**PRESS BRIEF TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING**

1. **UPDATE BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AD-HOC INTER-MINISTERIAL TASK FORCE ON THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

Cabinet received an update on the country’s response to the COVID-19 outbreak, which was presented by the Minister of Defence and War Veterans Affairs as Chairperson of the Ad-hoc Inter-Ministerial Task Force on COVID-19.

Cabinet was informed that as of 26 July 2021, Zimbabwe’s cumulative COVID-19 cases stood at 99 944, with 67 827 recoveries and 3 173 deaths. The recovery rate stood at 67%, with 98% of cases being attributed to local transmission. Active cases were 28 944.

Cabinet was informed that the number of infections decreased slightly, with a total of 14 275 cases being recorded during the week under review, compared to the 21 346 cases recorded the previous week. This reflected a 49.5% decrease, as the country’s efforts to contain the pandemic showed a high level of effectiveness. Nevertheless, Cabinet noted the need to strengthen efforts to contain the Third Wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, therefore, the Level 4 lockdown measures remain in force. Areas which recorded the most significant numbers of new cases were Harare Metropolitan Province (2 920), Mashonaland East Province (1 968), Mashonaland West Province (1 776), Manicaland Province (1 537) and Mashonaland Central Province (1 106).

Cabinet wishes to assure the nation that efforts are underway to replenish all supplies of essential COVID-19 consumables. Government is ramping up the supply of oxygen and other critical provisions at designated health institutions throughout the country. The Ministry of Health and Child Care has established a prepayment facility with a local gas supplier to ensure constant availability of oxygen. Treasury has released ZW$100 million for the purchase of oxygen.

Cabinet further wishes to inform the nation that a total of 39 new boreholes were drilled, while 12 others were rehabilitated during the week under review. Major cities are receiving priority in the provision of water. A total of 114 handwashing facilities were established at public places, and 2 924 hygiene promotion sessions were conducted during the week under review.

Cabinet acceded to a request by the tourism industry to open the Victoria Falls and Kazungula Border Posts to tourists who are fully vaccinated. This is in view of the realization that over 60% of the population in Victoria Falls has been vaccinated. The lockdown measures are being enforced throughout the country in order to curtail a surge under the Third Wave of COVID-19. Cabinet further resolved that the disbursement of funds should be streamlined in order to facilitate the completion of COVID-19 treatment and isolation centres around the country. As the nation prepares for the reopening of schools, parents and guardians are expected to complement Government efforts to provide Personal Protective Equipment, sanitisers and other essential requirements for learners.

Cabinet also directed that the Police should adhere to the curfew times when mounting roadblocks.

1. **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PROCUREMENT AND ROLL-OUT OF COVID-19 VACCINES**

Cabinet received an update on the procurement and roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines, which was presented by the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development as Acting Minister of Health and Child Care.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that as of 26th July 2021, a total of one million four hundred and ninety one thousand four hundred and ninety three (1 491 493) people had received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, while six hundred and eighty seven thousand two hundred and sixteen (687 216) people had received their second dose. Vaccination in border town hotspots and people’s markets is ongoing, with the highest coverages of the first dose being recorded in Victoria Falls City, Kariba and Chiredzi.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that one million doses of the Sinovac vaccine were received on 25th July 2021. Another consignment of 1.5 million doses of the Sinopharm vaccine are expected in the country on 30 July, 2021.

Cabinet noted with concern the failure by Chitungwiza Municipality and Harare City Council to pay nurses and other health personnel, resulting in a reduction in service delivery. The two Municipalities have also been unable to account for financial resources availed by Treasury towards the COVID-19 response. Cabinet directed that nursing staff in the two municipalities be placed under the Public Service Commission and be paid through the Salary Service Bureau. Risk allowances for the affected workers will also be paid. Cabinet also tasked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development to ensure that the municipalities account fully for the resources that they were allocated as part of the country’s COVID-19 response.

Cabinet wishes to urge citizens to be vaccinated against COVID-19, in view of compelling evidence that vaccination reduces the need for hospitalization and also reduces infection rates and deaths.

