament who play key roles in ensuring that the practice of using evidence is institutionalised and sustained. Various stakeholders, including the executive arm of government, the judiciary, civil society, academia and other research-related institutions, offer an opportunity for strengthening the agenda for transformational use of evidence in the Zambian parliament.

However, in order for parliament to strengthen evidence use, it should restructure itself to respond to the prevailing challenges and strive for a culture of generating and utilising evidence in its parliamentary processes. Practically, this may compel redefining the roles and responsibilities of the M&E Department, Research Department and Parliamentary Committees by creating new initiatives to strengthen the M&E function, as well as other functions supporting evidence use. By doing so, the culture of supplying and demanding evidence will truly empower the Zambian parliament and parliamentarians to facilitate development based on sound evidence and thereby increase efficiency and effectiveness in the legislature.

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