

The Formation and Evolution of Zambia Must Prosper Party

Zambia Must Prosper (ZMP) was officially launched on 23rd August 2022 as a stand-alone political party. Its inception followed a journey that began as a political movement supporting the United Party for National Development (UPND) Alliance during the 2021 general elections. The party's formation marked a significant milestone in Zambia's political landscape, establishing itself as a platform advocating progressive liberal values designed to address Zambia's present challenges and future aspirations.

The ZMP's foundational documents—the party's constitution and manifesto—were drafted with a progressive outlook, emphasizing inclusivity and innovation in governance. The party's highest organ, the National Crusade Team (NCT), oversees policy formulation and day-to-day administration. At the regional level, Provincial Crusade Teams manage the provinces and provide supervision to district and constituency teams, ensuring a grassroots connection to Zambia's diverse communities.

The Leadership of Kelvin Fube Bwalya

At the helm of ZMP is Kelvin Fube Bwalya (KBF), a lawyer and politician whose career has spanned decades of pivotal moments in Zambia's political history. Born on 20th April 1963 in Mufulira, a mining town on the Copperbelt, Bwalya was the second of six children in a politically active family. His father, Eric Benson Bwalya, played an important role in Zambia's independence struggle as a member of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) under Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda, later joining the United Progressive Party (UPP) under Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe.

Kelvin Bwalya's education began at St. John's Nursery School in Mufulira, followed by primary education at Mufulira Primary School and secondary education at Butondo Secondary School. After completing his studies, he attended the compulsory National Service Training at Kafue ZNS Camp in 1980–81. He pursued legal studies at the University of Zambia (UNZA), graduating in 1985, where he actively participated as secretary of the UNZA Law Association.

Upon completing his legal training, Bwalya worked for the Legal Aid Department, followed by private law firms, including Elis & Company and Chifumu Banda & Associates. It was during his time at Chifumu Banda & Associates that his political journey began, as Zambia transitioned to multi-party politics.

Kelvin Bwalya's Political Career

Bwalya's legal expertise and strategic acumen positioned him at the center of key political developments. He joined the legal team of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD), collaborating with renowned legal minds such as Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, Eric Silwamba, and Vincent Malambo. This work brought him into contact with notable politicians like Frederick Chiluba and Michael Sata, whose ideologies shaped his political path.

Bwalya later aligned himself with Michael Chilufya Sata and joined the Patriotic Front (PF), where he played a crucial role in securing the party's electoral victories. His leadership in the Anti-Rigging (Z) Ltd initiative ensured transparency in vote protection, contributing to the PF's success

in the 2006, 2008, and 2011 elections. Following Sata's death in 2014, Bwalya demonstrated his leadership during the transition, helping the PF win the 2015 and 2016 elections under Edgar Chagwa Lungu.

However, internal disputes within the PF led to Bwalya's expulsion in 2020, primarily due to his opposition to President Lungu's bid for a third term. Bwalya argued that this move violated constitutional principles, which led to his estrangement from the party.

Alliance with UPND and Formation of ZMP

After leaving the PF, Bwalya was approached by NGOs, traditional leaders, churches, and well-wishers urging him to support Hakainde Hichilema in the 2021 elections. Following extensive discussions, Bwalya agreed to assist the UPND, leveraging his strategic planning skills to secure Hichilema's victory as Zambia's 7th President.

Despite this collaboration, Bwalya parted ways with the UPND Alliance nine months into their rule. The decision was driven by a directive requiring all alliance parties to merge into the UPND, a move that Bwalya opposed. Consequently, in 2022, he formally launched Zambia Must Prosper as an independent political party.

Conclusion

Zambia Must Prosper represents a fresh chapter in Zambia's political narrative, embodying the vision of a progressive, liberal governance model tailored to the country's evolving needs. Under Kelvin Fube Bwalya's leadership, ZMP aims to offer innovative solutions and a unifying platform for the Zambian people. Its formation highlights the resilience and adaptability of Zambia's political system, reflecting the aspirations of a nation determined to thrive.