**3.0 PROPOSED NDS1 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

Cabinet considered and adopted the National Development Strategy 1 Communication Strategy, which was presented by the Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services.

Cabinet was informed that a sustained national information campaign targeting the entire nation on the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1), the national blueprint which Government is implementing to move the country towards the attainment of Vision 2030 is an imperative which should be adequately resourced. The aim is to raise citizens’ awareness about NDS1, and to raise public participation in the implementation of Government policies, programmes and projects designed to develop the country towards a prosperous and empowered upper-middle income society by year 2030. This will be undertaken through NDS1 and its successor, NDS2. Appropriate messages will be disseminated to targeted audiences using available communication platforms embracing billboards apparel and collateral messaging as well as digital media.

Cabinet noted that individuals, collectives and corporate organizations need to seize opportunities presented by the National Programme to improve livelihoods, welfare and corporate net-worth. The overall aim is to achieve a timeously and accurately informed nation and international community on developments in the country to facilitate two-way communication between Government and citizens; to re-shape the national viewpoint through content creation, development and dissemination; to adorn public building and spaces in Zimbabwe and at its Embassies with the country’s arts, culture and heritage products; and to improve public relations at ports of entry with appropriate welcoming messages and imagery.

Cabinet was informed that the NDS1 messaging campaign will segment audiences with a view to targeting them with tailor-made messages that will appeal to their social standing. The Diaspora will be a special target group.

Cabinet noted that the NDS1 messaging will be communicated through Highway Billboards at entry points targeting investors, tourists, visitors and local travellers; vehicle branding; collateral/giveaways, including T-Shirts, doeks, wrappers, caps, shirts and blouses; and school and college stationery messaging.

Cabinet further noted that both radio and television will be used extensively to carry messages on NDS1 and Vision 2030. Other strategies will include indoor and outdoor banners, the print media, and social media. NDS1 Thematic Working Groups and communication experts will be invaluable for messaging the campaign. The campaign will also draw expertise from public and private sector media practitioners. Cabinet directed that the requisite financial resources should be availed to facilitate the dissemination of information on NDS 1. Internal publics will segment the campaign according to social groups, rural and urban populations, youths and women’s groups, students, churches, the general public, workers, businesses, small and medium enterprises, corporates and the intelligentsia, cooperating partners and the international community.

**4.0 REPORT ON THE INTERACTIVE MEETING WITH THE SAN COMMUNITY IN TSHOLOTSHO**

Cabinet received a report on a Government delegation’s visit to the San Community in Tsholotsho District in Matabeleland North Province, which was presented by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works.

The delegation noted that the San people lack birth certificates and identity documents, encounter high teenage pregnancies as well as very low school completion rates at primary and secondary school, and suffer food insecurity mainly due to human wildlife conflict and failure to practise modern agriculture.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that the Second Republic has made undertakings to ensure that the right to equality and non-discrimination is realised. Section 56 of the Constitution clearly states that “every person has the right not to be treated in an unfairly discriminatory manner on such grounds as their ethnic or social origin. Cabinet noted that the Language Centre at Midlands State University has already translated the Constitution, the National Development Strategy 1: 2021-2025 as well as COVID-19 information manuals into the San/Tjwao language, with a view to expediting measures to safeguard the San community and advance its development. Cabinet directed as follows: that every Ministry should identify and take up a developmental role in areas inhabited by the San/Tjwao communities; that two or three primary and an equal number of secondary schools be set up as boarding institutions in areas easily accessible to San/Tjwao communities, in order to enhance school completion rates; that the Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage should instruct the Registrar General’s Office to issue birth and identity documents to the inhabitants of San/Tjwao and similar communities in Zimbabwe who have hitherto been unable to obtain such documentation.

In that regard, all constraints relating to testimonies by parents, relatives and guardians should be wavered; the Ministry of Health and Child Care should establish clinics that will benefit the San/Tjwao and other similarly disadvantaged communities; the Security Ministries waiver the entry requirements to enable San/Tjwao citizens to enlist into the respective uniformed services; the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works expeditiously appoints headmen and chiefs to enhance the participation of the San/Tjwao in governance. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development should ensure the timeous release of funds requested by Ministries for the implementation of development programmes and projects in San/Tjwao communities.

