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Citizens Forum Zambia

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About the author

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INTRODUCTION

Zambia embraced plural politics in 1991. The multi-party democracy has, however, not yet brought stable and mature politics and governance to the country. Almost two decades after its introduction, it is still not clear whose interests Zambian politics really serve. The country's citizens have largely remained spectators in the development process of their country, with little opportunities to be engaged in the decisions that rule their lives.

Civic organisations and individual citizens have made efforts to enhance the political involvement of ordinary people. In this research two such initiatives are analysed: the Oasis Forum, anchored in the campaign against the unconstitutional third-term bid by the country's president in 2001; and the Citizens Forum, born in 2004 out of the realisation that so many citizens were not participating in running the affairs of their country.

The two are membership organisations, but different. While the Oasis Forum members are organisations – namely, the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ), Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Council (NGOCC) and the Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) – the Citizens Forum comprises individual members.

This paper documents *the history of the two organisations*, discusses the strategies they have used in their campaigns, as well as some significant challenges encountered through the years.

1.1 Objectives of the study and questions addressed

The study aims to establish the contribution made by the Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum to the political processes in Zambia, and their significance for citizens' engagement with government.

The specific questions are as follows:

- What is the genesis of the two movements? What factors led to their formation and who were key players?
- What new aspects of political involvement have the two organisations brought on the scene, filling up the gaps left by other civil society organisations?
- What strategies are being employed by the CF/Oasis Forum ?

- Has the execution of activities depended on external funding, and if so, has external support been a determining factor for their performance?
- How has parliament/councils been responding to the campaigns of the Oasis Forum/Citizens Forum, and how have individual MPs and/or Councillors been rendering support to the activities of the two organisations?

1.2 Methodology of the study

The study was carried out through two main processes: namely, literature review and consultations. The literature included project proposals, activity reports, annual reports, media reports (mostly newspapers), and minutes of meetings. There was a consultative meeting involving founding members of the Oasis/Citizens Forum. There were also some consultations with individuals from among the founding members.

Initially three types of questionnaires for three categories of individuals were developed and distributed among them. These three categories are: (1) members of the Oasis Forum, (2) members of the Citizens Forum, and (3) those who belonged to both the Oasis/Citizens Forum. Unfortunately, none of the individuals approached responded, and as the date for a validation meeting had already been set and communicated to them at the time the questionnaire was sent out, the validation meeting was thus transformed into a consultative meeting.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THE TWO FORUMS

Among the developments and issues that led to the formation of the Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum were: (1) the third term campaign in 2001; (2) the need to promote a culture of constitutionalism, with a new constitution; (3) the lack of citizens' participation in governance; and (4) the political leadership vacuum.

2.1 The third-term campaign

When Zambia reverted to multi-party democracy in 1991, the party that eventually came into power – the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) – promised to facilitate a process to lay down a Republican Constitution that would strengthen democracy. Consequently the 1996 amendments to the Constitution limited the tenure for the presidency to two terms of five years.

At the beginning of the year 2000, as the second term for Zambian President Frederick Chiluba was coming to an end, there were calls to amend the Constitution to allow him to run for a third term. When it became clear that President Chiluba was determined to amend the Republican Constitution to his advantage, some members of parliament, churches, and other civil society organisations began to speak out in opposition to amending the Constitution. During the November 2000 session of Parliament, MPs refused to adopt a parliamentary committee report that seemed to suggest that President Chiluba's two-term limit in office should be counted from 1996 when the Republican Constitution was amended to provide for a presidential limit in office.¹ On 23 January 2001, church leaders from three church mother bodies met and issued a short but powerful

¹ *The Post*, 15 November 2000, p. 3

statement which opposed the third term, and called on Chiluba to make his stand on the issue known.²

The statement by the church leaders underscored their leading role in the fight against the third-term bid and it had a big influence on public opinion. In February 2001 churches, civil society organisations and lawyers convened a public meeting to further mobilise public opinion against the threat of manipulation of the Republican Constitution to keep the incumbent president in power. This resulted in the formation of an alliance called the Oasis Forum, the name *Oasis* deriving from the name of the restaurant where the public meeting took place. This meeting attracted in excess of 1,200 people with very diverse backgrounds, including church leaders members of parliament, 58 traditional leaders, senior citizens, lawyers, civil society activists, and members of community-based organisations from remote rural areas.

