

FIRST POST-CABINET PRESS BRIEFING

15TH FEBRUARY, 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 Procurement and Roll-Out of Vaccines, as presented by the Chairman of the Ministers' COVID-19 National Committee, Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care, Honourable Dr. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga.

The nation is advised that the fourth wave of COVID-19 fuelled by the Omicron variant was successfully managed as is reflected by the decrease in the cases. When Cabinet adjourned on 14 December, 2021, the country was in the midst of the fourth wave with an average of 4 014 per day, and currently the new cases average less than 1000. As at 14 February, 2022, the country's cumulative COVID-19 cases stood at 231 337, with 223 603 recoveries and 5 374 deaths. The recovery rate was 96%, with 2 892 active cases having been recorded. The number of new COVID-19 cases decreased to 929 during the week under review, compared to 992 recorded the previous week.

The number of people in need of hospitalisation for COVID-19 continues to decrease, with the country's bed occupancy rate declining to 1.3% during the week under review from 1.9% the previous week. This

indicates that the national response measures instituted by Government continue to pay off.

Regarding the national vaccination programme, Cabinet wishes to inform the public that, as at 14 February, 2022, a total of 4 346 937 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine had been administered, while 3 344 755 people had received their second dose. Government wishes to inform the nation that there are sufficient stocks of vaccines and urges those not yet vaccinated and those who need a booster to do so.

Cabinet resolved as follows:

1. that, henceforth, Ministers of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution and their teams submit updated vaccination campaign strategies and micro-plans that support implementation of more innovative ways of strengthening vaccination services in their provinces. Provinces should take advantage of the reopening of schools to ramp up vaccinations for those who are 16 years and above;
2. that the Ministry of Health and Child Care come up with vaccination targets per month for each province in order to help ramp up vaccination as well as urgently identify and address any challenges in a timely fashion;
3. that Treasury will release adequate funds to support vaccine risk communication and community engagement campaigns as well as the updated provincial vaccine strategies and micro plans that aim to ramp up vaccinations;

4. that in view of the continued decline in new cases and deaths coupled with a declining testing positivity rate that is indicating that the community transmission has gone down, all ports of entry be:
 - (a) reopened but ensuring that all the recommended COVID-19 prevention measures are adhered to, and
 - (b) all persons entering Zimbabwe must have undergone a valid COVID-19 PCR test not more than 48 hours from the time of their departure for Zimbabwe, and fully vaccinated. Those who have received a booster vaccine shot have an entry advantage; and
5. that, despite the continued decline in the number of new cases and deaths reported per day, strict enforcement of all COVID-19 regulations coupled with strengthened risk communication on the pandemic must continue since the pandemic is not yet over.

2.0 UPDATE ON THE 2021/2022 SUMMER PRODUCTION SEASON

The Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Honourable Dr Anxious Jongwe Masuka, presented an Update on the 2021/2022 Summer Production Season, which was adopted by Cabinet.

Regarding the ongoing marketing of grain, a record total of 1 307 250 metric tonnes of grain have so far been delivered to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) comprising:

- 987 367 metric tonnes of maize;

- 12 113 metric tonnes of soyabeans;
- 208 103 metric tonnes of wheat, and
- 99 667 metric tonnes of traditional grains.

Another 3000 metric tonnes of wheat have been delivered directly to millers.

Mashonaland West Province has continued to record the highest maize, soyabean and wheat deliveries, while Mashonaland Central Province has the highest traditional grains intake. The grain delivered to date to the Grain Marketing Board is valued at about ZW\$61 billion.

On summer grains production season, the following hectarages were recorded as at 19 January 2022:

- 1 563 200 hectares of maize;
- 44 898 hectares of soyabean;
- 243 254 hectares under sorghum; and
- 147 607 hectares under pearl millet.

It is highlighted that the actual area put under sunflower and cotton is 14 482 and 166 902 hectares, respectively. The production of sunflower and cotton is intended to increase the basket of oilseeds for the country. The first round of the Crop and Livestock Assessment which is currently underway will provide more details on the actual hectarages that were put under the various crops.

Meanwhile, a total of 110 102 hectares of tobacco have been planted, 18 510 hectares under irrigation and 91 592 under dryland. Given the late start to the tobacco planting season, the tobacco marketing season

will start on 30 March, 2022. Some 122 604 tobacco growers have registered for the 2021/2022 season, compared to 145 625 growers who registered during the same period last season.

