

FIFTEENTH POST-CABINET PRESS BRIEFING

7TH JUNE, 2022

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

Cabinet received an update on the Country's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic and a Report on the Procurement and Roll-Out of Vaccines, as presented by the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Honourable Professor Amon Murwira, who is the Acting Minister of Health and Child Care.

The nation is advised that, as at 6 June 2022, the country's cumulative COVID-19 cases stood at 253 508, with 245 373 recoveries and 5 513 deaths. The recovery rate was 97%, with 2 685 active cases having been reported. The number of new COVID-19 cases decreased by 15% to 1 241 cases, from the 1 454 recorded the previous week. This trend of declining cases, coupled with the findings of the latest COVID-19 resurgence threshold analysis, indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic remains under control. Meanwhile, resurgence analyses will continue to be undertaken as part of monitoring trends across the country in order to ensure scientific decision-making in managing the pandemic. The latest resurgence analysis reveals that Bulawayo Metropolitan Province is the only one which recorded more than 10% percent increase in new cases over the past two weeks. Public health

and social measures in the Province will be strengthened to address this situation.

Regarding the national vaccination programme, Cabinet wishes to highlight that, as at 6 June 2022, a total of 6 237 014 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine had been administered, while 4 559 541 people had received their second dose, and 829 558 their third dose. This translates to a national coverage of 55.5%, the same as that recorded the previous week. To strengthen the introduction of innovative strategies that might be required to further ramp up the COVID-19 vaccination programme as well as other public health and social measures, the National Microbiology Laboratory will conduct a national COVID-19 seroprevalence survey to determine the nation's level of immunity at the moment. Borehole drilling, particularly in Mashonaland Central Province, remains a priority.

2.0 UPDATE ON THE 2022/2023 CEREAL MARKETING SEASON AND THE 2022 WINTER WHEAT PRODUCTION SEASON

Cabinet received an update on the 2022/23 Cereal Marketing Season and the 2022 Winter Wheat Production Programme as presented by the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Honourable Dr Anxious Jongwe Masuka.

The nation is informed that the 2022/23 grains marketing season commenced on 1 April 2022, with substantial stocks of 453 717 Metric

Tonnes (MT) having been carried over from the previous season as a Strategic Grain Reserve.

The nation is also informed that Cabinet has approved a review of the price of maize to ensure farmers' viability. The current maize price to ZW\$75 000/MT plus a fixed early delivery incentive of US\$90/MT. The early delivery incentive, will be extended to other crops such as traditional grains, sunflower and soyabean, is payable to 31 July 2022, and applies to all deliveries made since the commencement of the marketing season.

The nation is further informed that the total wheat stocks in the country as at 3 June 2022 stood at 101 182 MT out of which 67 000MT were held by the GMB and the remainder by millers. These stocks are expected to last for 4 months, at an allocation rate of 21 000 MT per month. Millers are expected to import 9 000 MT per month to meet the country's monthly requirement of 30 000 MT per month.

Regarding the 2022 winter wheat production, the target is to plant 75 000 ha and produce 383 000 MT, which would be a record crop for the country. Despite challenges with the late start of the winter season, planting to date is 62.8% of the target, being above last year by 70%. The bulk of the planted wheat is at hardening stage. Cabinet wishes to remind the public that all contractors of grains should register with the Agriculture Marketing Authority (AMA) by 15th June each year, in accordance with Section 5 of SI 140 of 2013, for them to be able to participate and enter into contract farming.

On tobacco production and marketing, the nation is informed that a total of 122.7 million kilogrammes (kg) of tobacco valued at US\$366.8 million have been sold to date, compared to 141 million kg worth US\$382 million sold during the same period last year. The Auction and Contract floors average selling price has been firmer this year at US\$2.99/kg compared to US\$2.71/kg in 2021. The target for the 2022/2023 season is 275 million kg from 135 000 ha, with 96% of the tobacco expected to be produced under contract.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that henceforth, cotton is now treated as an export crop, just like tobacco, with prices being determined by fair pricing based on international lint prices. This should motivate growers to produce more in the coming seasons.

3.0 REPORT BACK ON THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT CONFERENCE: HWANGE: 23-26 MAY, 2022

The Minister of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Honourable N.M. Ndlovu, presented the Report on the African Elephant Conference, which was adopted by Cabinet.

The public will recall that Government announced the hosting of the Conference at its 13th Post-Cabinet Press Briefing of 17th May, 2022. Cabinet is pleased to inform the nation that the Hwange Declaration on the

Conservation of the African Conference was agreed on and released by the four participating countries, with a communiqué having been issued at the end of the Conference on 26 May, 2022. Going forward, efforts will be made for all African countries, including those who did not participate, to adopt the Declaration.

