

NINTH POST-CABINET PRESS BRIEFING

11TH MARCH, 2023

1.0 DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG CHILDREN, YOUTHS AND THE GENERAL POPULATION

Cabinet received and considered an update on Drug and Abuse Among Children, Youths and the General Population, which was presented by the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Honourable Paul Mavima.

The nation is being advised that Cabinet is deeply concerned about the increase in drugs and substance abuse, which poses a danger to family life and society. The Drug and Substance Abuse Unit, within the Department of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare has since been strengthened for effective coordination and programming of activities on curbing drug and substance abuse. The Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Drug and Substance Abuse technical officers are continuously being trained on curbing drug and substance abuse by the Government with support from the World Health Organisation.

Regarding supply reduction, the Inter-Ministerial Task Force is conducting surveillance activities across the country leading to the arrest and prosecution of a cumulative total of 6 156 accused persons. Under the Operation Clean Up Zimbabwe Campaign, the Inter-Ministerial Task Force managed to recover large quantities of dangerous drugs and substances

comprising crystal meth, cocaine, ecstasy, dagga, broncleer, histalix and benylyn.

Several Anti-Drug Abuse Awareness Campaigns are being conducted to date. Demand reduction activities are being ramped up across various platforms such as the Zimbabwe Agricultural Shows, Primary and Secondary School events at Growth Points, in Universities, Colleges and Online programmes at various television and radio stations across the country.

In terms of treatment and rehabilitation, the Inter-Ministerial Task Force is making strides in the control of adverse effects of drug and substance abuse. Regarding provision of Psycho-social support, Community and Social re-integration, efforts are currently ongoing in district offices. The nation is being informed that more rehabilitation centres for victims of drug and substance abused are being set up in major cities and towns in order to relieve pressure from existing institutions. Concurrently, steps are being taken to mobilise the whole of society from the family unit to villages, Headmen and Chiefs, religious organisations, schools, law enforcement agencies, prisons, youth skills training institutions as well as health centres, in order to achieve the much-needed traction in tackling the drug and substance abuse scourge. Cabinet has also resolved to adequately equip youth training centres and to revive the broader National Youth Service Programme in order to develop youths into productive citizens. Youths empowerment will be enhanced through information communication technology (ICT) skills training, among other essential

skills that are essential in running projects for self and household sustenance.

The nation is further being informed that dangerous drug and substance suppliers will be tracked down and prosecuted, with deterrent sentences set to be introduced. Culprits will be named and shamed. More patrols will be mounted to curb the sale of dangerous drugs and substances, while liquor outlet owners will be required to operate within stipulated business hours. Surveillance is being enhanced at all ports of entry and exit with personnel being trained in order to effectively detect the trafficking of dangerous drugs and substances.

Cabinet further wishes to assure the nation that the drug and substance abuse menace will soon be tamed in the manner other scourges such as the COVID-19 pandemic were fought. Accordingly, Cabinet has resolved to elevate the matter on drugs and substance abuse to a National Committee which will involve other stakeholders, whose composition and terms of reference will soon be made public.

2.0 REPORTS ON THE FIRST 100-DAY CYCLE OF 2023

Cabinet received reports on progress made in the implementation of priority projects for the 1st 100-Day Cycle of 2023, as presented by the Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage; and by the Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development.

2.1 The Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage, Honourable Kazembe Kazembe, reported that the following progress has been recorded on projects under his purview:

- i. the construction of an Administration Block and 5 staff houses at ZRP Dotito Camp in Mt. Darwin, Mashonaland Central Province has reached 89%;
- ii. the development of a platform for the Eternal Independence Flame at the Harare Kopje National Monument is in progress;
- iii. the conversion of records and personal files from paper to digital format is underway for 13 Chiefs from Kariba and Hurungwe Districts in Mashonaland West Province. Regarding delineation of the same chietanship boundaries, teams are engaging the relevant authorities within each district;
- iv. the decentralisation of passport services to Mazowe District in Mashonaland Central Province has been completed, and the project was commissioned on 15 March, 2023 by the responsible Minister; and
- v. the solar power electrification of staff accommodation at Sango Border Post in Chiredzi District and Mlambapele Border Post in Matabeleland South Province has reached the contract signing stage.

2.2 The Minister Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Honourable Sithembiso Nyoni reported on the six (6) projects being implemented by her Ministry. She highlighted the progress as follows:

- i. the construction of a Safe Market in the City of Masvingo is progressing well, with Gender-Based Violence Counselling Rooms, a Police Post and ablution facilities at roof level and the vegetable market stalls at slab level;
- ii. the Epworth Empowerment Service Centre comprising a One-Stop Centre for survivors of GBV, a Skills Training Centre and a Showroom for women products in Harare Metropolitan Province has reached 90% of completion;
- iii. the certification of 10 products by the Standards Association of Zimbabwe has reached 50% of completion, and 31 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Community Groups have been capacitated in Standard Based Training;
- iv. the Business Registration of 150 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Community Groups has reached 30% of completion;
- v. the funding of 80 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Community Groups has been funded to the tune of Z\$356 980 469 and US\$70 000. The beneficiaries are drawn from all the ten provinces, and
- vi. the establishment of 7 Savings and Credit Cooperatives District Unions and 1 Provincial Union in Manicaland Province has reached 25% of completion.

