



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

REPORT

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL
SERVICES**

ON THE

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL N.A.B NO. 64 OF 2026

FOR THE

FIFTH SESSION OF THE THIRTEENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Published by the National Assembly of Zambia

FOREWORD

Honourable Madam Speaker, the Committee on Health, Community Development and Social Services has the honour to present its Report on the Persons with Disabilities (Amendment) Bill N.A.B No. 64 of 2026, for the Fifth Session of the Thirteenth National Assembly.

The Committee is mandated to consider Bills referred to it by the House pursuant to Standing Orders 112(3) and 207(j) of the National Assembly Standing Orders, 2024.

In order to acquaint itself with the ramifications of the Bill, the Committee sought both written and oral submissions from selected stakeholders. The Report highlights the background, objectives and provisions of the Bill, stakeholder submissions, and the Committee's observations and recommendations.

The Committee is indebted to all stakeholders who made submissions and expresses gratitude to you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to scrutinise the Bill. Appreciation is also extended to the Office of the Clerk for the support rendered.

Mr Joseph S Munsanje, MP
CHAIRPERSON

May, 2026
LUSAKA

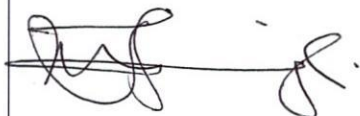
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1.0. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee consisted of Mr Joseph S Munsanje, MP (Chairperson); Mrs Marjorie Nakaponda, MP (Vice Chairperson); Dr Christopher K Kalila, MP; Mr Paul Chala, MP; Mr Monty Chinkuli, MP; Mr Heartson Mabeta, MP; Mr Leevan Chibombwe, MP; Mr Masautso Tembo, MP; Mr Miles Sampa, MP and Mr Elias Mubanga, MP.

2.0. BACKGROUND

The Persons with Disabilities Act, No. 6 of 2012, establishes the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) with a mandate of promoting, protecting, and advancing the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities in Zambia.

The Government, through the Persons with Disabilities (Amendment) Bill N.A.B No. 64 of 2026 proposes to amend the principal Act to revise, among others, the composition of the Council and related governance provisions. This revision is part of the broader public sector reform programme guided by Cabinet Office Circular Minute No. CO.101/39/1 of 2025. The Circular directs all Ministries to streamline Boards and Committees of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in order to strengthen governance, enhance representation and service delivery. It specifically requires that Boards and Committees include private sector representation, not to exceed eleven members, ensure gender balance, and reflect national diversity.

The reforms aim at strengthening institutional governance by promoting accountability, transparency, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability. This approach is aligned with domestic and internationally recognised best practice stipulated in the National Corporate Governance Code and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises (2015). Accordingly, the proposed amendments in the Bill seek to align the composition of the ZAPD Board with these established governance principles.

3.0. OBJECT OF THE BILL

The object of this Bill is to amend the Persons with Disabilities Act, No. 6 of 2012 so as to:

- i. revise the composition of the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities; and
- ii. provide for matters connected with, or incidental to, the foregoing.

4.0. SALIENT PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

Clause 4 - Revision of Board composition

The Bill repeals and replaces section 13 to restructure the Board into a smaller, streamlined body comprising part-time members

Clause 5 - Introduction of nomination process

The Bill introduces a requirement for ministries, institutions, and organisations to nominate their representatives for appointment by the Minister, thereby enhancing transparency in appointments.

5.0. SUBMISSIONS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders submitted various views on the clauses of the Bill, which are outlined below:

Clause 3: Amendment section 13, Composition of the Board

- 5.1. Stakeholders observed that clause 2 proposes a reduction of the Board size from eighteen (18) to seven (7) members, shifting from a disability-centred, multi-sectoral structure to a streamlined stakeholder model, significantly limiting representation of persons with disabilities and sectoral expertise while prioritising administrative efficiency. They specifically highlighted the following:

Absence of health sector and clinical expertise

- 5.2. Stakeholders raised a critical concern regarding the omission of health sector representation, including the Ministry of Health, medical professionals, and rehabilitation specialists. It was submitted that disability is inherently linked to health systems, particularly in areas such as rehabilitation, surgical care, and assistive technology provision. The absence of clinical input may result in weak integration between disability governance and health service delivery, leading to poor planning and limited continuity of care.

