

Committee on the Application of Standards

Date: 17 May 2025

Governments appearing on the preliminary list of individual cases have the opportunity, if they so wish, to supply on a purely voluntary basis, written information before 19 May 2025.

► Information on the application of ratified Conventions supplied by governments on the preliminary list of individual cases

Zambia (ratification: 1964)

Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

The Government has provided the following written information.

The Government of Zambia acknowledges receipt of the observation issued by the Committee of Experts concerning the implementation of our National Policy on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants and the provision of compulsory national service under the Zambia National Service Act. We appreciate the role of the supervisory system in supporting Member States to strengthen the application of international labour standards. In this regard, we welcome the opportunity to provide the information requested in the observation and offer hereto, the following responses:

1. Measures taken to implement the National Policy on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants and achieve its objectives: Zambia has taken extensive steps to implement the Policy, and these include:
 - Development of a comprehensive National Implementation Plan for the National Policy on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants to guide operationalization.
 - Amendment of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act No. 11 of 2008, which resulted in the following:
 - (a) the establishment of the Anti-Human Trafficking Department, mandated to coordinate all institutions involved in matters relating to human trafficking;
 - (b) operationalization of the Anti-Human Trafficking Department;
 - (c) enhancement of legal provisions through the inclusion of a specific section in the Act criminalizing child trafficking;
 - (d) revision of the composition and functions of the National Committee on Human Trafficking;

- (e) introduction of a provision for the certification of victims;
 - (f) expansion of the scope of authorized officers empowered to handle trafficking cases, now including officers from the Anti-Corruption Commission, Anti-Human Trafficking Department, Drug Enforcement Commission, and Immigration Department.
- A fourth pillar, “Partnerships”, was introduced to foster a multisectoral response to human trafficking. This has enabled wide-ranging engagement from institutions and stakeholders at the national level. The Anti-Human Trafficking Department also actively participates in meetings, workshops and training sessions on human trafficking at national, regional and international levels.
 - Continued engagement with various stakeholders is ensured through the National Committee on Human Trafficking, which convenes at least once per quarter to deliberate on human trafficking matters.
 - A dedicated budget line has been created and funded for the Anti-Human Trafficking Department to support the implementation of anti-trafficking activities.
 - The Victim Fund has been established, and guidelines for its disbursement are currently under development.
 - A Partnership Agreement has been signed between the Government of the Republic of Zambia and the Government of the United States of America to combat human trafficking. Under this agreement, the US Government has committed to providing a total of US\$12 million over a five-year period to support Zambia’s anti-trafficking efforts.
 - The Anti-Human Trafficking Department prepares and submits quarterly and annual reports on the implementation of anti-human trafficking programmes.
 - The Policy has not been reviewed since its adoption; however, a mid-term review is planned to be undertaken before 31 December 2025.
2. Victim identification and assistance: From 1 January to 31 December 2024, 186 victims were identified, of whom 73 received various forms of assistance such as shelter, food, clothing, psychosocial counselling, translation and interpretation service, legal services, and repatriation support.
 3. Efforts to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement officials in order to effectively identify, promptly investigate and prosecute cases of trafficking with emphasis given to the sectors where women are victims of trafficking:
 - The Government trained 2,204 law enforcement officers in 2024 in order to enhance their capacity to identify, investigate and enforce laws against human trafficking.
 - During the same period, 41 cases were investigated, 22 prosecuted, and 5 convictions secured.
 - Of the five convictions secured, one of the penalties imposed was a sentence of 13 years imprisonment with hard labour for attempted human trafficking. The remaining 4 cases are awaiting sentencing by the High Court.
 4. Efforts to strengthen awareness and implementation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act to promote greater awareness and effective implementation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act: The Government undertook a series of targeted interventions during the reporting period:

- Public awareness and education: A range of public sensitization activities were conducted nationwide using television, radio broadcasts, and community meetings. These platforms were employed to disseminate information on the provisions of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, the rights of individuals, and available channels for reporting suspected cases of trafficking in persons.
 - Capacity-building and institutional strengthening: A total of 2,204 officers from various law enforcement institutions received specialized training on trafficking in persons between 1 January and 31 December 2024. The purpose of the training was to enhance their ability to identify, investigate, and prosecute trafficking cases, with particular attention to sectors where women are especially vulnerable.
 - Development of supporting instruments: To reinforce the effective implementation of the Act, the following instruments have been developed or are under development:
 - (a) regulations to guide procedures on victim identification, reporting and certification;
 - (b) a revised National Referral Mechanism for coordinated support and case management;
 - (c) a national Data and Case Management System on Human Trafficking;
 - (d) guidelines for the administration of the Victim Fund;
 - (e) a National Communication Strategy on Human Trafficking;
 - (f) a standard training curriculum on trafficking in persons; and
 - (g) a Judicial Desk Guide to assist judicial officers in handling trafficking-related cases.
5. Nature of national service in Zambia: Contrary to the view of the Committee of Experts, that Zambia allows a compulsory national service of a non-military character, the Government wishes to clarify that, the Zambia National Service (ZNS) was recently reintroduced as a voluntary citizen empowerment programme, aimed at equipping citizens, especially youth and women with practical skills, fostering self-reliance and contributing to national development. These efforts are aligned with Zambia's commitment to the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Skills and Lifelong Learning Strategy 2030 adopted at the 109th Session (2021) of the International Labour Conference. In furtherance of these commitments, Zambia launched the four-year Skills Development for Employability Programme in 2023, with support from the ILO and the European Union, with the aim of enhancing the relevance, quality and governance of our Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) system. However, the ZNS programme contributes to a broader national and international objective in addressing youth unemployment, under skilling and decent work deficits. This was publicly affirmed by the Republican President, Mr Hakainde Hichilema, on 14 November 2024. This public affirmation is readily available on official online government media platforms such as the Zambia New and Information Service (ZANIS).

In conclusion, the Government remains committed to upholding its obligations under international labour standards and ensuring the effective implementation of relevant legislation and policies. The measures outlined in this report reflect ongoing efforts to strengthen institutional capacity, enhance coordination among stakeholders, and promote rights-based approaches across all areas of concern raised by the Committee. The Government will continue to engage constructively with the Committee and stands ready to provide further information and clarification where required.