



**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

**REPORT**

**OF THE**

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**ON THE**

**THE AGRICULTURAL LANDS (AMENDMENT) BILL, N.A.B NO. 31 OF 2026**

**FOR THE**

**FIFTH SESSION OF THE THIRTEENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

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## FOREWORD

Honourable Madam Speaker, the Committee on Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources has the honour to present its Report on the Agricultural Lands (Amendment) Bill, N.A.B No. 31 of 2026. The functions of the Committee are set out under Standing Orders 206(a) and 207 of the National Assembly of Zambia Standing Orders, 2024. Specifically, Standing Order 207(j) provides that portfolio Committees shall study and review Bills referred to them by the House.

In order to acquaint itself with the ramifications of the Bill, the Committee held five meetings and sought both written and oral submissions from stakeholders. The stakeholders, who appeared before the Committee, are listed at Appendix II of the Report. The Report is organised in three Parts. Part I provides a background and summary of the provisions of the Bill, Part II presents the summary of submissions from stakeholders, while Part III constitutes the Committee's observations and recommendations.

The Committee is grateful to the stakeholders who tendered both written and oral submissions. It further wishes to thank you, Madam Speaker, for affording it the opportunity to scrutinise the Agricultural Lands (Amendment) Bill, N.A.B No. 31 of 2026. The Committee's appreciation is further extended to the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly for the support and guidance rendered throughout its deliberations.



Mr Kasauta S Michelo, MP  
**CHAIRPERSON**

April, 2026  
**LUSAKA**

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## **1.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee consisted of Mr Kasauta S Michelo, MP (Chairperson); Mr Michael J Z Katambo, MP (Vice Chairperson); Mr Tyson Simuzingili, MP; Mr Lusale J Simbao, MP; Mr Yotam Mtayachalo, MP; Mr Andrew Tayengwa, MP; Mr Peter Phiri, MP; Mr Mweemba Malambo, MP; Mr Vumango Musumali, MP; and Mr Ackleo I A Banda, MP.

## **PART I**

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The Agricultural Lands (Amendment) Bill, N.A.B No. 31 of 2026 seeks to amend the Agriculture Act, Chapter 187 of the Laws of Zambia so as to revise the composition of the Agricultural Lands Board.

The governance of public institutions has not been adequate, thereby leading to governance variability and weakened private sector engagement, which subsequently hinder the effective operation of public bodies in the country. Further, it undermines the effective governance of public bodies and thereby compromising long term sustainability of public bodies.

### **3.0 OBJECT OF THE BILL**

The Object of the Bill is to amend the principal Act so as to:

- (a) Revise the composition of the Agricultural Lands Board; and
- (b) provide for matters connected with, or incidental, to the foregoing.

### **4.0 SALIENT PROVISIONS OF THE BILL**

The summarised provisions of the Bill are set out below.

#### **Clause 1 - Short Title and Commencement**

The clause provides for the short title of the Act, once enacted.

The clause also provides for the commencement of the Act by stating that the Act shall come into operation on the expiry of the term of office, or removal by the Minister, of members of the Board holding office prior to the enactment of the Act, after which the Minister shall appoint the members of the Board in accordance with the Act.

#### **Clause 2 – Amendment of section 2**

The clause seeks to amend section 2 of the principal Act by the insertion of the new definition “House of Chiefs” in the appropriate place in alphabetical order.

#### **Clause 3 – Amendment of section 4**

The clause seeks to amend section 4 of the principal Act by the deletion of subsections (2), (3) and (4) and the substitution therefor of the composition of the Agricultural Lands Board.

#### **Clause 4 – Amendment of section 6**

The clause seeks to provides for the amendment of section 6 of the principal Act by the deletion of the subsection that provides for quorum and substituting with the subsection which provides for parameters of passing the decision of the Board.

### **PART II**

#### **5.0 SUBMISSIONS AND CONCERNS BY STAKEHOLDERS**

Stakeholders who appeared before the Committee were in support of the Agricultural Lands (Amendment) Bill, N.A.B No. 31 of 2026, and submitted as outlined be

#### **Clause 3 – Amendment of section 4**

The Committee was informed that the composition of the Agricultural Lands Board reflected a deliberate effort to strengthen the governance framework for agricultural land administration in the country. The restructuring of the membership of the Board to include representatives from the private sector, key government ministries, legal institutions, farmer organisations, traditional authorities, economists, and civil society, would enable the Bill to ensure that the Board was more inclusive, balanced, and representative of diverse stakeholder interests. In particular, the inclusion of the House of Chiefs was a significant and positive development, given the central role of traditional authorities in the administration of customary land.