In addition, Cabinet directed that proceeds from the CAMPFIRE Programme be ploughed back to benefit communities living in areas where there is abundant wildlife. The Food Deficit Mitigation Programme should be retargeted for the benefit of the marginalised San/Tjwao communities. The operations of the John Landa Nkomo Trust in areas inhabited by the San/Tjwao should be revived and expanded.

1. **REPORTS ON THE 7TH 100-DAY CYCLE OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

Cabinet received reports on the 7th 100-Day Cycle of the Second Republic, which were presented by the Ministers of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry; Industry and Commerce; and Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services.

The Minister of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Hon. Mangaliso Ndlovu reported that the development of the Wetland Management Framework is on course, with the Wetlands Management Guidelines having been validated and adopted by the Ministry. The draft National Wetlands Map has been produced and validated, while the One Wetlands Policy now awaits approval by Cabinet. Four of the planned 14 waste drop-off sites were under construction at Mbalabala Business Centre in Umzingwane District, Mvurwi Town, and two in Harare Metropolitan Province. Progress was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

On the Conservation project for the San Community , recruitment interviews for general hands and rangers, training in basic paramilitary, and for programmes at the Institute of Wildlife were conducted. The Forest Restoration project has reached 90% completion, with a total of 186 146 trees having been planted out of the targeted 200 000.

The Minister of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Hon. Mangaliso Ndlovu as the Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, informed Cabinet that the Chemplex Animal Health Beta Tick Grease, Grain Protectant and Cattle Dip Production project in Msasa, Harare had produced the following quantities:

1. 69 metric tonnes of Beta Tick Grease out of the targeted 90 metric tonnes;
2. 39 metric tonnes of Grain protectants out of the targeted 50 metric tones; and
3. 70 metric tones of Cattle Dips out of the expected 85 metric tonnes.

The establishment of a new flour milling plant at Mega Market in Mutare has reached 75% completion, with the construction of the super structure completed. The installation of a Leather Processing Plant at Zambezi Tanners in Bulawayo has reached 72%, with some of the imported machinery having been received, while the Installation of Machinery Plant at Jiangshan Civil Explosives in Chinhoyi has reached 80% completion.

Cabinet was informed that ZimChem completed the refurbishment of a boiler at its Kwekwe Plant, and will soon embark on the refurbishment of the standby generator in order to produce 300 metric tonnes of Pitch for export and 300 metric tonnes for use by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development. Zimbabwe Grain Bags produced 192 302 grain bags between April and June 2021, out of the anticipated 240 000.

The Minister of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services reported that out of the targeted 10 Community Village Information Centres (CVICs), 3 were commissioned. Those commissioned are:

1. St Theresa Community Village Information Centre in Rusape, Manicaland Province;
2. Nyadire , Community Village Information Centres in Mutoko, Mashonaland East Province; and
3. Brunapeg Community Village Information Centre in Matabeleland South Province.

The following Community Village Information Centres will be completed soon:

1. Karanda Hospital Mt. Darwin,Mashonaland Central Province;
2. Madziwa, Mashonaland Central Province;
3. Majuru, Goromonzi, Mashonaland East Province;
4. Tongogara and Mnene, Midlands Province;
5. Dorowa, Manicaland Province.

On the Community Information Centres (CICs), Cabinet was informed that the Victoria Falls CIC was launched, while the remaining 9 await equipment and setting up. The 9 Community Information Centers are as follows:

1. Kariba and Mutorashanga in Mashonaland West Province;
2. Murewa in Mashonaland East Province;
3. Gwanda in Matabeleland South Province;
4. Mutasa in Manicaland Province;
5. Zaka in Masvingo Province;
6. Rushinga in Mashonaland Central Province;
7. Mberengwa in Midlands Province.