This was not the first time that people from different walks of life got together to fight a common cause. The demands to revert to a multi-party system of government in 1990/91 were also made by a cross-section of the Zambian people who mounted a successful campaign that led to a multi-party election in October 1991. In 2001 the people thus came together to defend what they had fought for ten years before.³

The campaign against the third term was however very rough.⁴ District Administrators (DAs) led MMD cadres to ‘deal with’ or ‘sort out’ dissenters. A clique of DAs and some MMD cadres began to call themselves the ‘Ku Klux Klan’, advocating violence in dealing with anti-third term campaigners and sympathisers.⁵ Apart from the DAs, the Office of the President (OP) and the Intelligence also took measures to make it appear to the public that many Zambians around the country wanted President Chiluba to continue as President beyond the constitutional two-term limit. Among their targets were traditional leaders,

² The Monitor, 26 January–1 February 2001, pp. 1-2

³ Examples of joint statements and letters by the Churches go back to 1978 when they issued a statement on elections. Through the years they have also written on the church’s concern for human development in Zambia, on the AIDS crisis, on the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, on the call for legitimising the new Zambian constitution, on violence and civil disobedience, and on calls to cancel Zambia’s debt. Even before they joined hands with the NGOCC and LAZ, the churches had issued in January 2001 a joint statement denouncing the third-term campaign.

⁴ Events that preceded the third-term calls were an indication that President Chiluba had shrewdly ‘sponsored’ them. He had begun by announcing, at a press conference of 1 December 1999, the creation of the office of District Administrators, whose job, among others, included ‘*the political and social mobilisation of the people*’ (*Times of Zambia*, 2 December 1999, p.1).

⁵ *The Post*, 7 April 2001, p. ?

whose signatures (forged or real⁶) were used to issue press statements in support of the third term.⁷

Both pro- and anti-third term campaigners targeted traditional leaders in their mobilisation of support, because this group is highly influential in Zambian society. It is believed that if a traditional leader issues a decree, his/her subjects will follow without questioning. Traditional leaders can therefore boost a people's campaign when they participate in or support it.

As the debate gained momentum, the Law Association of Zambia also issued a statement on 6 February 2001, indicating that they were going to hold third-term discussions.⁸ Apart from LAZ and the churches, a number of civil society organisations, opposition political parties, individuals and MMD members who were opposed to amending the constitution were also speaking out. After three months of constant pressure, President Chiluba declared he was not standing for a third term, marking the success of the anti-third term campaign.

2.2 Constitutionalism and constitutional development

After the successful anti-third term campaign, the Oasis Forum did not disband. Mid-2001, the members re-defined its role, deciding that the new mandate of Oasis was to promote a culture of constitutionalism in Zambia. The Forum was 'to defend, protect and uphold the Constitution'.⁹ This was necessary because although multi-party democracy was introduced in 1991, a constitution conforming to a multi-party system of government had not yet been put in place. One attempt was made in 1993, when a Constitution Review Committee (CRC) was appointed under the chairmanship of Mwanakatwe. When the committee submitted its proposals in 1995, the government rejected about 70% of its recommendations, including the advice on the method of adopting the constitution through a Constituent Assembly and a National Referendum. The government's decision to reject the recommendations of the Mwanakatwe constitutional review process was made possible, and lawful, by the Inquiries Act, which gives the President the power to reject a report coming from a CRC.