Role and Influence of NGOs and civil society

- 5.3. Stakeholders acknowledged the inclusion of two NGO representatives as a positive development, noting that civil society plays a key role in advocacy, community engagement, and grassroots mobilisation. However, concerns were raised that excessive reliance on NGO representation may result in fragmented or advocacy-driven decision-making, at the expense of technical and policy coherence.

Reduction in Institutional and sectoral diversity

- 5.4. Stakeholders observed that the revised composition reduces the breadth of institutional representation compared to the principal Act. It was submitted that limiting representation to a few ministries and general stakeholder categories diminishes sectoral input from critical areas such as labour, education, and health. This reduction may weaken coordination across sectors and limit the Board's ability to address disability issues holistically.

Clause 3: Nomination and Appointment Framework

Centralised ministerial appointment powers

- 5.5. Stakeholders submitted that the continued vesting of appointment authority in the Minister, albeit based on nominations, reinforces centralised control over Board composition. It was observed that this arrangement may reduce diversity of institutional voices and expose the governance structure to risks of politicisation, particularly in areas such as programme prioritisation and resource allocation.

Need for Inclusive and rights-based governance

- 5.6. Stakeholders emphasised that disability governance must be grounded in inclusivity, human rights, and technical competence. They cautioned that the proposed structure may not sufficiently reflect these principles, particularly given the reduced representation of persons with disabilities and absence of specialised expertise.

Clause 4: First Schedule: Quorum for Board Meetings

Reduction of Quorum from eight to five members

- 5.7. Stakeholders acknowledged that reducing quorum from eight (8) to five (5) members may enhance efficiency and enable faster decision-making. However, they expressed concern that this may compromise inclusivity and deliberative quality, as decisions could be made by a small subset of members. This raises the risk of dominance by a few actors and weakens collective accountability in governance processes.

6.0. COMMITTEE'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After carefully studying submissions from stakeholders, the Committee makes the following observations and recommendations:

Board size and composition

- 6.1. The Committee observes that the proposed reduction of the Board from eighteen (18) to seven (7) members significantly limits representation of persons with disabilities and sectoral expertise, thereby weakening the multi-sectoral character necessary for effective disability governance. Further the Committee observes that the Bill does not sufficiently reflect principles of inclusivity and human rights. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Board size be increased to eleven (11) in order to align with a rights-based approach and accommodate key stakeholders, particularly representatives of all categories of persons with disabilities and critical sectors, while maintaining operational efficiency.

Absence of health sector and clinical expertise

- 6.2. The Committee observes that the omission of the health sector, particularly experts in clinical rehabilitation and assistive technology, undermines integration between disability governance and health service delivery systems. The Committee, therefore, recommends inclusion of the Ministry responsible for health or relevant clinical professionals to strengthen service coordination and continuity of care. The Committee further recommends that this representation be accommodated from one of the two NGO slots.

Centralised ministerial appointment powers

- 6.3. The Committee observes that the continued vesting of appointment powers in the Minister, notwithstanding the nomination process, reinforces centralised control and may expose the Board to risks of politicisation and reduced diversity.

The Committee recommends the establishment of clear, transparent, and merit-based appointment criteria, including independent oversight mechanisms, to enhance accountability, inclusivity, and institutional balance.

7.0. CONCLUSION

The Committee acknowledges the Bill's intention to streamline governance and enhance participation of civil society. However, concerns were raised by stakeholders regarding limited representation of technical expertise and reduced institutional diversity. The Committee, therefore, urged that the Bill be revised to ensure an inclusive and technically grounded governance framework capable of effectively addressing the diverse needs of persons with disabilities.

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APPENDIX I - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OFFICIALS

Mr Charles Haambote, Director (Social Committees)

Mrs Chitalu K Mumba, Deputy Director (Social Committees)

Mr Darius Kunda, Senior Committee Clerk (SC1)

Mr Kelezo Lushako, Committee Clerk

Ms Catherine Chibuye, Administrative Assistant II

Mr Daniel Lupiya, Senior Committee Assistant

Mr Muyembi S Kantumoya, Committee Assistant

Ms Taona Chabinga, Committee Assistant

APPENDIX II–LIST OF WITNESSES

Institute of Directors Zambia

Ministry of Community Development and Social Services

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Justice

Zambia Medical Association

Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority