

## **THIRTY-EIGHTH POST-CABINET PRESS BRIEFING**

**20<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2022**

### **1.0 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, Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care, Honourable Dr. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga.

The nation is being informed that the country's cumulative cases since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 stands at 259 770, with 253 672 recoveries and 5 631 cumulative deaths. The recovery rate is 98%, with 467 active cases. A total of 211 new cases including six deaths were recorded during the week, compared to 203 recorded the previous week. For the week under review there were twenty-eight new admissions' compared to thirty recorded the previous week. Cabinet advises that the small spike in the number of new cases and deaths recorded during the week is of concern and calls for the country to remain vigilant.

Regarding the national vaccination programme, Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that a total of 6 581 530 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine has been administered, while 4 949 555 people have received their second dose, and 1 274 040 their third dose. It is highlighted that Provincial Task

Force teams should strengthened implementation of all COVID-19 public health and social measures with a focus to maximally protect citizens during the Christmas and New Year holidays. Members of the public who are not vaccinated are encouraged to take advantage of this blitz to get vaccinated.

In light of the upcoming festive season, Cabinet resolved on the following strategies in order to ensure that the pandemic is kept under check:

- (i) that provincial teams strengthen their vaccination program to protect citizens from severe disease and from death; and
- (ii) that communities and individuals remain vigilant during this festive season and continue to protect themselves by :-
  - a) getting fully vaccinated;
  - b) washing hands with soap and running water;
  - c) sanitizing hands frequently ;
  - d) social distancing and avoiding crowded gatherings;
  - e) wearing face masks properly in public transport vehicles; and indoor gatherings.

## **2.0 ZIMBABWE NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN (2023–2030)**

Cabinet received and approved the Zimbabwe National Broadband Plan (2023–2030), which was presented by the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Professor A. Murwira as Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Innovation, Technology Development and Application.

The nation is being informed that Broadband is the bedrock of the Fourth Industrial Revolution upon which future life-changing technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Block chain, Internet of Things and Autonomous Vehicles will ride. The importance of Broadband and its transformative benefits include the following: enhancement of global competitiveness, job creation, increased productivity, improved national security, and enhancement of performance in education, agriculture, health, and governance. All these are prerequisites for achieving sustainable development goals. Studies by the World Bank have revealed that in low and middle income economies, every 10 percentage increase in Broadband penetration accelerates economic growth by 1.38 percentage points, and the Second Republic is determined to ensure that no one and no place is left behind.

The Zimbabwe National Broadband Plan is a nationwide initiative to provide access to and adoption of Broadband Services at Government, business, household and individual levels, with the aim of transforming Zimbabwe’s growth trajectory from being largely driven by exploitation of natural resources to innovation-driven growth. The vision of the Plan is to have **“An all-inclusive Digital Society powered by Premier Innovations by 2030”**. The Plan aims at developing various incentives

to reduce the cost of broadband access to 2% of the average monthly income, from the current 10.1%, and widening the community access.

The Broadband Plan aims to:

- i. drive innovation in terms of new technologies, services, applications and business models;
- ii. improve the efficiency and productivity of enterprises, development of new services and applications, business models and processes that are not possible without Broadband;
- iii. enhance the potential of human capital through easier acquisition of knowledge and skills; and
- iv. increase community competitiveness by attracting knowledge-based businesses.

The nation is being further informed that the Plan has identified a number of key Broadband Projects to be implemented, Government will take the leading role in raising funding for Broadband deployment. Private investors will be expected to raise funding for the Plan as well through sources available to them. A Broadband Committee will be created to provide periodic evaluation of progress, facilitate coordination and collaboration as well as highlight areas of programme adjustment.

### **3.0 FIRST PERIODIC REPORT OF THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD**

The Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care, Hon. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga presented the First Periodic Report of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which was approved by Cabinet.

The nation is informed that the Report outlines the legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures adopted by the country to implement the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child since submission of the Initial Report in 2015. The First Periodic Report covering the period 2016 to 2021 is a result of extensive consultations with various stakeholders, including Civil Society Organizations. Highlights of developments that have taken place since the initial report include the following:

- the alignment of laws to the Constitution in relation to the definition of a child, age of criminal responsibility, and age of marriage. The Children's Amendment Bill, the Guardianship of Minors Act, the Child Justice Bill, the Marriages Bill and the Education Act are being aligned to the Constitution;
- the application of the following child rights principles in Government policies: child survival; best interest of the child; participation; and non-discrimination;
- promotion of the following rights: right to life; survival and development; education and protection;
- enhancement of cooperation with non-State actors; and
- the inclusion of Child Rights and Responsibilities in the Guidance and Counselling syllabus.

Regarding the rights of children, in addition to the constitutional and legislative measures in place, the administrative measures implemented include establishment of the Victim-Friendly Court to protect vulnerable child witnesses and the Victim Friendly Unit within the Zimbabwe Republic Police for the investigation of crimes against women and children involving sexual abuse and domestic violence.

The Report shows that Zimbabwe has made great strides in promoting and protecting the rights of children through the implementation and domestication of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

#### **4.0 FIRST PERIODIC REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

Cabinet approved the First Periodic Report of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (UNCRC-OPAC), which was presented by the Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care, Hon. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga.

Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that Zimbabwe ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in 2014. The Report outlines the legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures adopted by the country in compliance with the Optional Protocol on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC). Extensive consultations

with various stakeholders including Civil Society Organizations were undertaken in compiling the Report. The following highlights are being brought to the attention of the nation:

- that the Constitution prohibits the recruitment of a person under the age of 18 (a child) into the militia, forced or armed conflict or hostilities;
- that the recruitment of personnel into the Zimbabwe Defence Forces starts from 18 years;
- that the country established the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission to safeguard citizens' rights and freedoms; and
- that since there are no armed conflicts or armed groups in the country, Zimbabwe does not have children who are vulnerable and requiring implementation of the Optional Protocol.

As a nation, the country is fully committed to upholding the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## **5.0 RATIFICATION OF THE AFRICAN RISK CAPACITY AGENCY**

Cabinet considered and approved the Ratification of the African Risk Capacity Treaty as presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Honourable Ziyambi Ziyambi, as Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

The African Risk Capacity Treaty was established to help Member countries to improve in their response to extreme weather events and

natural disasters, thereby reducing the risk of loss and damage caused by such disasters. Although Zimbabwe became a member of the African Risk Capacity Agency in 2012, the country has not yet ratified the Treaty. The Treaty will provisionally apply to 35 countries, and the benefits to Member countries include, *inter alia*:

- i. participation in the African Risk Capacity Ltd Insurance Pool, which offers weather risk insurance;
- ii. access to the Africa Risk View Software, a tool that quantifies and monitors weather-related food security risks in Africa;
- iii. participation in other products to be developed by the African Risk Capacity Agency;
- iv. access to capacity building programmes;
- v. access to climate adaptation funds; and
- vi. participation in Conference of Parties (CoP).

Ratification of the Treaty will therefore enable Zimbabwe to fully participate in disaster risk management together with other African countries.

## **6.0 THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE AND THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT PERMANENT COMMISSION**

Cabinet considered and approved ratification of the Agreement between the Republic of Zimbabwe and the Republic of Belarus on the establishment of of Joint Permanent Commission as presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Honourable Ziyambi



Ziyambi, Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

The Agreement will provide for closer cooperation between the Republic of Zimbabwe and the Republic of Belarus in diverse fields of mutual interest, including but not limited to the following: economy, commerce, and finance; trade and investment; tourism, culture, and information; education, science and technology; and agriculture, parks and wildlife. The Agreement will further provide for the composition of the Commission, its functions, funding and financial arrangements and dispute settlement.

The Agreement will result in the establishment of a Joint Permanent Commission which will subsist for 5 years and will be subject to automatic renewal by the Republic of Zimbabwe and the Republic of Belarus.

## **7.0 AGREEMENT AMENDING THE SADC PROTOCOL ON ENERGY**

Cabinet considered and approved the Agreement amending the SADC Protocol on Energy as presented by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Honourable Ziyambi Ziyambi, as Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation.

The nation is being informed that the SADC Ministers responsible for Energy agreed to review and rationalise the SADC Energy Protocol of 1996 thereby aligning the development of the energy sector to current trends. The Agreement Amending the SADC Protocol on Energy and the Amendment to Annex 1 to the Protocol was adopted in 2021 at the 41<sup>st</sup> Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Lilongwe, Malawi.

The Amendment makes provision for the use of new and renewable energy sources, and seeks to promote low emission technologies in order to reduce the energy sector's impact on the environment. It encourages the use of vast sources of energy such as wood and wood residues, agriculture residues as well as animal waste, and provides for Member States undertaking to harmonise national and regional energy policies.

#### **8.0 REPORT ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA, HIS EXCELLENCY MR TEODORO OBIANG NGUEMA MBASOGO: MALABO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA: 8 DECEMBER, 2022**

Cabinet received and adopted the Report on the Occasion of the Inauguration of the President of Equatorial Guinea, His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 8 December, 2022, which was presented by the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Hon. Prof. Amon Murwira as the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

As the nation may recall, Zimbabwe played a pivotal role in foiling the 2004 *coup d'état* attempt which was plotted by Simon Mann and his contingent of mercenaries and the two countries have maintained strong relations ever since.

#### **9.0 REPORT ON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> SUMMIT OF THE ORGANISATION OF THE AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES SUMMIT**

Cabinet received and adopted the Report on the 10<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States Heads of State and Government which was held in Luanda, Angola, from 6 to 10 December, 2022. The Report was presented by the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Hon. Prof. Amon Murwira as the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The Republic of Angola assumed the presidency of the Summit which was held under the theme: **"3 Continents, 3 Oceans, 1 Common Destiny: Building a Resilient and Sustainable OACPS"**. The objectives being pursued by the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) encompass the fight against poverty; the promotion of sustainable development in Member States; and swift integration into the world economy. The Secretary General of African, Caribbean and Pacific States highlighted the need to enhance and broaden the role and visibility of OACPS through revitalizing multilateralism, and called for the creation of a conducive environment for advanced science, research and innovation to help promote the desired knowledge economy in Member States.