Hope for the continuation of the constitutional reform process revived after the successful anti-third term campaign. With new people in government after the 2001 elections, the coalition of the Oasis Forum decided to carry on towards making a new constitution come true. In 2002 the Oasis Forum started mounting pressure on government to resume the constitution review process. Indeed, in April 2003, the government appointed another

⁶ Some traditional leaders were actually visited and their signatures obtained, but in some cases a false explanation was given as the reason for their signing. For example, Chief Kanyesha of Mkushi district in the Central Province told this author that the DA had visited him the previous night to get his signature, confirming his support of the decision by government to increase the monthly subsidy for the chiefs. This author was at the time visiting the chiefs in the province, mobilising them for a workshop on human rights, democracy and development. The workshop was being organised by *Women for Change (WfC)*, a local non-governmental organisation. This author was at the time Field Animator for WfC.

⁷ Op.cit., 8 February 2001, p. 5

⁸ Op.cit., 7 February 2001, p. 7

⁹ Report of Oasis Forum Retreat, 8 June 2001.

Constitution Review Commission, this time chaired by Mung'omba. The Oasis Forum refused to sit on the CRC as long as the Inquiries Act would not be changed. It recognised that the CRC could facilitate the wider participation by the people of Zambia, but – given the experience in 1996 – it was suspicious about what might happen to the recommendations of the CRC.

Mid-2004, the government declared the Oasis Forum as an illegal organisation due to continued pressure on government to facilitate a people-driven constitution-making process. The formal reason given for its ban was that the Forum had not been registered with the Registrar of Societies. Pressure from other civil society organisations, especially the Citizens Forum, led to the 'un-banning' of the Oasis Forum two months later. In following the months, president Mwanawasa invited the Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum to the State House, first separately and later together, for dialogue on the constitution-making process.

2.3 Citizens' participation in governance

The Citizens Forum (CF) was born in 2004 out of the realisation that so many citizens were not participating in running the affairs of their country. Prominent politicians, business people, civil society activists, trade unionists, and lawyers came together to form a platform for citizens' mobilisation around **all** issues affecting them. They embarked on various campaigns, including the people's constitution campaign, campaign against the sale of Konkola Copper Mines (KCM), campaign against payment of mid-term gratuity to MPs, campaign against wastage of resources by political leaders (de-campaigning), and Social Contracts Campaign.

Were the citizens happy with the formation of the CF? Did they see it as their platform to be used for addressing their issues?

In fact, the formation of the CF was surrounded with clouds of questions and doubts. There was a perception that it was formed to become a political party and to participate in the 2006 elections. A number of factors gave rise to such speculation. One was the fact that behind the formation of the CF were prominent politicians, such as Dean Mung'omba who was the President of an opposition political party (Zambia Democratic Congress-ZDC), and Simon Zukas, who was the National Chairman of another opposition political party (Forum for Democracy and Development-FDD). Both ZDC¹⁰ and FDD¹¹ were splinters from the ruling party, and had unsuccessfully participated in the 1996 presidential and 2001 general elections. The combination of these prominent politicians, coming together as one, with other prominent people (business people, lawyers, civil society

¹⁰ MMD vice-president Levy Mwanawasa, claiming that the MMD had lost direction, announced his intention to stand against Chiluba at the next party convention. Mwanawasa's announcement followed the expulsion on 24 June 1995 of two MMD MPs, Dean Mung'omba and Derrick Chitala, who were accused of bringing the party into disrepute. On 30 July Mung'omba, a founder member of the MMD and hitherto party treasurer, announced the formation of the Zambia Democratic Congress (ZDC), which was able to count on the support of many disaffected MMD members, including 12 party officials (*World News Archives*, www.keesings.com)

¹¹ As discussed later in this paper the formation of the FDD resulted from the anti-third campaign of 2001. Although the FDD was not perceived to have been a creation of the Oasis Forum, the FDD itself at its launch proclaimed having got inspiration from the Oasis Forum, and set itself to championing what the Oasis Forum had outlined to address beyond the anti-third term campaign.

activists and trade unionists) on one platform, unsettled and troubled politicians from the ruling party as well as from the opposition parties.

