

THIRD POST-CABINET PRESS BRIEFING

28TH FEBRUARY, 2023

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 Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, Honourable Prof A. Murwira, on behalf of 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 advised that the number of new cases recorded during the week ending 25 February 2023 decreased compared to the number recorded the previous week. The continued decrease in new cases over a sustained period of time indicates that the COVID-19 resurgence experienced during the festive season and the pandemic in general remains under control. More specifically, as at 25 February 2023, the country's cumulative cases since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 stood at 264 127, with 257 839 recoveries and 5 668 cumulative deaths. The recovery rate was 98%, with 620 active cases having been reported.

Regarding the national vaccination programme, Cabinet wishes to inform the nation that, as at 25 February 2023, a total of 6 817 292 first doses

of the COVID-19 vaccine had been administered, while 5 060 282 people had received their second dose, and 1 586 573 their third dose. The national vaccination coverage for the first dose increased to 60.7% from 60.4% which was recorded the previous week.

To highlight progress made in curbing the pandemic and as part of the COVID-19 risk communication and information strategy, Cabinet advises that Zimbabwe's own COVID-19 video documentary "*Fighting the Wave, How a Nation United to Fight the COVID-19 Pandemic*" will be officially launched on Thursday, 2 March 2023.

In order to ensure that the pandemic and any resurgence are kept in check, the nation must remain vigilant and continue to strengthen all response strategies with particular emphasis on ramping up vaccination. All provincial teams will continue to encourage members of the public to take up the 1st, 2nd and 3rd doses. Government assures the nation that the country has adequate stocks of the COVID-19 vaccine and that all vaccination centres are well-stocked. In addition, the ongoing vaccination campaigns will continue to be strengthened ensuring that all stakeholders, including community leaders remain on board. Communities must also continue to protect themselves by adhering to all the recommended COVID-19 Public Health and Social Measures and prioritise getting vaccinated.

2.0 CONCEPT NOTE ON THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (NDS 1) MID-TERM REVIEW

Cabinet considered and adopted the Concept Note on the National Development Strategy 1: 2021-2025 (NDS 1) Mid-Term Review, as presented by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Honourable Professor Mthuli Ncube.

Citizens will be aware that the NDS 1 is in its third year of implementation, with its mid-term falling on 30 June 2023. There has been significant progress in the implementation of the Strategy as evidenced by a GDP growth of 8.5% registered in 2021, against a target of 5%. Several key projects have also been implemented, notwithstanding the negative impacts of endogenous and exogenous factors including COVID-19, Eastern Europe tensions, and inflation and exchange rate instability. A documentary showcasing the impact of the NDS1 in uplifting the standard of living of people will be put together for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Regular monitoring and evaluation reports, including a Mid-Term Review and a Terminal Evaluation Report, are necessary to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the NDS 1. The Mid-Term Review will include two major components, namely:

1. Performance of the NDS 1 Planned Outcomes Review, which will focus on assessing the extent to which the planned outcomes of the Strategy have been realised across the 14 Thematic Working Groups during the past two years of implementation; and
2. Process Review which will focus on assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Coordinating Structures of NDS 1.

A participatory and consultative approach will be adopted in carrying out the Review in the 14 Thematic Working Groups of the NDS1 under four main stages, namely:

1. Data gathering using Integrated Results-Based Management (IRBM) compliant templates;
2. Data analysis using appropriate tools to rate NDS 1 Outcomes Performance in order to establish whether the Outcomes are
 - On Track at Mid Term;
 - Partially On Track at Mid Term; or
 - Off Track at Mid Term .
3. An analysis involving assessment of financing and coordination structures and capacities as drivers of sustainability at Mid Term; and
4. Strategic positioning and recommendations.

The nation is advised that the approval of the Concept Note by Cabinet marks the launch of the process of undertaking the NDS 1 Mid-Term Review. The public is urged to participate in the process.

3.0 PROPOSED HOSTING OF THE 15TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP15) ON WETLANDS

Cabinet considered and approved the Hosting of the 15th Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 15) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 2025 as presented by the Minister of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Honourable Mangaliso Nqobizitha Ndlovu.

The nation is being informed that the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry intends to host the 15th Conference of Parties in 2025 in the prime tourist destination of Victoria Falls. The hosting of COP 15 will spur the Second Republic's international community re-engagement and engagement agenda and prove that the country is a peaceful, stable, growing and attractive international travel destination. The resort City of Victoria Falls is evidence that the country is committed to sustainable utilization and conservation of natural resources. Furthermore, the event will provide local tourism players with a platform to market the country as a tourist destination and attract foreign investment. The country will also take advantage of COP 15 to extend its influence and leadership on the global stage in environmental governance, stewardship and diplomacy.

4.0 2023 INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

Cabinet received an update on the 2023 Independence Day Celebrations which was presented by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works Honourable July Moyo.

The venue of the 2023 Children's Party and Independence Day Celebrations on 17 and 18 April will be Mt. Darwin Centre, in Mashonaland Central Province. The decentralisation of this august national event is in line with the Second Republic's devolution agenda, and the ethos of ***"Leaving No One and No Place Behind"***. Mt. Darwin is important and entrenched in the annals of the country's liberation history since it was the entry point for the both the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) as they

launched an offensive into the Front when the liberation struggle entered its decisive phase.

5.0 THE ZIMBABWE INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR (ZITF) 2023

Cabinet received an update on the 2023 International Trade Fair which was presented by the Minister of Industry and Commerce Honourable Dr. Sekai Nzenza. The 63rd Edition of the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) Exhibition will be held in Bulawayo from 25 to 29 April, 2023, under the theme "***Transformative Innovation, Global Competitiveness***".