Concerning cotton, Cabinet wishes to advise the public that the delayed payment of farmers and late onset of the rains affected the total area that was put to seed cotton. A total of 367 945 hectares was put under seed cotton compared to the 380 127 ha in the 2020/21 season. In a bid to increase shareholding in the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe, Government has engaged consultants.

The Milling Industry and Stock feed manufacturers are allocated 45 000 metric tonnes and 30 000 metric tonnes of maize monthly, respectively. The milling Industry and Stock feed manufacturers are encouraged to enter into contract farming for uninterrupted supply of their grain requirements. In light of increased demand for maize, Cabinet resolved to lift the maize import ban to facilitate imports by private players with free funds.

3.0 REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH GEOGENIX B.V. ON THE JOINT VENTURE AGREEMENT FOR THE POMONA WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY AND WASTE-TO- ENERGY PLANT PROJECT

Cabinet considered and approved the Joint Venture Agreement for the Design, Build, Operate and Transfer for the Pomona Waste Management

Facility and Waste-to-Energy Plant Project between the City of Harare and Geogenix B.V. which was presented by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Hon. July Moyo, as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee.

The partnership is between the City of Harare and Geogenix B.V. for the Harare Pomona Waste Management and Waste-to-Energy Plant Project. Geogenix B.V. will invest €303.9 million to design, build, operate and transfer a Waste Management Facility and Waste-to-Energy 16-22 MW Plant at Pomona in Harare. The project will be managed and operated by the investor for a period of thirty years before transfer of the project to the City of Harare. In addition to waste management, the project will also generate 16-22 MW of electricity which will be introduced into the national grid.

Government is encouraging local authorities to open up similar projects in other cities and towns as a way to ensure environmentally-friendly management of waste in the country.

4.0 PROPOSED MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF GOLD SERVICE CENTRES

Cabinet considered and approved the proposed measures to improve the effective operation of Gold Service Centres as presented by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Honourable Professor Mthuli Ncube.

The Gold Service Centres are meant to streamline and support the operations of artisanal gold miners through ensuring that they operate legally and in a safe environment. The Gold Centres provide machinery and transport to the miners, while the artisanal miners on the other hand, are expected to provide sufficient feed stock to the Centres. The artisanal miners are also expected to benefit through higher returns from the processing of the feed ore they supply to the Centres. The illegal artisanal mining activities are, however, causing a loss of human lives, land degradation, loss of potential revenue to the Government, and hence the need to safeguard the country's finite resources through curtailing these actions.

The Gold Service Centres are at Bubi in Matabeleland North province; Mt Darwin and Shamva in Mashonaland Central province; Silobela in Midlands province; and Odzi in Manicaland province. Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that Gold Service Centre are being established in other volatile environment areas with large numbers of illegal gold miners.

Government takes great exception to some influential and Government officials who are also involved in illegal mining activities. These should desist from such activities forthwith. Government would take stern action against all those involved.

Cabinet resolved on the institution of the following measures to ensure that the Gold Service Centres achieve the intended objectives:

- a) that the Mines and Minerals (Amendment) Bill be finalised as a matter of urgency;
- b) that the formalisation of all mining operations be expedited to enhance accountability and ease of monitoring by environmental management authorities;
- c) that funding be provided including through Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) for the operationalisation of Gold Service Centres as approved by Cabinet, with the participation of the private sector being vigorously pursued;
- d) that mobile Gold Buying Centres be established starting with four immediately; and
- e) that law enforcement measures be consolidated and that adequate resources be provided to conduct the necessary operations such as Operation *Chikorokoza Ngachipere/Isitsheketsa Kasiphele/No* to machete-wielding gangs.

5.0 UPDATE ON THE AERIAL MAPPING OF DYSFUNCTIONAL URBAN SETTLEMENTS AND REPORT ON THE REGULARISATION OF DYSFUNCTIONAL, ILLEGAL AND IRREGULAR SETTLEMENTS

Cabinet received an update on the aerial mapping of dysfunctional urban settlements and report on the regularization of dysfunctional, illegal and irregular settlements as presented by the Vice President, Chairman of the Enhanced Cabinet Committee on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Management.

The nation is informed that the exercise on the mapping of dysfunctional urban settlements commenced with Caledonia settlement and then proceeded to Harare South. Cabinet notes that construction works on the Treasury-funded four (4) blocks of flats at Dzivarasekwa (48 units) is now at 70% of completion and should be ready for occupation soon. Upon completion, the Dzivarasekwa flats will benefit mainly households currently residing in flood-prone areas such as Budiro 5 in Harare.

On the 18 blocks of flats to be constructed by the private sector, the Ministry of National Housing and Social Amenities is currently working with the Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (PRAZ) to finalise the engagement of contractors for the provision of roads, water and sewer infrastructure.