3.0 PROPOSED PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE AND FOUR CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES

The Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development, Honourable F.T. Mhona presented proposed partnerships between the Government

and four Road Construction Companies. The Ministry received Expressions of Interest from companies wishing to partner Government on the upgrading and modernization of some of the country's roads as well as the Nyamapanda Border Post. Cabinet considered and approved the process of negotiations with the companies as follows:

1. Proposed Partnership between Government of Zimbabwe and Leengate Pvt. Ltd. on the Mutare By-Pass (Christmas Pass) Project. The Project will see the construction of a 26 kilometre By-Pass Road by Leengate Pvt. Ltd. The new road will access Forbes Border Post and relieve congestion on the Christmas Pass Road which has become unsafe owing to inadequate carrying capacity and its deteriorating state. The work will be carried over a period of 12 months.

2. Proposed Partnership between Government of Zimbabwe and Road Trackers Construction on the Rehabilitation of the Shurugwi-Mhandamabwe Road. The project scope will include construction, upgrading and widening of the 43 km Shurugwi-Mhandamabwe Road which links Beitbridge Border Post with Gweru, Kwekwe, Kadoma, Chegutu, Chinhoyi, Karoi and Chirundu Border Post. The work will be carried over out a period of 12 months.

3. Proposed Partnership between the Government of Zimbabwe and Bitumen World Consortium on the dualisation, widening, Construction and rehabilitation of the North-South Corridor Link and the New Parliament Main Access. The project will commence at the Mbudzi Interchange and link up to Westgate Circle through High Glen road, Kuwadzana Traffic

Circle, Dzivarasekwa and Kirkman roads, and Harare Drive to the New Parliament via the Old Mazowe road and the New Parliament Access road. The new road will de-congest traffic in and around Harare's industrial areas as well as provide seamless connection for the north-south corridor transit traffic. The works will be undertaken in 2 phases over a 24-month period.

4. Proposed Partnership between Government of Zimbabwe and Harare-Nyamapanda Consortium on the construction, widening and rehabilitation of the Nyamapanda Road and Modernisation of the Border Post. The project is in line with the Second Republic's thrust of upgrading and modernising the country's border posts thereby improving efficiency at the ports of entry. The project aims to upgrade the 238 km Harare-Nyamapanda road as well as modernise the Nyamapanda Border Post through a Build, Operate and Transfer model. The road will be constructed over a 3-year period.

The nation is being informed that Government will leverage on local resources and ingenuity to speed up the upgrading and modernisation of the country's road network.

In addition to the above, Cabinet wishes to assure the nation that the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development has finalised procurement processes for the reconstruction of the 60 km of badly damaged sections on the 760 km Beitbridge-Bulawayo-Victoria Falls road and maintain the entire road so that it is trafficable. The road is being prioritised, and Bitumen World is already on the ground. In the medium

to the long term, the road will be dualised upon finalization of negotiations with the prospective contractor. Work will also be undertaken on the Victoria Falls-Kazungula road.

Priority is also being accorded to the Kwekwe-Nkayi-Lupane road which reduces significantly the distance to Victoria Falls. In Midlands Province, a contractor will be moving on site to work on 7 km of the damaged Boterekwa Escarpment road. Government will also continue to avail resources for the surfacing of the Karoi-Binga-Victoria Falls road.

The Birchenough-Murambinda road is being prioritised as well and a second bridge parallel to the existing bridge is being considered by private investors. Mining companies will be requested to assist in the maintenance of the roads they use, in order to lessen the burden on Government. Similarly, the Old Bulawayo-Gwanda road will be upgraded through a contractor who has expressed interest.

In order for the Government to recoup the costs of constructing and maintaining the roads, it will introduce toll gates along the highways. Furthermore, Government will ensure the development and upgrading of social amenities along the reconstructed highways for the convenience and benefit of the motoring public.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development is seized with the resuscitation of maintenance units so as to attend to damages caused to roads by the

incessant rains that the country received during the 2022/2023 summer season.

4.0 ZIMBABWE'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND REPORT ON THE PROCUREMENT AND ROLL-OUT 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 on the National COVID-19 Response, Honourable Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care, Gen. (Retd.) Dr. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga.

The nation is being informed that the cumulative COVID-19 cases as at 8 April, 2023 stood at 264 582, with 258 839 recoveries and 5 684 deaths. There were 59 active cases. Four deaths were recorded during the week under review. There were 11 new admissions, compared to the 3 recorded the previous week, with 1 being in intensive care.

Regarding the national vaccination programme, a total of 7 002 365 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, 5 213 666 and 1 691 432 second and third doses respectively have so far been administered. Cabinet is urging all those who have not yet been vaccinated to do so and also adhere to all COVID-19 public health and social measures.

5.0 UPDATE ON THE PREPARATION FOR THE "TRANSFORM AFRICA SUMMIT"

Cabinet received an update from the Minister of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services on the status of preparations for the Transform Africa Summit.