The nation is being informed that His Excellency President Mnangagwa emphasized the need to ensure food security by adopting greener and smart agriculture strategies. The President rallied Member States to maximise on OACPS strength in numbers and critical mass making and

leverage on the huge market share and economies of scale to benefit their economies.

Cabinet wishes to further advise that His Excellency the President held fruitful bilateral meetings on the side-lines of the Summit with the following: the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Baroness Patricia Scotland; His Excellency Joachim Chissano, former Mozambican President; and the Special Advisor to the President of the African Bank, Mr. Olajide Oyewusi.

## **10.0 REPORT ON THE INAUGURAL GLOBAL MEDIA CONGRESS**

Cabinet received and adopted the Report on the Inaugural Global Media Congress on Shaping the Future of the Media Industry held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 15 to 17 November, 2022, which was presented by the Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services.

The nation is being informed that the Global Media Congress, which was attended by over 1 200 delegates, serves as a platform for uniting the global media industry in the exchange of innovative ideas and solutions that define the future of the media industry. The Congress provided media practitioners with a platform for exploring partnerships and collaborative avenues to bolster the development of the media sector. The Congress was held under the theme: ***"Shaping the Future of the Media Industry"***.

The various global presence in information diplomacy are hallmarks of a country shedding off the skin of pariah status. The engagement and re-

engagement policies of President EDM and his Second Republic are opening wide the new vistas. Zimbabwe is assuming its rightful place as one of Africa's leading stars in all human endeavours.

Cabinet is informing the nation that in addition to participating in a Ministerial Panel discussion on "***New and Future Investment Opportunities in the Media across the Globe***" the Minister also had fruitful deliberations with Mohammed Jalal Al-Raisi of the Emirates News Agency and Sharjah Government Media Bureau Officials.

## **11.0 REPORT ON THE 17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM**

Cabinet received and adopted the Report on the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Internet Governance Forum held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 28 November to 2 December, 2022, which was presented by the Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services.

The nation is being informed that the theme of the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the Internet Governance Forum was "***Resilient Internet for a Shared, Sustainable and Common Future***". The Forum deliberated on the growing role and impact of digital technologies on people's daily lives, and the need to develop public policies, including legislation to counter disinformation, cybercrime and breaches of rights and freedoms online. While Governments the world over have the responsibility to create an enabling environment for citizens to enjoy digital rights, the citizens have a reciprocal duty to exercise these rights responsibly. The digital rights include freedom of speech, access to online information and data

protection. Furthermore, the introduction of cyber legislation would culminate in safeguarding personal data and put an end to the exploitation of personal data for profit by big data companies.

Cabinet is also informing the nation that the Forum urged technology companies, Governments and the civil society to use their fiduciary responsibility to end violence against women after it was observed that women were being subjected to online violence.

## **12.0 REPORT ON THE 53<sup>RD</sup> EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA**

Cabinet received a report on the 53<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the International Film Festival of India which ran from 20<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022 in Goa, India from the Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, Hon. Monica Mutsvangwa.

Cabinet advises that the master class concept saw 42 experts availing themselves free of charge to students of film production to offer specialized instruction in script writing, film production editing, camera work, post production, marketing and commercialization of the product. Each Province of India was afforded the opportunity to showcase its comparative advantages in terms of physical features and scenery that can act as scenes for film production. These sites are open to both domestic and international film producers, giving opportunity to film based tourism to flourish in India. This year's edition also featured a novel concept in which texts with a significant theme is considered by film

producers for conversion to films and documentaries. This platform provided an instructive model for Zimbabwe, especially as content creators in the country are crying for access to markets, while the market is pleading for access to suitable content. Platforms of this kind allow both demand and supply to meet in the marketplace.

The nation is informed that the Honourable Minister had the opportunity to meet and interact with key personnel of the Film and Television Institute of India. The two parties identified possible areas of cooperation in film production and specialized courses for capacity building of TV producers in Zimbabwe as follows:

- It is noted that institutions in Zimbabwe offering courses in film production require equipment that is industry-specific so as to cut off the cumbersome industrial attachment component for students, who would be exposed to industry conditions at their places of learning.
- Possible areas for cooperation include attending 2 week courses to study Film and TV production, dedicated programmes with designed curriculum, the possibility of Indian trainers to come to Zimbabwe to deliver training courses.
- It was resolved that ZBC and the ZIFTESSA produce proposals outlining their technical needs which should guide the Indian counterparts on areas of cooperation.
- Refresher courses for ZBC staff, software application training and technology transfer were also discussed and agreed upon.

Cabinet advises that the Film festival provided an excellent opportunity for Zimbabwe to glean valuable lessons on commercializing the film production industry with mutually beneficial prospects for both film producers and media houses seeking content. The festival also showcased how a country's political history can be preserved, packaged and distributed in agreeable formats for the younger generations who are no longer inclined to overtly didactic methods of historical lesson delivery. The nation is informed that a film festival along the lines of International Film Festival of India is under consideration, with special emphasis on regional balancing, market oriented film showcasing and repackaging of text to film, particularly our liberation struggle.

**I THANK YOU!**