Cabinet advises that works are earmarked to commence on the other 51 housing project sites identified across the ten provinces. The sites are expected to avail 324 blocks of flats yielding a cumulative 5 184 units for emergency settlements. The total cost required for construction of flats up to 2023 amounts to US\$377 million. When on-site and off-site infrastructure requirements are considered, the amount reaches US\$500 million or ZW\$60 billion.

Turning to the legacy matter on planned settlements lacking basic services, Cabinet reports that focus is being placed on an initial 16 Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle settlements identified countrywide for immediate infrastructural development. The cost of providing infrastructure on

these 16 prioritised settlements amounts to about US\$81 million or approximately ZW\$10 billion.

Cabinet approved that Ministers of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution actively participate in the development of Garikai / Hlalani Kuhle projects situated in their respective provinces. Already, eight (8) local authorities have since been authorised to commence design work for infrastructure development on these sites. The local authorities include Lupane Local Board; Bindura Municipality; Karoi Town Council; Mutare City Council; Marondera Municipality; Hwange Rural District Council (Dete); and Bulawayo City Council (Cowdray Park).

Regarding the regularisation of settlements on farms with disputed ownership, the nation is advised that there has been some progress on the options approved by Cabinet at its 34th Meeting held on 5th October, 2021. On the option of buying out land owners through offer of compensation, with beneficiaries being asked to contribute to the reimbursement of the land value to Government, negotiations with the owner of Whitecliffe Farm were initiated, and a compensation amount of ZW\$4,476 billion was submitted to Treasury. The funding is yet to be availed, and deliberations on the modalities of the compensation are ongoing. Pertaining to the allocation of alternative land to affected owners, negotiations have been initiated with the owners of Stoneridge and Ordar Farms. Government mediation efforts are proceeding between land owners and occupiers at farms such as Saturday Retreat to ensure a win-win situation for the parties involved.

In accordance with Cabinet's directive that households irregularly settled on wetlands and areas reserved for servitudes and social amenities be prioritised in every relocation exercise, the nation is informed that the procurement of tentage is underway. Two evacuation centres which can accommodate 200 people each have been constructed in Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts of Manicaland Province, while the identification of evacuation sites has been completed in other provinces. I am pleased to report that the Ministry of National Housing and Social Amenities is actively pursuing the adoption of new construction technology capable of delivering a house in a mere five days, since tents can only provide a stop-gap solution.

The nation is informed that the directive by His Excellency the President for title to be issued to compliant home-owners in Caledonia and Harare South is being implemented. It is hoped that the issuance of title will encourage the private sector and other investors to participate in housing provision schemes.

In light of the foregoing, CABINET approved as follows:

- (a) that, since most of the Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle schemes were handed over to local authorities, cash disbursements be provided to the local authorities directly as part of their Devolution funding, including the US\$81 million (ZW\$10 billion) intended for off-site and on-site infrastructure as directed by Cabinet in 2021; and
- (b) that the Musha/Muzi financing model as proposed by the Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency and approved by Cabinet in 2021 be actively pursued in order to augment housing provision through private sector and citizen participation.

6.0 EMERGENCY ROAD REHABILITATION PROGRAMME 2

PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1 MARCH

2021 - 31 DECEMBER 2021

Cabinet received the Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme 2 Progress Report as presented by the Vice President, the Chairperson of the Enhanced Cabinet Committee on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Management.

Cabinet wishes to inform the public that significant progress was achieved in implementing the ERRP 2 on the repair and construction of drainage structures as well as the reclamation of gullies and the repair of wash-aways, where the percentage completion of works exceeded 70%.

Cabinet reports that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has since released **Z\$1 billion** from the 2022 Budget to ERRP2, and a further **Z\$500 million** to DDF to facilitate response to some of the weather-related emergencies. With a view to address the issue of poor workmanship, the Programme Steering Committee intends to initiate remedial training for project supervisors and managers through the ERRP 2 National and Provincial Technical Committees.

The nation is advised that the periodic visits by the Steering Committee Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Teams to the provinces and districts were invaluable in galvanizing road authorities into action to achieve the desired results. The visits will continue in 2022.

In light of the foregoing, CABINET approved as follows:

- a) that Ministers of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution closely monitor local authorities in their areas of jurisdiction, with a view to ensuring that all of them support rather than stifle the implementation of central Government programmes and projects;
- b) that investigations be conducted in situations where funds utilised do not reflect progress on programme implementation;
- c) that remedial training for project supervisors and managers in the Provinces be resourced and conducted urgently to ensure that proper standards are maintained; and
- d) that the Programme Steering Committee works closely with ZIDA and ZINARA to ensure that the Transport Infrastructure Investment Indaba is held in the first quarter of 2022.