Reacting to the speculation that the CF was a political party in the making, MMD Information and Publicity Chairman, Mbikusita Lewanika, commented that his party was ready to face the CF 'in the political arena should it decide to transform into a political party'.¹² On the other hand, many non-politicians perceived the CF as just 'a duplication of efforts being carried out by NGOs and the Oasis Forum'.

What then was the agenda of the Citizens Forum, what was its raison d'être?

The observation that the Forum was to be an instrument for promoting people's involvement in politics was quite right. When Zambia opened up to multi-party democracy in 1991, it meant that the political environment allowed for pluralism, and for active participation by the people in governance. Yet, over the years, the spirit of pluralism had not been actualised, and the initiators of the CF felt the need for a vehicle to mobilise citizens into active participation in governance. The CF was thus formed with an agenda of championing the cause of filling the political vacuum through the participation of citizens in the affairs of the nation, so that the people of Zambia could exert more influence on the way the country is governed by the politicians to whom they had entrusted their destiny.

2.4 Political leadership vacuum

In spite of the wider political agenda, a considerable number of FDD and ZDC members and many members of the largest opposition political party (the UPND) and the former ruling party (UNIP) followed the leaders of their parties and joined the CF. But why did they opt to use the CF instead of just strengthening their political parties? The answer may be found in the fact that the politicians, having positioned the CF strategically to allow it more political scope, decided to invite some prominent civil society activists and trade unionists to join the CF. Among them were Emily Sikazwe, Lucy Muyoyeta, Rueben Lifuka, Simon Kabanda and Joyce Nonde, the latter being both Secretary General of the Zambia Union of Financial Institutions and Allied Workers (ZUFIAW) and President of the Federation of Free Trade Unions of Zambia (FFTUZ).

Why were they invited? Civil society activists were considered to articulate governance issues and to speak on behalf of the 'so-called' voiceless. This confidence of the masses in civil society organisations was believed to encourage them to use the CF as a platform for their participation in governance. Thus, the politicians in the CF banked on the ability of the civil society activists to mobilise the masses. This ability was in fact later demonstrated when the civil society organisations launched the CF on the Copperbelt seven weeks after the launch in Lusaka. While the Lusaka launch was attended by only a handful of people, more than 350 people from different parts of the Copperbelt participated in the Copperbelt launch.¹³ The trade unionists were invited because their business was to advocate for a better life for the Zambian workers. The trade union movement had been instrumental in championing the re-introduction of multi-party democracy in Zambia in

¹² *Zambia Daily Mail*, 25 March 2004

¹³ *Citizens Forum Interventions*, 2004-2007, p. 8.

1990.¹⁴ Their involvement in the CF was envisaged to draw the support of the workers, and the masses at large. This was what gave confidence, especially to the politicians, in the mobilisation capacity of the trade unions.

Did the strategy of inviting civil society activists and trade unionists work to promote political participation among the people in Zambia?

The second conference of the CF on 1 May 2004 was a crucial moment for CF, as some members, especially politicians, called for a decision on the direction of the Forum to be reached before dispersing the conference. The voice of civil society activists was stronger and carried the day. The resolution reached was that the CF ‘was a social movement, and it shall remain so’.¹⁵ This resolution, influenced largely by civil society activists, caused the exit of some politicians from the CF.

The decision not to transform CF into a political party showed the dominant idea in the Forum that civil society has its own role to play in political processes of a country. While political parties are focussed on elections, pre-occupied with strategies to get or maintain political power, the role of civil society is critical after an election and before another election takes place. With unlimited political space, civil society is able to mobilise campaigns ‘on various issues affecting the citizens, including political ones, but without being partisan, and without becoming a political party’.¹⁶ This means that there may be more active and effective democratic political participation through civil society than through political parties.

STRATEGIES

The strategies employed by both the Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum include the packaging of issues; the creation of strategic alliances with other civil society organisations, political parties, trade unions, and other influential individuals; mobilisation of the masses through public debates, national and village rallies, and demonstrations; direct engagement of government and individual politicians in various ways. The CF has also recently identified music as an effective strategy for advocacy and sensitisation.

