

## **Sixth Post-Cabinet Press Briefing**

**22<sup>nd</sup> 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 General (Rtd) Dr. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga.

The nation is informed that as at 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2022, the country's cumulative COVID-19 cases stood at 244 685, with 234 895 recoveries and 5 429 deaths. The recovery rate was 96%, with 4 361 active cases having been recorded. The number of new COVID-19 cases decreased to 2 004 during the week under review, compared to 3 306 recorded the previous week. This represented a 39% decrease. This was an indication that strengthened government implementation of all public health and social measures during the past few weeks in collaboration with all stakeholders is paying off. The following areas recorded the most significant number of new cases: Mashonaland East (445), Manicaland (381), Mashonaland West (379) and Masvingo (201),

The number of people in need of hospitalisation for COVID-19 continues to decrease, with the country's bed occupancy rate declining to 2.3% during the week under review from 3.0% 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 21 March, 2022, a total of 4 428 726 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine had been administered, while 3 443 832 people had received their second dose. A total of 181 798 third doses have been administered to date. The National Vaccination Blitz/campaign which kicked 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 main aim of the campaign is to reach 70% of the total population by end of July 2022 in line with WHO regulations. It is reported that the country has enough vaccine stocks for the planned national vaccination blitz having received 22 405 000 COVID-19 vaccine doses and utilized 8 034 932 doses so far.

The nation is also being informed that the total number of COVID-19 cases detected in schools since the beginning of the first term decreased. All the active cases detected through the schools' surveillance system are under isolation and are being managed by the Ministry of Health and Child Care. Attendance in schools remained stable at 100% for teachers and 84% for learners.

Cabinet reports that the Risk Communication and Information will roll out an intensive COVID-19 vaccination publicity campaign nation-wide

from the 21<sup>st</sup> March to 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2022. The campaign will target people aged 12 years and above and is aimed at encouraging them to get vaccinated. Community engagement by religious and traditional leaders on all COVID-19 prevention measures will be strengthened during this vaccination campaign blitz.

The nation is informed that the Presidential borehole scheme event/launch in Chitungwiza tomorrow will be expanded to include the vaccination campaign blitz launch/activities. It is noted that water and vaccines are two of the key ingredients for COVID-19 prevention.

Government is appealing to all Zimbabweans to take the COVID-19 pandemic seriously and as such are required to continue adhering 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. UPDATE ON THE 2022 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS**

The Minister of Finance and Economic Development updated Cabinet on the progress made pertaining the preparations for the 2022 Population and Housing Census, Hon. Prof. M. Ncube.

The nation is informed that preparations for the 2022 Population and Housing Census is progressing well as planned. The training of 500 Level 1 Supervisors was completed on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022, while the training of Level 2 Supervisors commenced on 15<sup>th</sup> March and will be completed on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2022. Level 3 training for 41 000 census enumerators is scheduled to take place from 7<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Youth will also be incorporated among the enumerators. Cabinet advises that deployment of census enumerators will start from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022, followed by census enumeration from 21<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The population is encouraged to be cooperative and be counted during the census exercise.

### **3. PRINCIPLES OF THE WITNESS PROTECTION BILL, 2022**

Cabinet considered and approved the Principles of the Witness Protection Bill, 2022 as presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Ziyambi Ziyambi.

The nation is informed that the Witness Protection Bill seeks to fill the gap in the law by establishing legislation to provide for Witness Protection in Zimbabwe. The absence of adequate witness protection mechanisms has resulted in the police taking the responsibility of protecting witnesses.

Cabinet reports that the purpose of the Bill is to provide for the establishment of an Office that caters for the protection and placement of witnesses under temporary, interim and permanent protection. The Bill seeks to regulate the powers, functions and duties of the Office. Furthermore, the Bill will establish the necessary procedures and measures on how witnesses are put into the witness protection programme.

#### **4. PRISONS AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES BILL, 2022**

Cabinet considered and approved the Prisons and Correctional Services Bill, 2022 as 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 Prisons and Correctional Services Bill, 2022 seeks to modernise the prisons legislation with a view to ensuring that it meets the international norms and standards regarding prisons administration, including the way prisoners should be treated. This includes focusing on restorative justice through rehabilitation rather than incarceration of offenders. The Prisons and Correctional Services Act will ensure that the prison system caters for the needs of the vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, juvenile offenders as well as persons with disabilities and other special categories in society that have special needs.

Cabinet advises that the parole system will be broadened to provide for the eligibility of every prisoner to apply for parole regardless of the nature of the sentences they are serving. The legislation will provide for the establishment of correctional community centres throughout the country which will essentially be open prisons. These centres will also ensure the decongestion of prisons as certain prisoners will be released from standard prisons to reside in such community centres. They will also serve the purpose of easing the transition of inmates from incarceration life to community life.

The legislation further seeks to promote community involvement in Prisons and Correctional Services in order to ensure that prisoners will not face difficulties and hostilities in being accepted back into their communities and within their families. The Prisons and Correctional Service Act will extend an inmate's right to consult with a medical practitioner of their choice at their own expense. In tandem with the Constitution, the legislation affords inmates access to their lawyers before and during their trials.

## **5.0. REPORT ON THE SADC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' MEETING HELD IN LILONGWE, MALAWI: 18<sup>TH</sup> TO 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2022.**

Cabinet received a report on the SADC council of Ministers' meeting held in Lilongwe, Malawi: 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 as presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Hon. Dr F. M. Shava.

Cabinet advises that the SADC Council of Ministers was held under the theme, '*Bolstering Productive Capacities in the Face of COVID-19 Pandemic for Inclusive, Sustainable, Economic and Industrial Transformation*'. The nation is informed that the discussions focused primarily on budgetary issues and how to strengthen the human resources and administrative capacities of the SADC Secretariat to enable them to better serve the region. Progress in the implementation of programmes and projects under the Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015 to 2063, SADC Vision 2050 and the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan for 2020 to 2030 was reviewed.

## **6.0 UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL TOURISM RECOVERY AND GROWTH STRATEGY**

Cabinet was updated and noted progress on the Implementation of the National Tourism Recovery and Growth Strategy by the Minister of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Hon. Mangaliso Ndhlovu.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that implementation of the National Tourism Recovery and Growth Strategy, which seeks to grow the Tourism Economy to US\$5 Billion by 2025, is in full swing following its

launch by His Excellency the President in August 2020. The tourism industry was adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, mainly from lockdowns, red listing and travel bans, resulting in the loss of 9 000 jobs as well as closure of 37 facilities. Notwithstanding this, notable progress and developments have been recorded to date. These include the following:

### **1. Domestic Tourism**

- The launch of the ZimBho campaign in 2020 which helped improve domestic tourism; and
- increased domestic entries into National Parks to 251 088 in 2021 compared to 173 714 in 2020;

### **2. Tourism Investment Promotion**

- Tourism investments increased from US\$86 million in 2020 to US\$142 million in 2021, some notable investments being Palm River Hotel, Zambezi Boutique Guesthouse, and Nkosi Guest Lodge (Victoria Falls); Makhado in Beitbridge; and the Beethoven Hotel in Harare. Hot Plate Grill restaurants were opened throughout the country;
- A new 3 000 seater conferencing facility is under construction in Mutoko, while another 250 seater has been constructed at Village Hotel in Gweru;



- Major renovations and refurbishments were carried out at the Victoria Falls Rainbow, the Cresta Group of Hotels, and the Victoria Falls Hotel;
- The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (Zimparks) is refurbishing its lodges in Nyanga, Vumba, and Chimanimani National Parks;
- Zimparks also launched new tourism products to diversify attractions in the national parks and these include Sikato Lion Encounter in Masvingo province; the Chinhoyi Lion Encounter in Mashonaland West Province; and the Tshabalala Lion Encounter and Entertainment area in Matabeleland South province;
- A total of US\$133.2 million was invested in Public-Private Partnership tourism-related construction projects between 2021 and 2022 involving the Forestry Commission; and
- The Bulawayo Kraal is being reconstructed.

### **3. Accessibility of Tourism Products**

- Qatar Airways commenced flights to Zimbabwe on 1 August, 2021;
- MACK Air of Botswana started servicing the Kasane-Victoria Falls route on 1 May, 2021;
- Fast Jet has scheduled flights that connect Victoria Falls to Kruger National Park through Mpumalanga that were introduced in March 2022;

- Falcon Air Safaris, a subsidiary of the District Development Fund, is now servicing Hwange Airport. The District Development Fund is also refurbishing the Chapoto (in Kanyemba) and Binga Aerodromes to support geographical spread of tourism;
- Luftansa's Eurowings will service the Frankfurt-Windhoek-Victoria Falls route commencing on 30 March, 2022;
- Kariba Airport is being refurbished by the Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe.

