**U.S. Statement at the Universal Periodic Review of Zambia,**

**27th Session, November 13th, 2017**

Thank you Mr. Vice President.

The United States warmly welcomes the Zambian delegation to the UPR Working Group.

We commend the Government of Zambia for reforming the country’s constitution and adopting meaningful changes to electoral clauses and human rights protections, and we encourage its continued implementation.

The United States, however, remains deeply concerned about the political environment in Zambia since the August 2016 elections. The government of Zambia continues to suppress dissenting voices in the media and public sphere and further restrict the freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly, including through the recent “threatened state of emergency.” We are additionally concerned by the police’s deliberate misapplication of the Public Order Act to block opposition gatherings – at times using excessive force – citing a nonexistent requirement for a permit to assemble.

Bearing in mind these concerns, we recommend that Zambia:

1. Engage civil society, activists, NGOs and the media in dialogue to seek common ground on the draft Access to Information bill and governance issues, such as corruption.
2. Ensure that freedom of association and right to peaceful assembly are respected and protected, to include promoting better implementation of the Public Order Act.
3. Engage in constructive dialogue and reconciliation with the main opposition party to diffuse lingering tensions from the August 2016 general election.

Thank you Mr. Vice President.