

Media Statement

For Immediate Release: Thursday, February 27, 2025

REFLECTION OF THE ZAMSTATS BOARD ON REPORTS RELATED TO THE RECENTLY RELEASED REVISED CENSUS AND POPULATION SUMMARY REPORT (VOL 2)

LUSAKA – Prior to the 2022 Census of Population and Housing, and in accordance with the provisions of the Statistics Act No. 13 of 2018, Section 22(1) Subsection 7, the Minister of Finance and National Planning declared that a National Census be undertaken in the Republic, by Statutory Instrument No. 92 of 2021.

The Minister of Finance and National Planning Dr Situmbeko Musokotwane, MP, launched the revised Census (2022) and Population Summary Report on Tuesday, 25th February, 2025. It has since come to our attention that there are some media reports alleging that Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats) was directed to exclude some census data on languages and ethnicity from the Population Summary Report. We have no record of and did not receive any instruction to that effect.

In similar vein, ZamStats has not removed or excluded any person or persons at any level from its operations on the basis of tribe or ethnicity as some media outlets are reporting. Placements are the preserve of established state agencies and these are done on merit. Therefore, the allegation in the media and public space should be treated as false, unfounded and perhaps an attempt to discredit the competence and integrity of the national statistical system. ZamStats is committed to upholding the integrity and international standards of the statistics that it produces and the revised Census (2022) and Population Summary Report was produced in observation on that basis.

As fellow citizens and stakeholders across the globe may be aware, ZamStats is a corporate body established under the Statistics Act No. 13 of 2018. The Agency's operations are governed by a Board of Directors which reports to the Minister of Finance and National Planning, as the Minister Responsible for Statistics. ZamStats is Zambia's primary source of official statistics and is mandated by law to coordinate and supervise the National Statistical System.

In view of the foregoing, we restate, as we did on Tuesday, that the Population Summary Report is one of the various census products that ZamStats is releasing from the 2022 Census. The report is part of a broader suite of outputs which include detailed analytic and descriptive reports covering vital demographic aspects, including language and ethnicity, marital status, and vital statistics.

Related to the above, we would like to reflect on recent comments made by the Chairperson of the Public Service Commission regarding the validity of the 2022 Census Population and Housing Revised Summary Report. The Chairperson observed that in a few wards (*fifteen to be precise*), there are data mismatches whereby the number of registered voters are different from the 2022 Census Population Count. The variance compared to the total population is statistically insignificant (way below 1%) and there are legitimate and explainable reasons for such differences. Discrepancies in voter registration and census data can arise from several factors. These two processes serve different purposes, undertaken on different timelines, and utilise different methodologies, which can lead to variations in the figures reported.

A census of population and Housing targets at counting every person at their place of residence, capturing socio-economic information, and is expected to be conducted every ten years. The exercise includes **everyone, regardless of citizenship or legal status**. In contrast, voter registration specifically refers to individuals who are eligible and have registered to vote in an election. This process can be influenced by various factors, including eligibility requirements, access to registration centres, and abode.

The Board takes this opportunity to reassure the public and stakeholders that ZamStats DID NOT receive any directive or instruction to change any figure or census report parameter. To the contrary, ZamStats released the outcome of the 2022 Census as captured during enumeration and according to the provisions of the Statistics Act No. 13 of 2018.

Suffice to say, ZamStats operates as a professional entity and is the primary source of official statistics in Zambia, guided by its mandate to provide comprehensive and accurate statistical information. The Agency's data-release decision-making process is founded on rigorous adherence to established international statistical standards as provided for in the United Nations Fundamental Principles for Official Statistics. In this regard, ZamStats assures the public that the Revised Census Population Summary Report (Vol 2) is credible, valid and published in accordance with the law.

The credibility of census data is paramount this is why ZamStats remains steadfast in our commitment to transparency and role as a trusted and source of credible official statistics in Zambia.

ZamStats looks forward to sharing the full breadth of our census findings with the public and clarifying any misconceptions.

Issued by:

(Original Signed)

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CHAIRPERSON - ZAMSTATS BOARD OF DIRECTORS