

ZIMBABWE CABINET
SIXTH POST-CABINET PRESS BRIEFING
19TH MARCH 2024

1.0 UPDATE ON THE NATIONAL CHOLERA OUTBREAK RESPONSE

The Minister of Health and Child Care, Honourable Dr. Douglas Mombeshora updated Cabinet on the national cholera outbreak response.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that during the period 5 to 11 March, 2024 there were 894 new suspected cholera cases reported. The implementation of sound response strategies, such as high community awareness, improved case management, establishment of oral rehydration points and cholera treatment camps, and the vaccination programme, is continuing in known hotspots.

Going forward, Cabinet resolved on the following measures in order to curb disease outbreaks:

- enforcement of onsite servicing of new residential areas/suburbs before residents take occupation of houses;
- enforcement of the requirement for small-scale miners operating in mining areas to prioritise the provision of water and sanitation facilities in mine compounds;
- enforcement of the removal of unregistered artisanal miners along Mazowe River to avert further spread of cholera;

- the decommissioning of Cholera Treatment Centres in areas where cases have reduced, and the redistribution of equipment to current hotspots; and
- the prioritisation of the purchase of oral cholera vaccines to provide a second dose for districts that were targeted for the first campaign to ensure protection for 3 years.

2.0 STATE PARTY REPORT TO THE AFRICAN UNION COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Hon. July Moyo presented the State Party Report to the African Union Committee of Experts on Children's Rights, which was approved by Cabinet.

Government wishes to inform the nation that the Report outlines the responses to issues raised by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as contained in Zimbabwe's First Periodic State Party Report submitted in 2022. The responses are a result of extensive consultations with various Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and convening of the full Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law meeting which validated the responses. The responses pertain to legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures adopted by the country to ensure realisation of children's rights. Highlights of the responses include the following:

- explanations on issues of non-discrimination, best interest of the child, the right to survival and development and child participation;

- clarifications on civil rights and freedoms including the right to a name, nationality, identity and registration at birth;
- shedding light on issues of health and welfare for children in Zimbabwe;
- clarifications pertaining to education, leisure and cultural activities; and
- addressing concerns on children in conflict with the law, children of imprisoned mothers and care-givers as well as economic exploitation and child labour.

Cabinet endorsed the responses by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, and these will be forwarded to the Committee of Experts. The responses show that Zimbabwe has made great strides in promoting and protecting the rights of children through the domestication and implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

3.0 PRINCIPLES OF THE STANDARDS BILL

Cabinet considered and approved the Principles of the Standards Bill, which were presented by the Minister of Industry and Commerce, Honourable Nqobizitha Mangaliso Ndlovu.

Cabinet wishes to inform the public that the Standards Bill will guide the development of voluntary standards in the protection of safety, health and the environment. The Bill will create the Standards Institute of Zimbabwe, whose main mandate will be to develop, publish and promote voluntary standards and quality assurance in industry and

commerce. The Bill will provide for the establishment of Provincial Standards Committees which will be entrusted with supervision, administration and financial management functions in the provinces.

The introduction of the Standards Law will help grow the country's exports through regulating the quality of goods and services under the consolidated African Continental Free Trade Area market. Furthermore, the framework of standards will be cascaded to all the country's provinces to support the rural industrialisation agenda through production of quality and competitive goods and services.

4.0 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM (APRM)

Cabinet approved the establishment of the National Institutional Framework of the African Peer Review Mechanism as presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Honourable Dr. Frederick Shava.

The African Peer Review Mechanism, to which Zimbabwe assented in February 2020, is a self-monitoring mechanism through which African Union Member States voluntarily foster principles of good governance for political stability and socio-economic development. As a member of the African Peer Review Mechanism, Zimbabwe is mandated to establish national structures through which country assessments will be conducted. The structures will comprise the Focal Point, the National Governing Council, the Secretariat and the Technical Research

Institutions. Cabinet has made appointments to the national structures as follows:

- Commissioner James Manzou as the National Focal Point, who will represent the Head of State and Government as well as play a coordination role among Government, the National Governing Council and the Continental African Peer Review Mechanism structures;
- members of the National Governing Council, who will be drawn from relevant Government Ministries, the academia, media, civic society organisations, Parliament of Zimbabwe and the private sector;
- the Secretaries for Provincial Affairs and Devolution will be the Provincial Focal Points;
- a Secretariat led by the Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ambassador R.N. Chikava. Ambassador Chikava will be the interim Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director of the African Peer Review Mechanism; and
- established universities and other research institutions will constitute the Technical Research Institutions. These will be appointed on an *ad hoc* basis.