The nation is being advised that the Transform Africa Summit will take place from 26th to 28th April, 2023 at the Elephant Hills Hotel in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. The Summit aims to enable Member States to become more competitive, adaptive, open and innovative smart economies. This will result in the most favourable business climates that attract large-scale investments, reward entrepreneurship and enable fast growth and exports through ICT innovation and development. The 2023 Transform Africa Summit will run under the theme **Connect-Innovate-Transform**, and has been designed to foster constructive conversation towards building a Smart Africa. It will also facilitate meetings of like minds seeking policy and collaborative opportunities to accelerate the continent towards digitally fostered socio-economic transformation. The Transform Africa Summit will bring together over 3 000 delegates from more than 100 countries to engage on the digital transformation of the continent across multiple sectors.

An Inter-Ministerial Organising Committee has been set up and is working closely with the Smart Africa Secretariat in preparation for the successful hosting of the Summit. The preparations are firmly on course, and weekly preparatory meetings are being held. The first on-site visit was conducted from 27th February, 2023 to 3rd March, 2023. Meetings and preliminary engagements with Local Authorities, key Government departments in the

provinces and districts as well as local hotels, tourism operators and various critical service providers were engaged. Preliminary reservations and block bookings have been processed and commitment letters have been dispatched. Invitations to Heads of State have been despatched through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. On budget and resource mobilisation, the nation is being informed that SMART AFRICA will cover US\$1 200 000 of the summit costs.

The nation is also being informed that the event will provide an opportunity for Zimbabwe to showcase its investment opportunities, promote its economic potential and attract new investments into the country not only for the ICT sector but for the broader economic spectrum as well. The Summit is a platform to buttress the engagement and re-engagement drive and push for the removal of sanctions that are an albatross to the technological development and advancement of the nation. The Transform Africa Summit is an opportunity for local businesses to make big business in services such as accommodation, transport, restaurants and entertainment. This will increase the much-needed foreign currency inflows into the country.

6.0 PRINCIPLES OF THE ZIMBABWE SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL

Cabinet considered and approved the Principles of the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (Amendment) Bill as presented by the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Hon. Dr. E Ndlovu.

The nation is being informed that the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) Act [Chapter 25:18] was enacted in 1994. Since then, numerous developments have occurred in the education sector as well as anomalies that have come to the attention of the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education which require amendment of the Act. The Bill, therefore, seeks to align the Act with the various developments that have taken place since its enactment.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that the Bill would be amended to give power to deregister examination centres that do not comply with ZIMSEC standards of appropriate examination centres. The Bill will also strengthen the independence and efficiency of the ZIMSEC Board by equipping it with the necessary skilled persons that can adequately meet ZIMSEC's mandate. In the new Bill the Board will be given powers to withhold examination results pending investigations by ZIMSEC in cases of examination malpractice such as leakages. Persons who handle examinations material and all those who work closely with ZIMSEC will take an oath of secrecy. Furthermore, a section will be introduced to deal with issues pertaining to conflict of interest among ZIMSEC employees and those that gain access to examination materials. Section 35 will be amended to provide additional offences and to further enumerate acts of examinations malpractice and their penalties.

The nation is being informed that it is envisaged the proposals will ensure that the quality of examination services will continue to match world

standards. The Bill will also arrest the vice of examination leakages by introducing stiffer penalties in order to deal effectively with offenders.

7.0 OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

Cabinet received and adopted the Report on the Official Visit to the Republic of Belarus undertaken from 27 to 29 March, 2023 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Honourable Dr. Frederick Makamure Shava, as presented by the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Hon. Prof. Amon Murwira, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The objective of the visit was to reinforce the country's multi-sectoral relations with the Republic of Belarus and identify new areas of co-operation. The two countries resolved issues on bilateral and multi-lateral co-operation. Under economic co-operation, ZimTrade and the National Centre for Marketing and Price Study of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Belarus expressed interest in importing avocado pears and macadamia nuts from Zimbabwe. Belarus will exhibit at the 2023 Edition of the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair. In turn, Zimbabwe is expected to participate at the Belarus Agricultural Fair in April/May 2023. The countries will also cooperate in mining and energy.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe is earmarked to receive fire tenders from Belarus, starting with a batch of 30 trucks that will come with spares. The 3rd Phase of the Agricultural Mechanisation Programme will be expedited for the

realisation of the refurbishment of existing and construction of new grain silos, and the supply of 15 to 20 horsepower capacity tractors for the *Pfumvudza/Intwasa* Programme.

8.0 2023 INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS

Cabinet was briefed on preparations for the 2023 Children's Party and the 43rd Independence Day Celebrations by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Honourable July Moyo.

The nation is being advised that the preparations for the 2023 Children's Party and 43rd Independence Day Celebrations are on course. The national fabric is now available in Mashonaland Central Province from the Offices of the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development in Bindura and the following districts:

- **Mazowe;**
- **Centenary;**
- **Shamva;**
- **Mt. Darwin;**
- **Rushinga; and**
- **Bindura.**

I THANK YOU!