Both Forums have been packaging issues in such a way that they are well understood by the people, and encourage them to join in the campaigns. Once the issues are packaged, alliances are created and public mobilisation starts. This is based on the principle that civil society is essentially collective action – in associations, across society and through the public sphere¹⁷ – and that it commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power.¹⁸ This principle contributes greatly to successful campaigns. Through various forms of mass mobilisation – such as public debates, public rallies and demonstrations, prayer rallies and processions – the campaigns put pressure on government. Signature collection has also been used as a way of expressing public opinion on various issues.

¹⁴ In fact the leader of the trade unions’ umbrella body, the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), Frederick Chiluba, became the Republican President when Zambia went for multi-party elections in 1991.

¹⁵ Citizens Forum, *Report of the Second Conference*, 1 May 2004.

¹⁶ Report of the consultative meeting on the study of social movements in Zambia, 6 August 2009.

¹⁷ http://www.infed.org/association/civil_society.htm

¹⁸ http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm

The Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum do not just end with mobilising the masses. They also engage government and other politicians. For example, politicians feature prominently during people's rallies. Writing letters to the Republican President, Ministers, and MPs is another form of engaging government that is used often. Sometimes the responses are directly to the organisations, or sometimes they are given when the president addresses the nation during a press conference.

3.1 Strategies specific to the Citizens Forum

The CF conducts a range of political actions to challenge politicians, especially when they take actions that are not in the interest of the electorate. As a result, the Citizens Forum can be called an organisation that is positioned somewhere between NGOs and political parties. One feature that stands out for the CF and not for other civil society organisations is that the CF is not afraid of being accused by politicians of 'meddling' in politics.

De-campaigning

In 2006 and 2007, CF went out to de-campaign two serving MPs responsible for creating the need for by-elections due to their decisions to change political parties. According to the political system in Zambia, if an MP decides to resign from his/her political party and to join another one, he/she loses his/her seat in Parliament. When this happens, a by-election is called for. MPs may then decide to re-contest their seat in the by-election. The reason they cross over is usually to have an opportunity to be appointed Cabinet Minister. The ruling party also applauds this practice because it increases its numbers in Parliament, thus weakening the opposition. By-elections are costly and money spent on them could be used on other priority areas.

The CF thus decided to embark on campaigning against candidates in a by-election who had caused the particular by-election, hoping that once he/she loses, other MPs who may be contemplating to resign may decide not to do so, thus saving the country from spending on unnecessary by-elections. This political action by the Citizens Forum was unprecedented in Zambia, and it sent 'shock waves' to political parties, particularly the MPs.

Collecting voter's cards

In addition to de-campaigning, the CF went on a campaign to collect voters' cards from cadres of the ruling party who had been going round asking people to hand in their voters' cards in exchange for relief food. In a country where politicians do not engage in mature politics, they use or sorts of means to stay in power, including preventing people from voting in areas where they see that they are not popular. Collection of voters' cards is one way of preventing them from participating in voting.

This active engagement in political affairs is risky in a country where politics have not yet matured. The CF became a victim of political violence where the cadres mobilised themselves and, armed with stones and sticks, ambushed the CF team in a village where the CF had just collected some cards with a view to hand them back to the owners.

Social contracts

In the quest to promote and/or enhance accountability of elected leaders, the CF has come up with another innovation: signing of social contracts between the electorate and candidates. The Social Contracts Campaign was introduced during the 2006 presidential

and general elections. During the 2008 presidential by-election, social contract forms were developed on two issues: the Constitution Making Process and the Proposed Salary Increments for Constitutional Office Holders.

Signatures as promises to practice what you preach

A Social Contract is an agreement between a political candidate and the constituency on a particular issue that figures prominently in the election campaign. By signing the contract, the political candidate indicates that – once elected – he/she will keep the promises made. Thus, the electorate has direct means to hold the politician accountable.