The Committee was, however informed that despite these strengths, there remained important gaps relating to representation and balance that may limit the effectiveness of the composition of the Agricultural Lands Board, and these included the following:

#### **1. Non-inclusion of Key Technical Experts on Land Matters on the Agricultural Lands Board**

Stakeholders submitted that the composition of the Agricultural Lands Board did not have representation from the technical bodies who are supposed to offer technical judgement on survey standards, boundary determinations, professional registration and disciplinary rulings. The absence of such expertise would mean that decisions would be subjected to non-technical influence, thereby producing inconsistent technical standards or politicised outcomes.

#### **2. Limited Representation of key Stakeholders**

The Committee was informed that the Bill did not explicitly provide for representation of critical stakeholder groups, particularly:

- (i) Smallholder farmers, who constitute the majority of agricultural land users in the country;
- (ii) Women land rights groups, to address the persistent gender disparities in access to land; and

- (iii) Local authorities, who play an important role in land use planning and local governance.

Stakeholders stated that the absence of these groups would bring concerns about whether the Board would adequately reflect the interests of those most directly affected by agricultural land decisions. In particular, smallholder farmers and rural communities who were often the primary users of agricultural land, may remain under-represented in decision-making processes, a situation that may be skewed towards commercial, institutional, or elite interests, rather than promoting equitable access to land and inclusive agricultural development.

### **3. Ambiguity in Civil Society representation**

The provision for “a civil society organisation concerned with human rights, land administration or gender was broad and lacked specificity. In its current form in the Bill, the provision did not define the criteria for selection of the civil society representative and it did not outline the process for nomination or appointment, and that in itself leaves room for discretionary interpretation, which may undermine transparency.

In this regard, the Committee was informed that in order to strengthen the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Agricultural Lands Board, the Bill should:

1. explicitly provide for representation of smallholder farmers; women’s land rights organisation; and local authorities;
2. establish clear criteria and transparent processes for the selection of civil society representatives; and
3. consider incorporating provisions that promote gender balance and equitable representation across all categories of Board membership

### **Clause 4 – Amendment of section 6**

The Committee was informed that the amendments to section 6 sought to strengthen the procedural clarity and operational efficiency of the Agricultural Lands Board by defining quorum and decision-making processes. The establishment of a fixed quorum of five members would provide certainty and ensure that Board proceedings were formally constituted before decisions were made. Similarly, the introduction of majority voting, coupled with a casting vote for the presiding officer, enhanced the Board’s ability to reach decisions efficiently and avoid deadlocks.

Stakeholders however stated that a relatively low quorum threshold would allow decisions to be taken without adequate representation of key stakeholders, potentially undermining the broader objective of inclusivity introduced under the revised composition of the Board. Stakeholders further stated that the amendments did not provide for safeguards to ensure balanced participation within quorum requirements or address emerging governance considerations such as transparency in voting procedures and participation modalities. As such, while the provisions enhanced efficiency, there remained a need to ensure that they were complemented by measures that uphold inclusiveness, accountability, and stakeholder confidence in the Board’s decision-making processes.

## **6.0 SUBMISSION BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY – MINISTRY OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Committee also interacted with the Permanent Secretary who submitted that the Agricultural Lands (Amendment) Bill, N.A.B No. 31 of 2026, had several positive outcomes, which, if enacted, would be of great benefit to Zambia. The Permanent Secretary further submitted as outlined below.

He stated that agricultural land remained one of Zambia's most critical national resources, underpinning food security, economic growth, employment creation, and rural development. Effective administration of agricultural land was therefore essential to ensuring sustainable development and attracting both local and foreign investment.

The Agricultural Lands Act (Chapter 187) had historically provided the legal framework for the administration of agricultural land through the Agricultural Lands Board. However, changing socio-economic dynamics, increasing demand for land, and the need for inclusive governance had highlighted the necessity to modernise the legal framework. The Agricultural Lands (Amendment) Bill, 2026 was introduced as part of Government's broader efforts to strengthen land governance, improve institutional effectiveness, and align the administration of agricultural land with contemporary national priorities. The Bill introduced targeted amendments to enhance the effectiveness, inclusivity, and accountability of the Agricultural Lands Board.

