

FIFTH POST-CABINET PRESS BRIEFING

16TH MARCH, 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 as at 15 March, 2022, the country's cumulative COVID-19 cases stood at 243 365, with 232 787 recoveries and 5 417 deaths. The recovery rate was 95%, with 5 151 active cases having been recorded. The number of new COVID-19 cases increased to 3 306 during the week under review, compared to 3 234 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 3.0% during the week under review from 3.2% the previous week. There were no admissions to the intensive care unit.

Regarding the national vaccination programme, Cabinet wishes to inform the public that, as at 15 March, 2022, a total of 4 401 450 first doses of

the COVID-19 vaccine had been administered, while 3 426 112 people had received their second dose. A total of 159 628 third doses have been administered to date. The National Vaccination Blitz/campaign will kick off on Monday, 21 March, 2022 and Government is urging those that have not yet been vaccinated to take advantage of this exercise to do so.

The nation is also being informed that the total number of COVID-19 cases detected in schools since the beginning of the first term increased to 606 during the week under review, compared to 517 recorded the previous week. The majority of the infected learners (422) were day scholars which is indicative that the infections are from the communities. Attendance in schools has continued to increase and currently stands at 96% for teachers and 94.7% for learners. Government is concerned about those schools and teachers that are demanding payment in foreign currency and will institute disciplinary measures where this is found to be true.

The Government is appealing to all Zimbabweans to take the COVID-19 pandemic seriously and as such are required to continue to adhere to the laid down World Health Organisation and National protocols at all times. These protocols include the following: the wearing of masks correctly at all times; washing of hands and observing social distance. The citizens are being urged to be on their guard at all times to minimise infections.

2.0 PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2022 CHILDREN’S PARTY AND 42ND ANNIVERSARY INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

Cabinet was briefed on the 2022 Children’s Party and the 42nd Anniversary Independence Day Celebrations by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Hon. July Moyo on behalf of the Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee State Occasions.

Cabinet reports that the 2022 Children’s Party and the 42nd Anniversary Independence Day Celebrations will, for the first time in the history of the nation, be held in Bulawayo on the 17th and 18th April, 2022, respectively under the theme **‘Zim@ 42- Leaving no one and no place behind’**. This is in line with the Second Republic’s drive towards the promotion of national unity, devolution and decentralisation.

The 2022 Children’s Party will be attended by 540 learners drawn from the country’s ten provinces. In an effort to expose the learners to the country’s history and heritage, the learners drawn from the provinces will visit the following places in and around Bulawayo: Matopos; Bulawayo Museum; Chipangali Orphanage and Chabalala Sanctuary.

His Excellency the President will grace the soccer match between Highlanders and Dynamos Football Clubs and handover the Presidential Independence Day Trophy to the winner.

The 2022 Children’s Party and 42nd Anniversary Independence Day Celebrations will be held in strict observance of all COVID-19 protocols.

There will be a massive COVID-19 testing exercise in Bulawayo during the Independence Day Celebrations. Only those who are tested and are negative will be allowed to attend the Celebrations.

The nation is also being advised that the 42nd Anniversary Celebrations will also be held in all the other Provinces and Districts and there will be strict enforcement of all COVID-19 regulations.

3.0 JUDICIAL LAWS AMMENDMENT BILL, 2022

Cabinet considered and approved the Judicial Laws Amendment Bill as presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs as Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

Cabinet advises that the Judicial Laws Amendment Bill seeks to provide for virtual court sittings in both civil and criminal proceedings and to align various provisions of Judicial Laws to the Constitution. The Bill also provides for the establishment of the Office of the Messenger of the Labour Court to enforce judgements.

4.0 REPORT ON HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT'S STATE VISIT TO KENYA AND THE ZIMBABWE-KENYA JOINT PERMANENT COMMISSION FROM 8TH TO 10TH MARCH,2022.