These services are in addition to those already being offered by Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, South African AirLink, Rwandair, Air Tanzania and Emirates.

#### **4. Tourism Marketing and Promotion Efforts**

Three tourism promotion programmes launched during the period being reviewed are:

- Zimbho (domestic tourism promotion);
- Visit Zimbabwe (international tourism promotion) launched in partnership with the Ministry of Youth, Sport, Arts and Recreation to use Cricket as a vehicle to promote destination Zimbabwe; and
- Meet in Zimbabwe (promotion of meetings and exhibitions).

The country's tourism digital marketing campaign was rated by Dubai Expo 2020 as one of the top 8 out of the 109 exhibiting countries.

The 2020 and 2021 editions of the Sangana/Hlanganani World Tourism Expo were held virtually with limited participants. The 2022 Edition will be held in Bulawayo as a full physical event.

The Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry partnered with tourism players in the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA) to promote regional tourism through the highly successful Africa's Eden Travel and Trade Show which was held on 7-10 February, 2022. It was attended by 70 international buyers from 23 countries, and 113 exhibitors from the KAZA region.

Furthermore, football personalities, such as Tino Kadewere and Marvellous Nakamba have been roped in as Tourism Ambassadors to grow the brand and popularise the country as a tourist destination of choice. These Ambassadors and others are influential on the international arena.

## **5. Wide Scale Rollout of the Service Excellence Programme**

- 500 local tourism players attended the online Service Excellence Training facilitated by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority in partnership with Global Leadership Summit.

## **6. Tourism Support Facilities**

Some of the significant achievements attained under this facility include the following:

- The waiver of Value Added tax on Domestic Tourism and Duty Exemption Facility. These will help improve access to tourism products and services by the domestic market through extended price reductions;
- A total of 117 applicants received tax rebates valued at US\$11 301 721 in 2021, compared to the 81 applicants that received US\$2 399 957 in 2020. The rebates were for capital goods and specified motor vehicles;
- Government paid ZW\$198 million in to support operations of the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, whose operations are normally funded by a 2% levy charged on services provided to both domestic and international tourists;
- Tourism operators are now allowed to retain 100% of their foreign earnings
- The Tourism Satellite Account which is a statistical tool for the measurement of tourism's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product, trade and employment in the economy, is now operational.

Cabinet resolved that:

1. The Statutory Instrument on Duty rebates be amended to give Zimbabwe Tourism Authority the exclusive mandate to

- recommend applicants to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for duty processing;
2. The gazetting of major water bodies like Tugwi-Mukosi and Gwayi Shangani Dams as Conservation and Recreational Parks should be expedited to unlock investment potential; and
  3. The Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry work closely with that of Finance and Economic Development to come up with an effective financing plan that can complement the recovery of the Tourism Sector.

## **7.0 MINING UPDATE**

The Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Honourable Wiston Chitando, submitted a number of updates on the state of the mining industry which included the following matters:

- a) A Kimberly Process team will be undertaking a Review visit to Zimbabwe from 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022. This is to enable Zimbabwe to undergo a review process every five years.
- b) Zimbabwe which is Vice Chair of the African Diamond Producers Association (ADPA), is set to host a meeting of the Council of Ministers and meeting of experts in Hybrid format at Elephant Hills Hotel, Victoria Falls from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022.
- c) A proposal which was granted for approval to be given for application to export used catalytic convertor recovered from vehicles which have come to the end of the useful lives.

## **8.0 UPDATE ON THE WATER SUPPLY SITUATION IN THE MAJOR URBAN CENTRES**

Cabinet was updated on issues related to challenges facing Urban Local Authorities in discharging their water service delivery functions by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Hon. July Moyo.

Cabinet noted the challenges and is aware that this matter must be attended to in the shortest period. To that extent, there will be a Presidential Statement on the issue once all the arrangements are finalised.

## **9.0 STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 99 YEAR LEASE**

Cabinet discussed the issue of a bankable 99-year lease. The aim is to harness resources for financing agriculture from the Financial Sector. The Attorney General was directed to expedite work on the enabling document.

**I THANK YOU**