

TWENTY-FIRST POST-CABINET PRESS BRIEFING

19TH JULY, 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 Chairman of the Ministers' Committee, Honourable Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care, Honourable General (Rtd.) Dr. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga.

The nation is advised that, as at 18th July 2022, the country's cumulative COVID-19 cases stood at 256 137, with 250 059 recoveries and 5 568 deaths. The recovery rate was 98%, with 531 active cases having been reported. The overall number of new COVID-19 cases continued to decrease, with 184 cases having been recorded, compared to the 227 recorded the previous week, marking a 19% decline. This indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic remains under control.

Regarding the national vaccination programme, Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that, as at 18th July 2022, a total of 6 346 598 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine had been administered, while 4 698 444 people had received their second dose, and 916 459 their third dose. This translates to a national coverage of 56.4%, compared to the 56.3% recorded the previous week. Government will therefore continue to intensify vaccination activities

in order to bridge the gap between the 1st and 2nd dose coverage as well as reach herd immunity before year end. Emphasis will continue to be placed on risk communication and community engagement so as to increase vaccination uptake.

On a related matter, Cabinet advises that no cases of monkeypox have been recorded in Zimbabwe. The country, nonetheless, remains vigilant for any cases of the disease by continuing to strengthen surveillance and information dissemination.

2.0 2022 BUDGET STRATEGY PAPER

Cabinet adopted the Strategy Paper for the 2023 National Budget, as presented by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Honourable Professor Mthuli Ncube.

Economic stakeholders and the public at large are advised that the Budget Strategy Paper is issued annually to guide the Budget consultations and other processes for the forthcoming year. It is a strategic policy document that outlines the forthcoming proposed budget priorities after taking into account the macro-economic conditions in the country. The Strategy Paper is meant to improve transparency in the preparation of the National Budget and forms the basis for a detailed process that culminates in the presentation and approval of the forthcoming year's Budget by Parliament. Indeed, as the public is aware, Zimbabwe has done well in this regard, and has improved

by 11 positions from a ranking of 52nd to 41st out of 120 countries on the latest Global Open Budget Survey.

Running under the theme "*Accelerating Economic Transformation*", the 2023 Budget Strategy Paper will, accordingly, facilitate public, stakeholder and Parliamentary consultations and engagements on policy priorities for the 2023 National Budget, thereby enabling holistic responses to a complex global and domestic economic environment. Given that the year 2023 will mark the mid-point in the implementation of the National Development Strategy 1: 2021-2025 (NDS 1), the 2023 Budget will allow stakeholders to review progress while giving the impetus required to attain the set objectives.

The Strategy Paper gives an overview of the fiscal policy thrust for 2023 and outlines the Proposed Strategic Priorities for the 2023 Budget. The proposed priorities will draw from the 14 Thematic Areas of NDS 1, while taking into account the prevailing global and domestic environment, risks and the attendant emerging issues such as the 2023 electoral processes. Accordingly, the Proposed Strategic Priorities are as follows:

1. Economic Growth and Macro-stability;
2. Supporting Productive Value Chains;
3. Infrastructure, ICTs and the Digital Economy;
4. Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture;
5. Women, Gender Equity and SMEs;
6. Devolution and Decentralisation;

7. Human Capital Development, Well-being and Innovation;
8. Effective Institution Building and Governance; and
9. Image-building, Engagement and Re-engagement.

Cabinet underscores that a strong economic recovery and transformation of the country is well underway, notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic and new shocks. The proposed policy actions in the Budget Strategy Paper therefore seek to accelerate and deepen this transformation in pursuit of Vision 2030, hence the Strategy theme. Government highlights that the proposals are by no means exhaustive and Treasury welcomes further relevant inputs from stakeholders. This will ensure an inclusive and people-centred Budget for 2023.

3.0 REPORTS ON THE 2ND 100-DAY CYCLE PRIORITY PROJECTS

Cabinet received reports on progress made in the implementation of priority projects for the 2nd 100-Day Cycle of 2022, as presented by the Ministers of Energy and Power Development; Mines and Mining Development; Transport and Infrastructural Development; and Finance and Economic Development.

1. The Minister of Energy and Power Development, Honourable Zhemu Soda, reported that the following progress has been recorded on projects under his purview:

- (i) The Hwange 7 and 8 Expansion Project, which will add an additional 600 megawatts to the national grid, is 90% complete and on course to meet timelines;
- (ii) Construction of the 6 000 cubic metres ethanol storage tanks in Harare is 96% complete;
- (iii) The Kanyemba Project which targets the construction of 30.5 kilometres of a high voltage line and 3.1 kilometres of a medium voltage line, and installation of 12 substations to power 21 institutions as well as energizing the high voltage line crossing the Zambezi River from Luangwa in Zambia is now 98% complete;
- (iv) The Mola Anchor Project in Kariba, involving the electrification of Chalala Clinic, Primary and Secondary Schools, District Development Fund, Police, Government institutions, and the Business Centre is on target and will be commissioned by 30 August 2022;
- (v) The Caledonia Solar Power Plant Construction Project has so far achieved the following: installation of 12 megawatts solar modules; and completion of the control room, cabling, and of the line and substation.

