

ZIMBABWE CABINET
FOURTEENTH POST-CABINET PRESS BRIEFING
14TH MAY 2024

**1.0 UPDATE ON THE 2023/2024 SUMMER CROP MARKETING,
FOOD SECURITY OUTLOOK TO MARCH 2025 AND WINTER
CEREALS PRODUCTION PLAN FOR 2024**

Cabinet received an Update on the 2023/2024 Summer Crop Marketing, Food Security Outlook to March 2025 and Winter Cereals Production Plan for 2024, as presented by Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Honourable Dr. A.J. Masuka.

The Second Round of Crops, Livestock and Fisheries Assessment of 18 April 2024; and the Rapid Village-based Food Assessment concluded on 15 April 2024 established that 6 million people in rural areas will require assistance between May 2024 and March 2025. The Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZimLAC) Report indicated that 1.7 million people who reside in urban areas will require assistance. A total of 7.7 million people, being 51% of the population will require food assistance. This excludes a further 4.5 million who would require school meals.

The grain stock at the Grain Marketing Board as at 9 May 2024 stood at 423 779 metric tonnes. The private sector is expected to import all the stockfeed requirements of 400 000 metric tonnes, and urban maize requirements of up to 450 000 metric tonnes to March 2025. The private

sector has capacity to import 1 000 000 metric tonnes to mitigate the effect of the drought.

Regarding winter cereals production, a total of 712 500 metric tonnes of wheat, barley, maize, sorghum, and potatoes are planned to be produced this winter from the available irrigation area of 142 000 hectares. All the wheat production enablers including power, water, seed and fertilizers are being tracked on a weekly basis.

Cabinet advises that the 2024 cotton marketing season will be from 1 to 30 June 2024. Farmers will receive 75% of their payments in US\$ and 25% in ZiG. All outstanding payments by the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe amounting to US\$2.65 million and 2.8 million in ZiG will be cleared by 31 May 2024. The grade-based pricing system will be announced once on-going consultations are concluded.

Regarding tobacco, Cabinet advises that as at 8 May 2024, 116.4 million kilogrammes of tobacco were sold at an average price of US\$3.57/kg, with decentralised floors accounting for 35% of the total tobacco sold under contract. The Africa Regional and Annual Tobacco Conference will be held in Harare from 15 to 16 May 2024. The topics for discussion include the following; production challenges and opportunities; sustainability of the tobacco sector; contracting models; and future prospects of the tobacco sector in Africa.

2.0 REPORTS ON THE ZIMBABWE LIVELIHOODS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (ZimLAC) 2024 URBAN LIVELIHOODS AND NUTRITION ASSESSMENT; AND THE SECOND ROUND CROPS, LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES ASSESSMENT

Cabinet received Reports on the Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZimLAC) 2024 Urban Livelihoods and Nutrition Assessment; and the Second Round Crops, Livestock and Fisheries Assessment as presented by the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Food Security and Nutrition, and Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Honourable Dr. A.J. Masuka, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Cabinet Committee on Food Security and Nutrition.

The 2024 ZimLAC Urban Livelihoods and Nutrition Assessments was conducted: to estimate the urban population that is likely to be food insecure in 2024, their geographic distribution and the severity of their food insecurity; to assess the status of nutrition among the urban population in order to facilitate evidence-based decision-making and programming for better nutrition outcomes; and to determine access to basic services namely, education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene; sources of income, expenditure patterns, food consumption patterns and consumption coping strategies.

The Assessment established that 65% of urban households are food secure, while 35% are food insecure. The proportion of food insecure households translates to 1 732 770 people.

The main youth development challenges reported by surveyed households are unemployment; drug and substance abuse; and early marriages. The surveyed youths indicated that their priorities are job creation; income-generating activities; vocational training or skills development; and start-up capital or loans.

Regarding the Urban Nutrition Assessment, the findings were as follows: that the household Dietary Diversity Score is high across the provinces, with 79% of households at the national level consuming 5 or more food groups; that 71% of urban households consume acceptable diets which include meat, fish, eggs complemented by other foods such as pulses, fruits and milk.

On the Second Round Crops, Livestock and Fisheries Assessment Report, the findings confirmed that both agricultural production and productivity for the 2023/2024 agricultural season were severely and negatively impacted by the El Nino induced drought. The whole of the Southern African region experienced an El Nino season, although Zimbabwe seemed to be the epicenter for the phenomenon.

A total of 1 777 540 hectares was planted to maize in the 2023/2024 season, which represents a 7% reduction on the target area of 1 782 000 hectares. The area planted to maize was 12% lower than the previous year, and this was a reflection of agro-ecological tailoring, which entails a shift to traditional grains in drier regions. There was a 16% increase in the hectareage planted under traditional crops from 533 625 hectares to 621 048 hectares. Cumulatively, the area under cereals (maize and traditional grains) was 2 496 201 hectares, and was initially

expected to yield 2 579 237 metric tonnes. However, a 77% reduction in production to 744 271 metric tonnes is estimated for the 2023/2024 summer season, indicating a major shortfall for both food and stock feed. In anticipation of the severity of the impact of the El Nino phenomenon and the consequent reduction in the volume of cereals produced to feed the nation, His Excellency the President, Cde. Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa declared a State of Disaster on 2 April 2024. Government is working hard to ensure that no one will die of hunger. Going forward, Zimbabwe's food security thrust will center on the reduction of reliance on rain-fed food production by strengthening initiatives such as climate-proofed agriculture, with a focus on conservation agriculture and expanding the area under irrigation.

