

## **THIRTEENTH POST-CABINET PRESS BRIEFING**

**17<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2022**

### **1.0 ZIMBABWE'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND REPORT ON THE PROCUREMENT AND ROLLOUT OF VACCINES**

Cabinet considered Zimbabwe's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the report on the procurement and roll-out of vaccines, which was presented by the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, on behalf of the Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care, Honourable C.G.D.N. Chiwenga.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that as at the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, 2022, Zimbabwe's cumulative COVID-19 positive cases had reached 249 431, with 242 537 recoveries and 5 484 deaths. The recovery rate was 97%, with 1 279 active cases recorded. The overall number of new cases increased during the week, with 910 cases recorded, compared to 361 the previous week. An average of 130 new cases were reported per day, compared to 52 the previous week. A total of 49 new admissions were recorded compared to 42 the previous week, with 8 patients admitted to the Intensive Care Unit.

The nation is informed that the most recent genomic sequencing test results show that the circulating variants in Zimbabwe remain Omicron

BA.1 and BA.2, and not the more transmissible BA.4 and BA.5 that have been reported in South Africa.

On the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, Cabinet is informing the nation that Vaccination campaign teams were out in full force during the week. Vaccine doses utilised reached 726 278, compared to 289 035 the previous week. The cumulative numbers of vaccinations since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020 have now reached 6 131 637 for the first dose, 4 381 446 for the second dose, and 750 228 for the third dose. All provinces except Harare, Mashonaland West and Chitungwiza city, recorded vaccination coverage above 50%. The Public is urged to take advantage of the current Vaccination Blitz at a centre nearest to them.

The nation is further being informed that 14 new COVID-19 cases were detected through the School Surveillance System. This brings the number of cases recorded since the beginning of the Second Term on 3 May 2022 to 66. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education continues to provide the requisite facilitation for the on-going COVID-19 vaccination blitz campaign in schools. Provinces are planning to extend the phase two vaccination blitz campaign by a few more weeks to ensure that all eligible learners are vaccinated and are maximally protected, especially during the winter season that is now upon us.

Cabinet advises the country to remain vigilant in view of the surge in COVID-19 cases. In embracing the new normal, Cabinet has approved the following measures:

1. that Provincial Medical Directors in collaboration with Provincial Education Directors submit, on a weekly basis, a list of schools in their provinces that meet the 70% second dose COVID-19 coverage;
2. that all teams should continue working closely with community leaders to ramp up vaccination campaign activities, and encourage the most vulnerable groups, especially the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions to get vaccinated; and
3. that all primary schools resume all sporting activities. Secondary Schools that have reached 70% COVID-19 second dose vaccination can resume non-contact sporting activities;

## **2.0 HOSTING OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION CONFERENCE AT HWANGE NATIONAL PARK: 23 – 26 MAY, 2022**

The Minister of Environment, Climate, Tourism, and Hospitality Industry, Honourable Mangaliso Ndlovu, updated Cabinet on the Hosting of the African Elephant Conservation Conference at the Hwange National Park from 23 to 26 May, 2022. Cabinet noted the Report.

The nation will recall that Cabinet earlier on approved the hosting of the Conference, which is primarily meant to discuss and prepare for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) 19<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP 19), scheduled for November 2022 in Panama. The African Elephant Conference will also provide technical scientific research on African elephant conservation and management as well as assess the successes and failures recorded in that regard. Furthermore, the Conference will galvanize support on measures to improve African Elephant conservation in Southern Africa and agree on a framework for wildlife management.

Overall, a total of 150 participants are expected to attend the event, including:

- Responsible Ministers from 16 Southern, Central, Eastern and Western African countries;
- Diplomats accredited to Zimbabwe;
- Non-State Actors, such as the CAMPFIRE Association, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation; and
- Chiefs and local community representatives.

Cabinet wishes to further highlight that the Elephant Conference programme involves a two-day meeting of technical officials from 23 to 24 May 2022, followed by a one-day Ministerial Meeting on 26 May 2022. The key output of the Conference will be a Ministerial Declaration on African

Elephant Conservation in Africa that is to be referred to as the *Hwange Elephant Declaration*.

Government emphasizes that the CITES COP 19 is critical in the country's wildlife conservation and management programmes, especially that of elephants and stockpiled products. The outcome of the African Elephant Conference should, therefore, be mutually beneficial to all parties, including communities, wildlife, the environment and Government. In particular, there is need to look objectively into the issue of trade in elephant products as well as human-wildlife conflict issues in affected communities, and this Conference provides the appropriate discussion platform.