Cabinet received a report on His Excellency the President's State visit to Kenya and the Zimbabwe-Kenya Joint Permanent Commission from 8th

to 10th March,2022 as presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The nation is informed that His Excellency the President's visit to Kenya was preceded by the 3rd Session on Joint Permanent Commission Cooperation between Zimbabwe and Kenya. In order to facilitate its work, the Joint Permanent Commission on Cooperation broke into three Clusters namely: Foreign Affairs, Administration and Governance; Economic and Trade Matters; and Social and Cultural Affairs. The Commission recommended seven Memoranda of Understanding for signing during the State Visit by His Excellency's to Kenya.

The nation is advised that discussions between the two Heads of State had focused on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest and concern. The Two Heads of State reaffirmed their commitment to continue working together to strengthen and broaden bilateral cooperation.

Cabinet reports that the State Visit was highly successful as the following Memoranda of Understanding were signed:

1. Memorandum of Understanding on Political and Diplomatic Consultation;
2. Memorandum of Understanding on the Promotion of Women Empowerment and Community Development;
3. Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Youth Affairs;
4. Memorandum of Understanding on the Promotion of Cooperatives;

5. Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of Tourism and Wildlife Management;
6. Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Sport and Recreation; and
7. Memorandum of Understanding regarding Cooperation and Assistance in the field of Civil Aircraft Accidents and Serious Incidents Investigation.

The nation is also advised that His Excellency the President of Kenya agreed to officiate at the 2022 Zimbabwe International Trade Fair, to be held in Bulawayo. During that visit, he will also visit the Great Zimbabwe Monument.

In addition, various other areas of interest were discussed with a view to furthering economic cooperation. These include discussion on the duration of the visitors' passes issued at the points of entry for the respective countries.

Cabinet also expressed appreciation to President Kenyatta and the Government of Kenya, for granting citizenship to members of the Shona Community who have been resident in Kenya since 1960. This gesture demonstrated the strong fraternal bonds between the peoples of the two countries.

In the spirit of African solidarity and friendship between the two countries, President Mnangangwa donated to Kenya, 100 metric tonnes of medical oxygen.

Going forward, Zimbabwe will host the 4th Session of the Joint Permanent Commission during the 1st quarter of 2024 at a venue and date to be agreed through diplomatic channels. Zimbabwe will also host the Mid-Term Review Meeting in March 2023.

5.0 REPORT ON THE OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT TO ATTEND ZIMBABWE'S NATIONAL DAY COMMEMORATION AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI : 13TH TO 15TH MARCH, 2022

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade briefed Cabinet on the visit to the United Arab Emirates by His Excellency the President from 13th to 15th March, 2022.

The nation is informed that during the visit, His Excellency the President attended the Zimbabwe National Day Commemorations at Expo 2020 Dubai which was held on 14th March, 2022. The President also officiated at the following events: Diaspora Engagement Forum, 13th March, 2022, and the Zimbabwe Business Forum, 14th March, 2022.

At the Diaspora Forum, investment, trade, cultural exchange and tourism promotion, knowledge and skills transfer, philanthropic works and remittance mobilisation were identified as key areas for diaspora contribution to national development. Cabinet acknowledged the role played by the diaspora in championing development and urges them to

support the devolution agenda by taking up development projects in each of the ten provinces.

Cabinet is pleased to report that the Zimbabwe National Day was held on 14th March, 2022 and was attended by the hierarchy of the UAE Government. The following Memoranda of Understanding were signed:

1. ARDA signed a US\$250 million Joint Venture Agreement with the NV Group of India to establish a brewery in Masvingo;
2. Memorandum between the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries Water and Rural Development and the Private Office of H.H. Sheikh Ahmed Bin Faisal Al-Qassimi; and
3. The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) signed an Agreement with DNATA Travel on marketing.

Various other agreements such as the one with Sky Power for the establishment of a 500 MW solar energy plant are at an advanced stage of completion. The nation is further advised that follow-up on all enquiries and deals negotiated during the six-month Expo period is being pursued and the nation will be updated on the progress made.

Cabinet also wishes to advise the nation that it has been resolved to set up a Commercial and Consulate Office in the Commercial Hub of the United Arab Emirates in Dubai. This will ensure that our citizens in that region are well served, while the investment interest ignited by Zimbabwe's participation at the World Exposition will be adequately attended to in the national interest. The Zimbabwe Embassy in UAE will

be prioritised for the establishment of facilities such as e-passport processing.

I THANK YOU