### **(a) Clarification of Definitions**

The Bill introduced a definition of the House of Chiefs, ensuring consistency with the Constitution and reinforcing the recognition of traditional leadership in land governance.

### **(b) Reconstitution of the Agricultural Lands Board**

The Bill significantly strengthened the composition of the Board by introducing a diverse and balanced membership structure. The Board would include:

- (i) A Chairperson from the private sector with relevant expertise;
- (ii) Representatives from key Government ministries responsible for lands and agriculture;
- (iii) A representative of the Attorney-General;
- (iv) A representative of the Zambia National Farmers Union;
- (v) A representative of the Economics Association of Zambia;
- (vi) A representative of the House of Chiefs;
- (vii) A representative of civil society;
- (viii) A private sector expert with experience in finance and human resettlement.

This structure ensured that the Board benefits from a wide range of perspectives, including policy, legal, economic, traditional, and community-based insights.

The Agricultural Lands (Amendment) Bill, N.A.B No. 31 of 2026 represented a progressive and forward-looking reform of the agricultural land governance framework. By broadening representation and strengthening institutional arrangements, the Bill would:

- (i) promote transparency and accountability in land administration;
- (ii) enhance coordination among key sectors;
- (iii) support agricultural productivity and investment; and
- (iv) ensure that land governance reflects the needs of all stakeholders, including rural communities and traditional authorities.

The reforms were expected to contribute significantly to improved land management outcomes and national development.

### **Part III**

#### **7.0 COMMITTEE'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee supports the enactment of the Agricultural Land (Amendment) Bill, N.A.B No. 31 of 2026, however, in supporting the Bill, it makes the observations and recommendations set out below.

##### **(i) Non-inclusion of Key Technical Experts on Land Matters on the Agricultural Lands Board**

The Committee observes with great concern the exclusion of the land related experts such as the Surveyors Institute of Zambia – Land Survey Chapter, from the Agricultural Lands Board. It is the view of the Committee that technical bodies such as Surveyors Institute of Zambia will offer technical judgement on matters to do with survey standards and boundary determinations.

In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Surveyors Institute of Zambia – Land Survey Chapter should have representation on the Agricultural Lands Board.

##### **(ii) Non-representation of key Stakeholders like the Smallholder Farmers**


The Committee observes that the Bill does not explicitly provide for representation of critical stakeholder groups, particularly smallholder farmers, who constitute the majority of agricultural land users in the country.

In this regard, the Committee recommends that the composition of the Agricultural Lands Board should expressly provide for a representative of smallholder farmers. It is the opinion of the Committee that including smallholder farmers on the Board would adequately reflect the interests of those most directly affected by agricultural land decisions.

#### **8.0 CONCLUSION**

The Committee is in support of the Agricultural Lands (Amendment) Bill, N.A.B No. 31 of 2026, as it presents an opportunity to enhance private sector participation in agricultural land matters. By reconstituting the Agricultural Lands Board to include a wide range of stakeholders, the Bill will promote inclusivity, enhance decision-making, and align land administration with modern governance principles.

The Committee is confident that, as the Bill is enacted into law, its observations and recommendations will be taken into consideration.



Mr Kasauta S Michelo, MP  
**CHAIRPERSON**

April, 2026  
**LUSAKA**

## **APPENDIX I - List of National Assembly Officials**

Mr Stephen Chiwota, Director – Financial Committees  
Mr Geoffrey Zulu, Deputy Director – Financial Committees  
Ms Chitalu Mulenga, Senior Committee Clerk - Financial Committees  
Mr Evans Chilongu, Committee Clerk  
Ms Eneless Njobvu, Administrative Assistant  
Mr Daniel Lupiya, Senior Committee Assistant  
Mr Muyembi Kantumoya, Committee Assistant  
Ms Taona Chabinga, Committee Assistant

## **APPENDIX II - List of Witnesses**

Ministry of Justice  
Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Zambia Land Alliance  
Zambia Institute of Valuation Surveyors  
Agricultural Consultative Forum  
Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute  
Oxfam Zambia  
Civil Society for Poverty Reduction  
Zambia Institute of Planners  
Zambia Institute of Estate Agents