The assembling of 2 000 Personal Computers and laptops at the Zimbabwe Information Technology Company in Msasa, Harare was completed. The establishment of one ICT Lab per School project awaits the delivery of equipment which was slowed down by the onset of the COVID-19 third wave. The project, which is expected to be completed by 12 August, 2021, will benefit the following schools:

1. Katsenga High, Manicaland Province;
2. Kapembere Primary, Mashonaland Central Province;
3. Nebarwe Primary, Masvingo Province;
4. Sipepa High, Matabeleland North Province;
5. Chigwedere Primary, Mashonaland East Province;
6. Selukwe Primary, Midlands Province;
7. Nhlanhla Primary and Mzinyathini Secondary, Matabeleland SouthProvince;
8. Neuso Primary, Mashonaland West Province;
9. Nehumba Secondary, Manicaland Province.

Seven (7) Shared base stations were established, namely:

1. Sviba;
2. Boli;
3. Maranda; and
4. Chikombedzi, all in Masvingo Province;
5. Sherwood in Kwekwe, Midlands Province;
6. CABS Budiriro, Harare Metropolitan Province.

The Ministry completed the installation of Local Area Network (LAN) at 10 Public Finance Management System (PFMS) Kiosks at:

1. Makonde and Kariba, Mashonaland West Province;
2. Marondera, Mashonaland East Province;
3. Gwanda, Matabeleland South Province;
4. Mutasa, Manicaland Province:
5. Zaka and Chivi, Masvingo Province;
6. Rushinga, Mashonaland Central Province;
7. Victoria Falls; Matabeleland North Province; and
8. Mberengwa, Midlands Province.

The International Internet Bandwidth Transit Project in Harare was completed.

**6.0 UPDATE ON PREPARATIONS FOR ZIMBABWE’S PARTICIPATION AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Honourable Dr. F. S. Shava, presented the Update on Preparations for Zimbabwe’s Participation at Expo Dubai 2020.

Cabinet wishes to inform the public that ten (10) tourism operators have expressed interest in participating at the Expo and these are Africa Sun; Matetsi; Meikles; Shearwater; Wild Horizon; Five Bulls Tours; Rainbow Tourism Group; Tour Africa Travel, the Wattle Company; and Khanondo Safaris and Tours. Zimbabwe is one of the eight (8) countries that was featured on the Pre-Expo Week on Travel in a programme titled ‘*What’s on in the World*’’ in February 2021. Through collaboration with the tourism private sector, the Regional Manager for Southern Africa for South African Airways and past President of the Tourism Business Council of Zimbabwe, Ms. Winnie Muchanyuka was nominated to be a speaker at the Thematic Business Forum on Travel and Connectivity in January 2022.

The nation is advised that Ministries are mobilising the private sector players under their purview to participate at EXPO Dubai 2020 in general, and at the Zimbabwe Trade and Investment Forum in particular. Steering Committees to mobilise private sector participation have been set up for the following sectors: Industry and Commerce; Agriculture; Mining; Women Affairs and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture; and Higher and Tertiary Education.

In terms of reaching a wider market for Zimbabwean products, online trading platforms are being developed for the following sectors: Arts and Culture; Tourism; Industry and SMEs; and Mining. ZimTrade is working with both Industry and SMEs, while the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ) is targeting selling diamonds online.

Zimbabwe’s National Day, at Expo 2020 Dubai, will be celebrated on 14 March, 2022 and will be graced by His Excellency the President. Key deliverables will include: cultural performances; investment meetings; high level delegations; digital screening of Zimbabwe content and engaging partners and service providers. The venue for the Zimbabwe Investment Centre has been booked, and Jah Prayzah will perform at the National Day Celebrations.

The nation is being informed that content production has started and the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services will be working with various media houses to promote Zimbabwe’s participation at Expo 2020 Dubai. A countdown advert to Expo 2020 Dubai has already started on television and the nation is being educated on the importance and benefits of participating at the world fair.