Cabinet approved the piloting of a Targeted Review of Zimbabwe under the thematic area “**Economic Governance and Management**” in order to prepare the country for a full African Peer Review Mechanism assessment.

5.0 UPDATE ON THE TOBACCO VALUE CHAIN TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

Cabinet considered and adopted the update report on the Tobacco Value Chain Transformation Strategy, which was presented by the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Hon. Dr. A.J. Masuka.

It will be recalled that the Tobacco Value Chain Transformation Plan was launched in 2021 to provide a roadmap for increasing production to 300 million kilogrammes annually, and to enhance value addition and beneficiation from 2% to 30%, while building a US\$5 billion industry by 2025. The nation is informed that 98% of Zimbabwe's tobacco is exported to over sixty (60) destinations. Over 52% of the tobacco is being grown by beneficiaries of the Land Reform Programme, and is generating 54% of annual value. Tobacco contributes substantially to economic development of the farmers, whose average gross earnings are over US\$7 000 annually per grower.

The nation is further informed that the number of growers has increased 17-fold since the commencement of the Land Reform Programme, indicating the success of the Land Reform programme, with over 85% of the tobacco currently being grown by the smallholder sector. The average yield has also increased, since farmers have gained experience and are enjoying better agronomic support by merchants and a conducive policy environment and advisory role played by government. The average price paid to farmers has increased by 80% from year 2

000 to 2023, again attesting to better quality tobacco produced from experience gained.

The nation is further informed that the average price paid this year is 18.19% firmer than last year. The average price at the auction floors is currently higher than that at contract sales, even as these are still early marketing days. The Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board is monitoring the situation, together with the Tariff and Competition Commission and the nation will be kept abreast of developments on the matter.

Cabinet would like to report that the value of local tobacco purchased has increased from US\$650 million in 2022 to US\$897 million in 2023. Out of this amount, tobacco purchases using local financing were US\$61.4 million in 2022 and US\$73.2 million in 2023. For the 2024 tobacco marketing season, the recorded intentions for local financing amount to US\$81 million.

The nation is informed that there are opportunities to increase the level of value addition and beneficiation of tobacco into cut rag and production cigarettes, from 2% of total tobacco produced to 30%. Currently, seven (7) cigarette manufacturers operate in Zimbabwe, with a combined production capacity of around 5 billion cigarette sticks per annum. An additional cigarette manufacturing plant is under construction, with a current production of 1.6 billion sticks per year. The plant will increase capacity by 50% in the first half of 2024.

6.0 UPDATE ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2024 INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AND CHILDREN'S PARTY

Cabinet considered and adopted the update report on preparations for the 2024 Independence Anniversary Celebrations and Children's Party, which was presented by the Honourable Vice President K.C.D. Mohadi as Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on State Occasions and National Monuments.

The nation is informed that preparations for the 2024 Independence Anniversary Celebrations and Children's Party are progressing well, with road equipment having been mobilised from Road Authorities and private sector players to execute works on the civil works at the main venue as well as on the Murambinda-Birchenough Bridge, Chivhu-Nyazura, and Wedza-Mutiweshiri roads. The other roadworks undertaken include the grading of the access roads, the grading of the eight (8) kilometre Murambinda-Marenga junction roads, and the opening of access roads to the helipad.

The nation is also informed that a total of twenty-two (22) boreholes comprising seventeen (17) wet holes have been drilled in Buhera District towards preparations for the 2024 Independence Anniversary Celebrations and Children's Party. Furthermore, two (2) boreholes will also be drilled at Interpretive Centres, namely: the former Dzapasi (Foxtrot) Assembly Point in Buhera and the Castle Camp Kopje Farm (The Butcher) in Rusape. Tree planting is ongoing at the school orchard

and also on the general plantation area of (3) hectares, raising the total of the planted trees to 8 000.