2. The Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Honourable Wiston Chitando, reported that the progress recorded for projects under his purview is as follows:

- (i) The Lithium Processing Plant at Sabi Star Mine in Buhera is 45% complete, with the project on schedule for completion in January 2023;

- (ii) Construction of the Copper Processing Plant at Alaska in Mashonaland West Province has been completed as scheduled;
- (iii) At Mimosa Mine in Zvishavane, concentrator optimization is 59% complete, while civil and earth works are nearing completion, and structural steelwork erection and mill installation are underway;
- (iv) Construction of the Coke Oven Battery at Dinson Colliery in Hwange is 50% complete; and
- (v) The Tsingshan Iron Ore and Chrome/Coke Value Addition Project straddling the Chivhu and Mvuma districts of Mashonaland East and Midlands provinces, respectively, has recorded the following progress: construction of the Carbon Steel Plant is progressing well; the foundation of the steel plant structure and supporting infrastructure are 70% complete; most of the blast furnace components are at the steel plant site and ready for installation; and the construction of the power line from Sherwood to Manhize is on course.

3. The Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development, Honourable Felix Tapiwa Mhona, outlined the following progress for projects being implemented in his sector:

- (i) Finishing works for the North and South Wings of the Terminal Building at the Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport are progressing well with the roofing and plumbing having been completed, while the tiling and ceiling are 78.7% and 72.5% complete, respectively;

- (ii) The Administration offices and laboratory for the Beitbridge Border Post Upgrading and Modernisation project are 95% complete;
- (iii) Resealing and supporting works have started on 9 kilometres of the Bulawayo-Beitbridge Road and will gather pace as temperatures rise;
- (iv) 22 kilometres of the Harare-Beitbridge Road has been constructed, with surfacing having been halted due to low temperatures. This brings the cumulative total distance constructed and opened to traffic to 336 kilometres;
- (v) Earthworks for the construction of the targeted section of the Bulawayo-Tsholotsho Road have been completed, leaving total progress at 65%, with surfacing having been suspended due to low temperatures.

4. The Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Honourable Professor Mthuli Ncube, highlighted the following progress for projects under his purview:

- (i) The 2022 first quarter implementation report of the National Development Strategy 1: 2021-2025 (NDS 1) was finalized and work on the 2nd quarter report is underway;
- (ii) The NDS 1 was disseminated in Mashonaland East and West provinces, covering 3 districts in each province;
- (iii) The Mid-Term Budget and Economic Review Report and Budget Strategy Paper are on course to meet the presentation targets;
- (iv) The Insurance and Pensions Commission and the Insurance Bills are at the Second Reading stage in Parliament;

- (v) Revenue targets were surpassed with a total of ZW\$156.5 billion having been raised in June 2022 against a target of ZW\$90.9 billion;
- (vi) A total of ZW\$50.7 billion was disbursed towards infrastructure development in June 2022, mainly to roads, housing, dam, irrigation and education infrastructure construction;
- (vii) The Arrears Clearance Strategy was launched and is now available on the Ministry website;
- (viii) The Accounting Policy and Manual is currently being updated in order to provide clear policy direction and guidance to users;
- (ix) Selection of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies which will report using the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) is being finalized, while the identification of State Enterprises which will be exempted from reporting using IPSAS is on-going;
- (x) Two sensitisation workshops on the operationalisation of Sector Working Groups of the Co-operation Policy and Manual of Procedures were held and the installation of the Development Projects Management Information System (DevProMIS) was completed in June 2022; and
- (xi) The consolidation of the second quarter development partners' disbursements is in progress.

4.0 REPORT ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE HEROES DAY COMMEMORATIONS AND THE ZIMBABWE DEFENCE FORCES DAY CELEBRATIONS

Cabinet received a report on the Preparations for the Heroes Day Commemorations and the Zimbabwe Defence Forces Day Celebrations as presented by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Honourable July Moyo as the Acting Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on State Occasions and Monuments.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that preparations for the 2022 Heroes Day Commemorations to be held on 8th August, 2022 have commenced in earnest. The venue for the main Heroes Day Commemorations will be the National Heroes Acre in Harare. Provinces will also hold commemorations in their respective areas. Government will provide 50 buses for the celebrations in Harare, while 2 buses each will be availed to ferry the public to the provincial venues. Buses will also be provided to the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (4); Zimbabwe Republic Police (4); and Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (4) to ferry their members to the venue. The Central Mechanical Equipment Department (CMED) is ready and has already started mobilisation of vehicles for the event.