The main highlights of the Conference deliberations were as follows:

1. There was consensus that the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) should acknowledge the conservation efforts of Southern African States and reward them by allowing the disposal of ivory stockpiles.
2. Domestic trade in ivory should also be permitted, with the sovereignty of States and their rights to sustainable use of wildlife being respected.
3. The participating countries emphasized on the need to generate revenues through sale of elephant and wildlife products by developing a viable instrument which will enable them to sell ivory stockpiles to raise funds for conservation, given that the CITES ban is depriving the sector of critical funding for conservation.
4. The Conference agreed that there is need to harmonise policy and legislation and manage elephants as a collective unit across borders, through the promotion of Trans-frontier Conservation Areas, so that Africa speaks with one voice on the issue of elephant management.

The nation is advised that Cabinet endorsed all the Conference Outcomes.

4.0 NATIONAL INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Cabinet considered and approved the National Information Communication Technology Policy as presented by the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Honourable Amon Murwira.

Hon Murwira presented the ICT Policy review 2021 to 2025 from the Ministry of ICT . The nation is informed that the Zimbabwe National Policy for Information and Communication Technology seeks to align to global trend, as the use of ICT is now the game changer which will transform the macro economic landscape of the country. The review is aligned to the NDS1 and the Smart Zimbabwe master plan with a vision to ensure ubiquitous connectivity and a mission to exploit the potential of ICTs across all sectors of the economy. The policy review will also address both supply-side and demand-side challenges faced in the ICT sector; local content; cost of accessing devices; low digital literacy levels; and limited awareness of data rights by the citizenry. A multi-sectoral National ICT Policy Advisory Council (NIPAC) will be constituted to provide strategic direction, while a Secretariat will be established to track the implementation of the Policy.

5.0 UPDATE ON BINGA DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Cabinet received and noted an Update on the Binga Development Initiatives as presented by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Honourable July Moyo.

The nation is informed that a lot of progress has been made on a number of initiatives to transform the lives of communities in Binga, in line with Government's mantra of leaving no-one and no place behind. The developments include the following:

- Completion of the Kalonga road, the 7 km Binga-Sengwa detour road and roads to
- Drilling of boreholes
- Binga has been granted access rights to Gwayi-Shangani lake water, with two places having been identified for irrigation;
- Land has been secured for a Vocational Training Centre;
- TEL-ONE is on the ground connecting Binga to promote e-learning, with preference being given to those schools with existing infrastructure, that is, power and computers;
- transformers have been installed to date at Manjolo, whilst REA is working on the electrification of schools in the area;
- Designs for the School of Nursing are being developed ;
- Tendering processes for mortuary cold rooms and expecting mothers' shelters are under way;
- The temporary border post is now operational;

- Construction of 17 flood victim houses is under way, while the remainder of the houses will be constructed by the Ministry of National Housing and Social Amenities; and
- 6 teams from the Registrar General's Office are in the district for mobile registration.

6.0 PRINCIPLES OF THE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND CIVIL PROTECTION BILL

Cabinet considered and approved the Principles for the Disaster Risk and Management Bill, which were presented by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Honourable July Moyo. The Principles are a result of extensive consultations held with all stakeholders.

The Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection Bill will amend the Civil Protection Act in order to ensure adequate preparedness and predictability in responses to and the general management of disasters, which are on the increase in terms of both categories and intensity. This will guarantee a proactive or preventative rather than reactive approach that focuses is on dealing with the effects of a disaster. Accordingly, the Bill will provide for the strengthening of the disaster risk governance architecture to manage the risk at the national, provincial and local levels. Organizational structures will therefore be established at national, provincial, district, local authority, ward and village levels. A National Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection Centre is also provided for.

The National Committee will now be headed by Ministers, with a National Coordinating Committee on Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection, which incorporates the relevant Government Departments and Agencies as well as non-State actors, providing the necessary support. Provincial Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection Committees, comprising line Ministry representatives in the respective provinces will be established. The existing district, ward and village structures in terms of the Traditional Leaders Act and the Rural and Urban Councils Act will be adapted to include disaster risk management functions. Furthermore, Disaster Risk Management Officers and their assistants as well as volunteers will be specified for each locality. The Committees will be required to produce annual plans on the predictability and preparedness for disasters, including issues to do with monitoring and evaluation.

Other highlights of the Bill include streamlining the issuance of presumption of death certificates for missing persons during a disaster; and that the Civil Protection Fund will be renamed Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection Fund in order to reflect the expanded sources of funds and their applications, including resilience building. The Disaster Risk Management and Civil Protection Bill will therefore promote involvement of all citizens in disaster-prone communities in managing the increasing multiplicity and severity of disasters and associated risks. It will also modernize the current Act to deal with emergent risks and disasters.

I THANK YOU!