### **3.0 PROPOSAL ON THE SMART CITY PROJECT**

The Minister of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, Honourable Dr. Jenfan Muswere, presented a Proposal on the Smart City Project, which was adopted by Cabinet.

The Smart City Solutions proposal relates to the strategic area which will introduce operational efficiencies in law enforcement and city administration through the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). Implementation of the Solutions is spearheaded by the Ministry of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services. The current proposal relates to the Smart Traffic Management System that is Monitoring and Surveillance with Cameras; and Integration

of Systems under the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development.

In terms of the Smart Traffic Management System, a country-wide system is set to be deployed throughout the country in partnership with capable technical partners. The System aims to install cameras on all controlled intersections and strategic points in all cities for gathering information and monitoring traffic flow within cities. It will create a platform for the real-time electronic monitoring of roads, receipting, reconciliation of fines, docket management, and analysis of traffic information and statistics across the whole country. The System will be integrated with relevant electronic platforms at the Central Vehicle Registry (CVR), Zimbabwe National Roads Administration (ZINARA), Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA), INTERPOL and other relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

The Integration of Systems under the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development will link a number of operational systems as well as those to be installed in the Ministry. A Committee was set up to work on the linkage of all the systems to the National Data Centre. The targeted systems are in the CVR, ZINARA, ZIMPOST, Vehicle Inspection Department (VID) and other relevant Departments in the road and vehicle management area.

Cabinet advises that the Ministry of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services will directly engage Ministries, Departments and Agencies and Technical Partners for the deployment of the Smart City Solutions across the country. Under this arrangement, the selected partners will fund the procurement of equipment and implementation of smart solutions on a revenue-share basis, with investment recouped from revenues generated by the respective project on a Build Operate Transfer basis. This will expedite implementation of the projects.

The Smart City Project has many benefits. It will ensure that all criminals who skip red traffic lights and commit similar crimes are easily traced and brought to book. The Project is also expected to reduce road carnage attributable to human error, while improving operational efficiencies in the administration of local authorities and law enforcement agencies. Crime detection and enforcement will be enhanced, while revenue collection will also be increased through optimized systems.

#### **4.0 STRATEGIES TO STANDARDIZE ZIMBABWE'S FUEL PROCUREMENT SYSTEM**

Cabinet received a report on Strategies to Standardise the Fuel Procurement System as presented by the Minister of Energy and Power Development, Honourable Zhemu Soda.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that the instability in Eastern Europe has increased the uncertainty in fuel supply. Government has, therefore, increased efforts to improve the Strategic Fuel Reserve, with US\$40 million worth of fuel having been procured in the last six months. The intention is to maintain at least a 30-day stock cover, which, at the current consumption levels, translates to 150 million litres. This fuel would be released onto the market to plug supply gaps or to stabilize prices.

The nation is informed that in the immediate term, Cabinet has adopted the following strategies:

- Resumption of petrol blending at E10 from 25 April 2022, which has reduced the pump price of petrol by US\$0.04 per litre. The blending will go up to E20 by end of May 2022, which will lead to a higher reduction in the price of petrol by US\$0.07 per litre;

Government intends to set up a Fuel Price Stabilisation Fund, to cushion consumers from sharp increases in fuel prices. Discussions are on-going on the modalities and timing of the Fund. Government will come up with measures to stabilize and ensure a consistent supply of fuel.

## **5.0 PROGRESS REPORTS ON PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR THE FIRST 100-DAY CYCLE OF 2022**



Cabinet received reports on progress made in the implementation of priority projects for the 1<sup>st</sup> 100-Day Cycle of 2022, as presented by the Ministers of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development; National Housing and Social Amenities; and Youth, Sport, Arts and Recreation.

**1. The Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Honourable Dr Sithembiso Nyoni,**

reported that the following progress had been recorded on projects under her purview:

- (i) The Ministry is funding 31 women projects worth ZW\$24.8 million through the Women Development Fund in the Mashonaland Central and Harare Metropolitan provinces, with 109 women directly benefiting and a further 400 people benefiting indirectly;
- (ii) 434 women were trained on the Establishment of Women Empowerment Clubs in the Matabeleland South, Mashonaland West and Mashonaland East provinces. The training areas include leadership, business management, financial literacy, value addition and family health;
- (iii) The setting up of the One Stop Centre for Victims of Gender-Based Violence is 65% complete, with the casting of the concrete slab for the building which houses the Centre now complete, as well as establishment of the relevant services at the Hospital, namely: counseling, Police Victim Friendly Unit, and medical, legal and administrative services;

- (iv) All the targeted 100 beneficiaries have been trained under the Transformation of Community Groups from Informal Livelihood Projects into Formal Enterprises in Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Matabeleland South and Midlands provinces. The programme is now being cascaded to other groups while at the same time the trained groups are supported to certify their products with the Standards Association of Zimbabwe; and
- (v) A total of 241 small to medium-scale entrepreneurs from Zvishavane (51), Gokwe South (53), Makoni (82) and Chimanimani (52) were trained on entrepreneurship and business management skills.