The nation is informed that Government, through the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises will ensure that the national dress fabric is readily available at selected retail outlets, including

the National Handicrafts Centre. The nation will be informed of the retail outlets where the national dress will be available. People are encouraged to wear the national dress on this special day.

Cabinet also wishes to inform the nation that the 2022 Zimbabwe Defence Forces Day Celebrations will be held on 9th August, with the main event taking place at the National Sports Stadium in Harare under the theme, *"Zimbabwe Defence Forces-Creating a Conducive Environment for the Attainment of Vision 2030"*

The nation is informed that the Zimbabwe Defence Forces will carry out Community Assistance Projects from 1st to 5th August 2022, and that the completed projects will be handed over to the communities by the Minister of Defence and War Veterans Affairs. The Zimbabwe Defence Forces will also carry out a week-long medical outreach during which there will be free consultations and treatment for minor ailments.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that 50 buses have been reserved for the Zimbabwe Defence Forces Day Celebrations in Harare, 15 for Bulawayo and 2 for each of the remaining provinces. Districts are encouraged to submit requests for fuel and mobilise transport to ferry people to the various venues. Learners are also encouraged to attend these celebrations.

The nation is informed that the Draft Programme for the Defence Forces Day Celebrations is now in place, with some of the highlights being musical

entertainment by different artists including a traditional dance group from Botswana, the Zimbabwe Defence Forces Displays; and a soccer match between select teams from the Zimbabwe and Botswana Defence Forces.

5.0 PRINCIPLES OF THE PLANT BREEDERS RIGHTS AMENDMENT BILL

Cabinet considered and approved the Principles of the Plant Breeders Rights Amendment Bill, as presented by the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Honourable Dr Anxious Jongwe Masuka.

Amendment of the Plant Breeders Rights Act will enable Zimbabwe to accede to the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) Convention. Membership to the International Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties, which the Amendment will facilitate, has the following benefits, among others:

1. Membership to UPOV will result in co-operation with other member States which have wide experience in plant variety protection;
2. By becoming a member of UPOV, a State offers its own plant breeders the opportunity of protection in other member States' jurisdictions, and incentivizes foreign breeders to invest in plant breeding and seed production in its own territory;

3. UPOV affiliation will raise the confidence of breeders to market their improved varieties in the country since it eliminates the risk of infringements; and
4. An internationally recognised plant variety protection system will enhance access to foreign-bred materials.

Cabinet advises that Plant breeders' rights are a form of exclusive intellectual property rights which are granted to the breeder of a new plant variety. This ensures protection of the new plant varieties against exploitation without the breeder's permission. Furthermore, the protection afforded to new varieties of plants incentivises the development of agriculture, horticulture and forestry, in addition to safeguarding the interests of the breeders. This exclusive right allows the breeder to recover the costs incurred in the research and development of the new variety as well as capitalize on their investment, thereby generating funds for further investment in breeding other new varieties.

Other advantages of having plant breeders' rights include the following:

1. the rights encourage availability of a wide choice of plant varieties which vary in performance and adaptation;
2. improved plant varieties are more cost-effective in enhancing the production of food, renewable energy and raw materials;
3. plant breeders' rights have a positive impact on research and development of new crop varieties in both public and private institutions as well as on the growth of the horticulture industry; and

4. the rights prevent bio-piracy of improved varieties.

6.0 SHONA AND NDEBELE TRANSLATED VERSION OF THE HIGHWAY CODE

Cabinet received a report on the Shona and Ndebele Translated Version of the Highway Code, as presented by the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development, Honourable Felix Tapiwa Mhona.

The nation is informed that in an effort to promote inclusivity and in line with the His Excellency the President's mantra of **not leaving anyone and any place behind**, Government has translated and printed the Highway Code into Shona and Ndebele. No one will henceforth be hindered studying the Highway Code and subsequently acquiring a driver's licence due to language barrier. Electronic learners licence tests will be available in Shona and Ndebele within the next few months.

7.0 PASSING ON OF THE HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND DEVOLUTION

His Excellency the President led Cabinet in observing a moment of silence in honour of Honourable Engineer Oliver Chidawu, the late Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Harare Metropolitan Province who passed on this morning. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during

this difficult moment of bereavement. May they find fortitude in the fact that the whole nation is also mourning this loss, and the legacy of his contribution to the development of the country lives on.

I THANK YOU!