The nation is being advised that a total of 363 exhibitors have so far booked exhibition space, and there will be 45 new exhibitors. Nine foreign nations have booked exhibition stands, and these include Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Belarus, Britain, United States of America, United Arab Emirates, and Japan.

The main highlights of the Fair will include the following:

- there will be exclusive business days from 25 to 27 April;
- the ZITF International Business Conference will be on 27 April;
- the ZITF Diplomats Forum and Connect Africa Symposium will be on 27 April;
- the Official Opening Ceremony and the ZNCC Business Luncheon will be on 28 April; and the
- public/open days will be on 28 and 29 April.

The nation is therefore being assured that preparations for the 2023 ZITF are on course.

6.0 HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT'S STATE VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Cabinet received and adopted the Report on His Excellency the President's State Visit to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea from 7 to 9 February 2023, as presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Hon. Dr. Fredrick Shava.

Besides the Cabinet Ministers and Senior Government Officials, His Excellency the President's delegation also included the Chief Executives of the Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency; ZimTrade; and the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce.

Cabinet highlights that during the State Visit, the two delegations reviewed the status of bilateral relations between the two countries and sought to speed-up the opening of a Diplomatic Mission in Malabo by Zimbabwe. They agreed on the need to convene the Inaugural Session of the Zimbabwe-Equatorial Guinea Joint Commission, and to broaden the scope of economic, investment and trade relations.

The highly successful State Visit saw the signing of the following eight Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding:

- Agreement on the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investment (BIPPA);

- Agreement on Reciprocal Exemption of Visas for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports;
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation and Technical Assistance in the field of Civil Aircraft Accidents and Serious Incidents Investigation;
- MOU in the Agriculture Sector;
- MOU on Transport and Transport Infrastructure;
- MOU for Mining Cooperation;
- MOU in the Field of Fishing; and
- MOU in the Field of Culture and Tourism.

In view of the need to implement the concluded Memoranda of Understanding and Agreements as well as broadening the scope of cooperation between the two countries, the establishment of a Diplomatic Mission is urgent and paramount.

7.0 32ND AFRICAN PEER REVIEW FORUM OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

Cabinet received and adopted the Report on the 32nd African Peer Review Forum of Heads of State and Government which was held on 9 February, 2023, as presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Hon. Dr. Fredrick Shava.

The virtual African Peer Review (APR) Forum was chaired by the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Chairperson of the African Peer Review of Heads of State and Government, His Excellency Julius Bio Maada. Zimbabwe was represented by the Minister of Defence and War Veterans

Affairs, Honourable O.C.Z. Muchinguri-Kashiri as the then Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The APR Forum considered the following Reports:

- the Niger Country Review Report;
- the Targeted Review Report of the Republic of Djibouti;
- the Inaugural National Governance Report of Kenya; and
- the African Governance Report 2023.

The 2023 Edition of the African Governance Report on Unconstitutional Changes of Government, which was validated by Heads of State and Government, centred on countries that experienced coups, namely: Chad; Republic of Sudan; Union of Comoros; Sierra Leone; Mali; and Republic of Guinea.

The Forum resolved to extend the tenure of Office of the African Peer Review Mission Chief Executive Officer to 2024. It also endorsed the appointment of the President and Vice President of the African Peer Review Mission Panel of Eminent Persons, Dr. Abdoulie Janneh and Ambassador Inonge Mbikusita, respectively.

8.0 36TH SUMMIT OF THE AFRICAN UNION ASSEMBLY

Cabinet received and noted a report on His Excellency the President, Cde E.D. Mnangagwa's participation at the 36th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly held on 18 and 19 February, 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Report was presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Honourable Dr. Fredrick Shava.

His Excellency the President was accompanied by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Industry and Commerce; and Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry to the Summit. The Summit was held under the theme "***Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) Implementation***". The President of the Union of the Comoros took over the Chairmanship of the Union from His Excellency Macky Sall of Senegal. His Bureau will consist of the 1st Vice Chair to be nominated by the Northern Region; 2nd Vice Chair, Burundi (Central Region); 3rd Vice Chair, Botswana (Southern Region); and a Rapporteur, Senegal (Western Region).

The Summit approved the 2023 AU budget amounting to US\$655 million. Zimbabwe is a fully paid-up member. Under the 2022 theme on **Nutrition**, which was extended to 2025, Zimbabwe will lobby for the resuscitation of funding for the African Centre for Fertiliser Development (ACFD) based in Harare. The Peace and Security Council, of which His Excellency the President Cde E.D. Mnangagwa is a member, met and discussed the situation in Eastern DRC and recommended the deployment of the East Africa Force into the troubled region. The Assembly adopted the recommendation and the funding of the Force's operations from the AU Peace Fund. The Assembly also adopted a resolution condemning the unilateral coercive measures imposed on AU Member States including Zimbabwe, Eritrea and South Sudan.

The nation is further being informed that His Excellency the President met with the Director-General of the International Organisation for Migration, Mr. Antonio Vitorino on the sidelines of the Summit. During the meeting,

His Excellency the President welcomed the IOM's pledged support for the impending return of Zimbabweans living in South Africa whose permits will expire in June this year. Further, he stressed the need for the IOM to assist Zimbabwe with Skills Mapping and Profiling of Zimbabweans living in the Diaspora for identification of sectors they can ably contribute to under the mantra "**Nyika Inovakwa Nevene Vayo**".

On his part, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade met with the Representative of the Chinese Government on African Affairs, Mr. Liu Yuxi, thereby further cementing the excellent relations between Zimbabwe and China. China committed to continue supporting Zimbabwe's developmental path. Mr. Yuxi undertook to convey Zimbabwe's request for consideration of new projects under the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Dakar Action Plan to the Chinese Authorities.

I THANK YOU