**2. The Minister of Youth, Sport, Arts and Recreation, Honourable Dr Kirsty Coventry,** reported that the progress recorded for projects under her purview is as follows:

- (i) Under the Empower Bank and Mhuri Tobacco Youth Business Starter Pack Project, 164 youths were supported in tobacco production on 110 hectares of land in Hurungwe District, Mashonaland West Province, and the young farmers have delivered their produce to the auction floors;
- (ii) Under the Youth Drug and Substance Abuse Awareness Project, campaigns were held in 6 out of the country's 10 provinces;
- (iii) Under the Skills Outreach Programme, a total of 2 215 youths were trained, surpassing the targeted 2 000;

- (iv) Regarding the Women and Girls Sport Festivals, a total of 16 708 women and girls participated in festivals which have so far been conducted in 73 districts, while 1 825 Women and Girls Clubs have been established in most of the country's wards; and
- (v) On the Kanyemba Arts and Culture Centre Project, all the preparatory work for implementation of the project has been completed, including regularisation with the Local Authority.

**3. The Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities, Honourable Daniel Garwe,** outlined the progress made in the implementation of projects under his Ministry as follows:

- (i) The brickwork for 3 of the 4 blocks of flats at the Dzivarasekwa Flats being constructed for households affected by flash floods is now complete, with the funding coming from Government. Provision of services for the additional 14 blocks of flats to be constructed in partnership with the private sector is underway. Overall, the project is 56% complete;
- (ii) For the Binga Floods Victims Core-Houses in Nsungwale, being constructed by the Department of Public Works, 3 houses have been roofed, while the remaining 14 are at roof level, that is, the brick superstructure is complete, leaving overall project completion level at 85%;
- (iii) The Empumalanga Project in Hwange, which targets the provision of offsite and onsite infrastructure for 2 000 high density stands is at advanced levels of completion, with construction of water and

sewer reticulation at 80% completion, and construction of roads and storm water drains standing at 66%;

- (iv) In Gweru, the Senga Messengers' Camp Housing Project, targeting the construction of 11 blocks of flats, is progressing well, with construction having started on 1 February 2022 and the slab for 4 blocks having been completed;
- (v) For the Kasese Housing Project in Kariba, where houses are being built for families whose houses were built under electricity pylons, the Environmental Impact Assessment was done, paving way for the resumption of the projects;
- (vi) The Marondera Housing Project, under which 4 blocks of flats are being constructed for civil servants, is on course for completion in August 2022 as scheduled;
- (vii) The Contractor for the Crownlands Start-Paying-For-Your-House Scheme for civil servants in Chinhoyi, Mashonaland West Province is now back on site following Government intervention in the matter. The Project involves provision of offsite and onsite infrastructure for 999 medium-density residential stands. The stands sizes range from 300 square metres to 1 000 square metres.

## **6.0 REPORT ON THE MINING INDABA HELD IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, 9 TO 13 MAY 2022**

The Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Honourable Wiston Chitando, briefed Cabinet on the Mining Indaba which he attended in Cape Town, South Africa, from 9 to 13 May 2022.

Cabinet would like to advise the public that the Conference was attended by more than 6 000 delegates, surpassing the attendances recorded at the two previous Indabas. Lots of state-of-the art equipment was on display, while the Conference also afforded the Zimbabwean delegation the chance to engage investors and other mining stakeholders. The Zimbabwe Pavillion attracted a lot of investors and other visitors, whose engagements were made more productive by the presence of officials from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

The Minister held meetings with some of his regional counterparts as well as the potential investors. These included the current President of the African Diamond Producers Association (ADPA), who is also the Tanzanian Minister of Mines.

On a related matter, the public will recall that a Post-Cabinet Briefing Session held a few weeks ago advised that a Kimberly Process Certification Assessment Team would visit the country on a scheduled tour. Accordingly, Cabinet takes this opportunity to announce that the Team is in the country carrying out the assessment. Stakeholders are encouraged to co-operate with the Team.

**I THANK YOU!**