The idea of the Social Contract is based on the principle of democracy as expressed by Abraham Lincoln, who defined democracy as government of the people, for the people, by the people. In a representative democracy, where the people entrust the powers to govern to a few ‘elected’ people, the people do not cease to participate after elections. They continue to participate through making their leaders accountable at all times. The CF came up with the concept of social contracts between the electorate and candidates/elected leaders to help the electorate to continue participating in governance beyond elections. Currently, the Citizens Forum is preparing for a new Social Contracts campaign during the 2011 presidential and general elections. A social contracts committee has been formed, comprising CF members and two academicians from the University of Zambia. The CF has also begun to engage all Pastoral Coordinators of the Catholic Church.

Music to mobilize and advocate

An innovative way of engaging people into serious issues, as well as draw the attention of authorities, is music. In Zambia people generally get attracted to music. The CF has been promoting a 12-song music album titled, *Know Your Constitution, Volume 1*, which has already been produced, and it is a by-product of a book that was published in February 2008. Another 12-song music album on gender and women’s issues, which began during the commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence in 2009, is in the process of being produced.

CHALLENGES

The Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum have had to face many challenges, both from outside and from within. Outside challenges include threats and intimidations. A lot of times the police blocked or disrupted demonstrations or processions and rallies. There have been indications that the police had received instructions from political leaders. Sometimes unknown people have been used to scare the CF or the Oasis Forum. For example, ‘an unidentified person sent a message (sms) that bombs had been planted: ... “If you continue your noise over the constituent assembly, you will have yourselves to blame. Close all your offices tomorrow and have them checked”’.¹⁹ Also in 2006 there were people who kept trailing the CF in the various parts of the country, with some them being identified by the local people as coming from the Office of the President.

The Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum have been interacting with the government on various issues, and specifically with the Republican President. Many times, though, he did not keep his word. For example, while the President assured the CF in 2004 that he was

¹⁹ Ibid., 25 February 2006, p. 1

going to consult Cabinet over people's concerns on payment of mid-term gratuity to Members of Parliament, a few days later he supported the payment during a TV programme with BBC. On the constitution-making process, the Republican President also exhibited a lot of inconsistencies, such as initially supporting the adoption of the new Constitution through a Constituent Assembly (CA), if the people would indicate their preference for it,²⁰ only to denounce the idea a few weeks later. On two occasions (July and November 2005) also parliament rejected the motion to allow for a process of coming up with a CA.

There have also been other campaigns against government decisions that have not yielded the desired results. For example, another campaign coordinated by the CF against the payment of mid-term gratuity to MPs in 2009 was unsuccessful, as government went ahead and paid. Neither was the attempt to stop the privatisation of the Zambia National Commercial Bank in 2004 successful, as the bank was sold four years later to outside investors.

Internal challenges include the inability to reach out to a larger population, and limitations in sustaining some of the innovations and activities. In many of their activities the Oasis Forum and the CF would have made more impact if they reached out to more parts of the country. For example most of the public debates organised by the Oasis Forum were conducted only in the provincial headquarters, which is only 9 out of a total of 72 districts. To date there are many people in different parts of the country who have had no opportunity to understand the intricacies of issues such as the constitution-making process, MPs' mid-term gratuity, social contracts, electoral laws and many other burning issues in the country. There have been limitations in sustaining innovations, e.g., following up Social Contracts that were signed during the 2006 presidential and general elections, as well as during by-elections that have occurred since. Internal difficulties and financial problems have led to the (temporary) closure of the Oasis Forum.

CONCLUSIONS AND FORWARD-LOOKING REFLECTIONS

A significant feature of both the Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum is that they began with a bang, giving a lot of hope to the people. From its inception the CF set out to address all issues affecting the people in the country. It set for itself high 'standards', creating high expectations among the people. Many people are still expectant and hopeful that the Citizens Forum will provide leadership on a number of critical challenges in the country.

The uniqueness of the Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum in their early years has contributed to their successes. The success of the anti-third term campaign in 2001 was partly due to the carefully and strategically selected institutions coming together to fight one cause. And when the Citizens Forum started, the Republican President began to invite its leaders for dialogue on national issues. This was due to the prominence of its leaders in Zambian society.