7.0 RATIFICATION OF THE SADC PROTOCOL ON INDUSTRY

Cabinet considered and approved the Memorandum on the Ratification of the SADC Protocol on Industry, which was presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Ziyambi Ziyambi as Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

Cabinet reports that in 2015, the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063) was approved, and in 2018, the SADC Protocol on Industry was created to enhance implementation. The SADC Protocol on Industry is anchored on regional cooperation on industrialization through developing prioritized regional value chains, promoting the development of Small and Medium Enterprises and creating joint industrial enterprises, among other aspects. The nation is further informed that 16 SADC Member States including Zimbabwe signed the SADC Protocol on Industry, which will enter into force 30 days after two-thirds of the Member States have deposited their instruments of ratification.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that ratification of the Protocol will unlock significant economic opportunities for Zimbabwe through collaboration, resource access and increased investment in vital areas such as research, infrastructure and Small to Medium Enterprises.

8.0 MEMORANDUM ON THE CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE SECRETARIAT-GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Cabinet considered and approved the Memorandum the Co-operation Agreement between the Republic of Zimbabwe and International Social Service Secretariat-Geneva-Switzerland, which was presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Ziyambi Ziyambi as Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

Cabinet reports that Zimbabwe had worked with the International Social Service in areas of inter-country child protection, refugee protection and family welfare, but without a founding Agreement. The Agreement to be signed will establish the nature of the relationship that should exist between Zimbabwe and the International Social Services, based on the principle of reciprocity.

The nation is advised that the desire to sign the agreement was informed by the need to protect Zimbabwean citizens or adopted children who may be ill-treated outside the country. Becoming a signatory of the International Social Service, will cut the cost of managing related cases outside the country's jurisdiction.

9.0 MEMORANDUM ON COOPERATION BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI AND THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE IN THE FIELDS OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

Cabinet considered and approved the Memorandum on Cooperation between the Republics of Malawi and Zimbabwe, in the Fields of Labour and Employment which was presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Ziyambi Ziyambi as Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

The nation is informed that the main objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to establish a legal framework for institutional relations on co-operation between the Republics of Zimbabwe and Malawi in the Fields of Labour and Employment. The two countries have jointly decided that they will cooperate in the areas such as labour dispute resolution and social dialogue; labour law reform; social security; employment services; labour migration; occupational safety and health; and child labour. It is important to note that Zimbabwe has similar agreements with Botswana and South Africa, and that the co-operation promotes exchange of technical expertise on policy development and programme implementation.

10.0 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE AND THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA IN THE FIELDS OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

Cabinet considered and approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the Republics of Zimbabwe and Zambia in the Fields of Labour

and Employment, which was presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Ziyambi Ziyambi as Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

The nation is informed that the main objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to establish a legal framework for co-operation between the Republics of Zimbabwe and Zambia in the fields of employment, labour and social welfare. The Memorandum of Understanding also provides for the establishment of a Joint Committee whose responsibilities include coordinating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating activities to be carried out.

11.0 MEMORANDUM ON THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION CONVENTION 190 ON VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

Cabinet considered and approved the Memorandum on International Labour Organisation Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment at the Workplace, which was presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Ziyambi Ziyambi as Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

Cabinet reports that Convention 190 was the first international treaty to recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. The Convention was adopted on 10 June, 2019 by the International Labour Committee of the International Labour Organization at the 108th Session

in Geneva, and came into force on 25 June, 2021. The nation is further informed that Governments that ratify the Convention are required to put in place necessary laws and policy measures to prevent and address violence and harassment at workplaces. The Convention represented a historic opportunity to shape a future of work based on dignity and respect for all.

Cabinet wishes to advise the nation that Zimbabwe is already complying with this Convention. However, ratification of the Convention will regularize the country's membership of the International Labour Organization Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment at the Workplace.

I Thank You