7.0 UPDATE ON THE EXPO 2020 DUBAI

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade updated Cabinet on the Expo 2020, Dubai for the period 1 October 2021 to 31 January 2022.

Cabinet advises that the Expo recently recorded over 10 million visitors to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to view the exhibitions from over 192 participating countries. From the month of October to January 2022, the Zimbabwean Pavilion received over 206 000 visitors. The majority of visitors were mainly interested in mining, solar and hydropower generation, agriculture imports of macadamia nuts, horticultural and livestock products, setting up of Greenfield companies in many sectors and tourism amongst others. Cabinet advises that in the month of January alone, the Pavilion was visited by 33 000 people most of whom were on tourism packages from Europe and the Americas. They expressed interest in travelling to Zimbabwe post COVID-19 to visit various tourism sites, especially the majestic Victoria Falls that is being showcased in the Pavilion.

On publicity, it is reported that the Commissioner General Ambassador Mubi has marketed the country by featuring on live TV interviews with international media. Over 20 pre-recorded interviews were held by international media houses for broadcast, digital, print and social media.

On investment, tourism and trade, the nation is informed that the Pavilion continues to receive investment enquiries which are being recorded through the self-help desk. These have been sent to the relevant line Ministers for their consideration. It is anticipated that if

such enquiries are responded to timeously they will culminate in signing of investment and trade deals by His Excellency during the National Day Celebrations on 14 March 2022.

Pertaining to commercial activities, Cabinet advises that total sales for the period October to December 2021 are amounting to AED 38 200 (US\$10 500). Top selling products from all the sales sites are as follows: tea and coffees, potato chips, cerevita, binga baskets and wall plates, sauces, baticks and wood sculptures among others. A number of companies in the UAE have expressed interest to distribute Zimbabwean products in the UAE. The nation is informed that during the period under review a forty-foot container of Tommy Atkins varieties of mangoes – Zimbabwean farmers have been requested to submit their quotations. A buyer has requested to be provided with details of nuts grown in Zimbabwe and our supply capacity; and a request for the quotation for avocados supply has also been received.

Cabinet advises that events, both within the Expo Exhibition site and outside were part of Zimbabwe's initial programming to compliment the Pavilion exhibition. The events held include Smart Cities Conference and Exhibition and Mining Conference. The following were scheduled to take place before the end of the Expo: Trade and Investment Conference, Agribusiness Forum, Tourism Investment Conference, Health Wellness Conference and the National Day. Cabinet has approved the holding of the Media Week from 10 to 14 March 2022 ahead of the National Day. This is intended to create the necessary hype ahead of this important day.

Cabinet informs that Zimbabwe is showcasing its artists in Dubai on the side-lines of the Expo at the Akka Gallery from 7 January to 28 February 2022. The exhibition's diverse mix of artists reflects the nation itself, which is rich in narratives from all parts of societies.

The nation is advised that the Zimbabwe National Day at Expo 2020 Dubai is scheduled to take place on 14 March 2022 and it would be graced by His Excellency the President, Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa as the Guest of Honour. The President will participate in a host of other events which include: the Business Investment Forum, engagement with the diaspora and signing of various agreements among other activities.

8.0 UPDATE ON THE SITUATION AT SCHOOLS

The Minister of Primary and Secondary Education updated Cabinet on the situation at both primary and secondary schools.

Cabinet noted with dismay the reported absenteeism by some teachers and Headmasters. Of particular concern, is the alleged barring of some teachers from attending to their work as well as attendance by some teachers without delivering lessons. The Minister of Primary and Secondary Education has been instructed to take stern action in consultation with the Chairman of The Public Service Commission and the Ministers of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development; and Public Service, Labour and Social

Welfare. An appropriate statement on the matter will be issued by the Minister soonest.

Cabinet would like to commend those teachers who have continued to attend to their duties.

9.0 HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO THE 6TH AU-EU SUMMIT, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 17 -18 FEBRUARY 2022

The nation is informed that His Excellency, the President was invited to attend the 6th AU-EU Summit in Brussels, Belgium from 17 to 18 February 2022. The forum is an important turning point in the partnership between AU and EU member states as it intends to define and promote a new vision in the partnership for the coming years based on the principles of mutual respect, accountability, equality, value addition and respect for sovereignty.

I THANK YOU!