Notwithstanding the early successes and the high expectations of the people, the Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum have lost their momentum. People are wondering why the

²⁰ *Zambia Daily Mail*, 18 April 2003, p. 1

civil society organisations in Zambia have become dormant. They are asking why the Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum are not as vibrant as they used to be. From 2007 to date, the Oasis Forum has not been active. While it managed to stop the third campaign within a few months of its existence, the struggle for a new people-driven and people-centred constitution has been 'long and winding'. Vigorous campaigns by the Oasis Forum began at the end of 2001, the Citizens Forum reinforced the campaigns since its formation in 2004, but the prospects of attaining a new constitution sooner than later are still not in sight. Several factors may be at play.

There is a perception in society that the Oasis Forum and the Citizens Forum are elitist. This may be true. While the founding members at national level, especially the churches and NGOCC, identify themselves with the Oasis Forum, many of their grassroots members do not. Sometimes they do not even share the same stance on issues. For example, there is disagreement about the current way forward with the Constitution. While the church mother-bodies have decided not to participate in the National Constitution Conference (NCC) to adopt a new constitution, some individual church leaders are participating. Also many members of the NGOCC argue that their leaders made a wrong decision to boycott the NCC.

In the beginning, the Citizens Forum also created the impression of being an elitist group. The National Management Committee (NMC), based in Lusaka, conducted many activities, but with minimal reaching out to other parts of the country. However, the CF quickly moved away from this situation when it began to form District Chapters, attracting a countrywide membership of over 7,000 people. Unfortunately, today the momentum of countrywide recruitment has died. Many members are not as active as they used to be when they joined between 2004 and 2006, which does not speak well for the organisation, high numbers of active members is a reflection of the vibrancy of the organisation, as well as increase the chances of conducting successful campaigns.

Something significant about the Oasis Forum as an alliance is that it has 'stood the test of time'. The five institutions came together to campaign against the third term, but did not disband at the close of the campaign. This is unlike other alliances that organisations form and disband. For example, in the run-up to the 1996 national elections, election-related organisations came together under what they called the Committee for Clean Campaign (CCC). It was disbanded after the elections. Prior to the 2001 elections they formed the Coalition 2001 'to pool election monitoring resources and recruit donor support for the defence of "free and fair elections" (but) dissolved amidst in-fighting soon after the elections'.²¹ And before the 2006 national elections, organisations came together and formed the Civil Society Elections Network (CSEN), which disbanded soon after. The Oasis Forum has been sustained as an alliance to date, despite having decreased vibrancy. Perhaps the Church is a factor in the sustenance of the alliance.

While it may look like the Oasis Forum and the CF have not scored successes in the constitution-making process, the increased awareness of the people of Zambia of the country's constitution and the formal and informal debates going on are an indication that their efforts have not been in vain.

²¹ Gould 2006

Abbreviations/Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCGC	Citizens' Consultative Group on the Constitution
CCZ	Council of Churches in Zambia
CF	Citizens Forum
CRC	Constitution Review Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DA	District Administrator
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia
FDD	Forum for Democracy and Development
FFTUZ	Federation of Free Trade Unions of Zambia
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
IBE	Issue-Based Elections
KCM	Konkola Copper Mines
LAZ	Law Association of Zambia
MICC	Mulungushi International Conference Centre
MMD	Movement for Multi-party Democracy
MP	Member of Parliament
NCC	National Citizens' Coalition
NEAC	National Economic Advisory Council
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NGOCC	Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Council
PUDD	Party for Unity, Democracy and Development
SCC	Social Contracts Campaign
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UPND	United Party for National Development
ZCTU	Zambia Congress of Trade Unions
ZDC	Zambia Democratic Congress
ZEC	Zambia Episcopal Conference
ZEMCC	Zambia Elections Monitoring Coordinating Committee
ZIMA	Zambia Independent Media Association
ZUFIAW	Zambia Union of Financial Institutions and Allied Workers

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