**7.0 CHILD JUSTICE BILL, 2020**

Cabinet considered and approved the Child Justice Bill, 2020, which was presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Honourable Ziyambi Ziyambi, as Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

The nation is informed that the Bill will establish a Child Justice System for children in conflict with the law, in accordance with the values and principles underpinning the Constitution and the international obligations of Zimbabwe. The Bill seeks to entrench the principles of rehabilitation and restorative justice as an integral part of the child justice system, and to establish procedures for the screening of children to create special rules for a Child Justice Court. Furthermore, the Bill will provide for legal representation for children; and the sentencing options available for children. The age of criminal responsibility of a child is being reviewed upwards from 7 to 12 years. The Bill also provides for the establishment of child justice committees at national, provincial and district levels that will be mandated with monitoring child justice.

**8.0 CHILDREN’S AMENDMENT BILL, 2021**

Cabinet considered and approved the Children’s Amendment Bill, 2021 which was presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Honourable Ziyambi Ziyambi, as Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

Cabinet was informed that the Children’s Amendment Bill will be amended to align it with the 2013 Constitution and incorporate provisions of International Conventions and treaties that Zimbabwe has ratified. The Bill widens and criminalises instances of child abuse to include allowing a child to reside in or to frequent a brothel; causing the seduction, abduction or commercial sexual exploitation of a child; and causing a child to participate in the propagation of child sexual abuse material. The denial of medical treatment or access to medical treatment to a child without reasonable cause will also be criminalised.

The Bill places an obligation on any professional person who becomes aware or suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child is being abused, to report that person to a Police Officer or a Child Protection Officer. Furthermore, the Bill will criminalise parents or guardians who enable the commission of an offence by a child or fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that the child does not commit an offence. The abused children will be removed to a place of custody or detention in the best interest of the child. It is highlighted that institutions that receive children must accommodate them in a family-type environment. A new clause has been incorporated that empowers probation officers to obtain birth certificates for children without parental care.

**9.0 UPDATE ON THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2022 ZIMBABWE NATIONAL POPULATION CENSUS**

Cabinet received update on the Preparations for the 2022 Zimbabwe National Population Census from the Minister of Finance and Economic Development. The 2022 Population and Housing Census enumeration is scheduled for 21 to 30 April, 2022.

The nation is informed that the preparations for the 2022 Population and Housing Census are being coordinated by the National Census Committee, which will be assisted by the Provincial and District Census Committees. The Provincial and District Census Committees will be constituted by 30 September, 2021.

Cabinet adopted the 2022 Population and Housing Census Timelines, which are disaggregated into Pre-Enumeration, Enumeration and Post Enumeration Phases. The Pre-Enumeration phase which started on 21 Nov 2019 will run until 17 April, 2022, and has two major activities, namely: the Census Field Mapping Exercise (to be completed by 21 January 2022) and the Pilot Census (to be completed by 27 November 2021). The Enumeration Phase is scheduled for 21 to 30 April, 2022. The post enumeration will be completed by 31 August 2022 and activities during this phase include the following:

1. publication of the preliminary census results by 1 August, 2022;
2. data analysis, processing and dissemination; post enumeration survey;
3. evaluation of the census in terms of content and coverage errors; and
4. recovery of census equipment and materials.

Government wishes to inform the nation that 60 per cent of the country has been mapped although the COVID-19 outbreak is militating against progress. The Bulawayo Metropolitan Province was completed, as well as 20 districts spread across the country’s provinces. The completed districts are as follows:

1. Bulawayo, Bulawayo Metropolitan Province;
2. Rusape, Manicaland Province;
3. Muzarabani, Rushinga, Mvurwi Urban and Bindura Urban in Mashonaland Central Province;
4. Marondera Rural in Mashonaland East Province;
5. Gwanda Urban, Plumtree and Beitbridge Urban in Matabeleland South Province;
6. Victoria Falls City in Matabeleland North Province;
7. Redcliff, Zvishavane Urban, Gokwe Urban; and Shurugwi Urban in Midlands Province;
8. Masvingo Urban, and Chiredzi Urban in Masvingo Province;
9. Chitungwiza, Epworth, Harare Rural in Harare Metropolitan Province.

**I THANK YOU!**