Regarding livestock, the impact of the El Nino-induced weather conditions on water supply and grazing availability for livestock resulted in the loss of 9 941 cattle at the beginning of the 2023/2024 season. The most affected districts are Tsholotsho and Binga of Matabeleland North province and Mangwe and Bulilima districts of Matabeleland South province. Forty-seven percent of the wards will face a critical grazing shortage from July 2024 onwards, while 12% are assured of adequate grazing to the next season

Government assures citizens that Zimbabwe will emerge from this drought stronger, more united, more resilient, better organised, better coordinated, and better capable of withstanding similar shocks in future. A comprehensive report on drought strategies and measures is now available and will shape interventions going forward.

3.0 ZIMBABWE CRICKET STADIUM CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IN THE MASUWE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE FOR TOURISM IN VICTORIA FALLS

Cabinet considered and noted the update on the Zimbabwe Cricket Stadium Construction Project in the Masuwe Special Economic Zone for Tourism in Victoria Falls as jointly presented by the Acting Minister of Sport, Arts and Recreation, Honourable Dr. Jenfan Muswere, and the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Honourable Babra Rwodzi.

Zimbabwe Cricket was allocated 10 hectares of land for the construction of an international cricket stadium and ancillary facilities in the Masuwe Special Economic Zone for Tourism in Victoria Falls. The stadium will be used in the hosting of the 2026 and 2027 Cricket World Cup jointly with South Africa and Namibia. His Excellency the President, Cde. Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa will lay the foundation stone to mark the commencement of the international cricket stadium.

The project will contribute towards the US\$5 billion Tourism and Hospitality Industry by 2025, as well as the development and expansion of sports infrastructure in the country. Tourism is a key pillar of the Zimbabwean economy and ranks at number three after Mining and Agriculture, and accounting for 12% of the country's Gross Domestic Product during the period January to September 2023. Thus, the international cricket stadium and associated facilities will significantly contribute to the growth of the national Gross Domestic Product. The construction of the cricket facilities and associated infrastructure will also

create training and employment opportunities for communities in Victoria Falls.

Under the Integrated Tourism Resort initiative, sustainable tourism will be promoted in line with the United Nations Tourism ethos. The diverse tourism business facilities in the resort town are expected to blend with the natural environment.

4.0 REPORTS ON THE FIRST 100-DAY CYCLE OF 2023

Cabinet received reports on progress made in the implementation of priority projects for the 1st 100-Day Cycle of 2023, as presented by the Transport and Infrastructural Development; and Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs.

4.1 The Minister Transport and Infrastructural Development, Honourable Felix Mhona reported on the projects that were being implemented by his Ministry. He highlighted the progress as follows:

- i. the rehabilitation of the Old International Terminal Building at the at the Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport in Harare Metropolitan Province is in progress and the VVIP lounge has reached 84.5% of completion;
- ii. 16km of the targeted 30 kilometres of road were constructed and opened to traffic on the Harare-Masvingo-Beitbridge highway, with earthworks on the remaining stretch now above 55% completion;

- iii. The construction of the Mbudzi Interchange has reached 63% completion level;
- iv. the construction of an initial 20 kilometres of the Harare-Kanyemba Road to base-2 level is in progress, with an 8-kilometre stretch being above 40% complete; and
- v. the rehabilitation of the Shurugwi-Mhandamabwe road has commenced, with a 23-kilometre detour having been opened to traffic and earthworks on the construction of a 20-kilometre stretch having started.

4.2 The Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Honourable Ziyambi Ziyambi, reported on projects being implemented by his Ministry and some of these are as follows:

- i. the harvesting of 80 hectares of maize grown under a centre pivot irrigation facility at Hurungwe Prison Farm in Mashonaland West Province is underway, while that of 30 hectares of maize at Mutimurefu Prison in Masvingo Province will commence in a week's time;
- ii. US\$1 700,15 metric tonnes of maize and 2 metric tonnes of sunflower were realised from the 40-hectare drip and sprinkler irrigation horticulture farm and garden at Anju Prison Farm in Matabeleland North Province.
- iii. a total of 109 inmates gained valuable operation of machinery skills under the MacDonald Bricks Correctional Employment Programme in Matabeleland North Province. The inmates receive cash, groceries and other supplies that benefit their families;

- iv. the Gogo Olive Correctional Programme is being undertaken in Manicaland Province with a total of 8 inmates being trained in the knitting of export quality animal sets. A total of 60 inmates have so far been trained under this programme;
- v. 10 inmates acquired skills in the interpretation of plans, basic engineering works and bricklaying under the Building Brigade Correctional Programme during the construction of a classroom at Stanley Primary School in Midlands Province; and
- vi. the Gwanda New Court Complex and the Chiredzi and Mutawatawa New Magistrates Courts are at various levels of completion.

5.0 REPORT ON THE 2ND AFRICA FERTILISER AND SOIL HEALTH SUMMIT: NAIROBI, KENYA: 7 TO 9 MAY, 2024

Cabinet received and adopted the Report on the 2nd Africa Fertiliser and Soil Health Summit held on 9 May, 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya, as presented by the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Honourable Professor dr. Amon Murwira. His Excellency the President, Cde. Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa attended the Summit which was chaired by his Kenyan counterpart, Dr. William Samoei Ruto, on behalf of the African Union Chairperson and President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ould Ghazouani.

The Special Summit adopted the Nairobi Declaration on Fertiliser and Soil Health and endorsed the Ten-Year Africa Fertiliser and Soil Action Plan, and the Soil Initiative for Africa Framework documents. The documents highlight Africa's efforts to eradicate food insecurity and poor

soil health. The Heads of State and Government undertook to triple domestic production and the distribution of organic and inorganic fertilisers by 2034, and to strengthen research and development on the utilisation of inorganic and organic fertilisers through the resuscitation of the Africa Centre for Fertiliser Development in Harare. The Centre for Fertiliser Development is earmarked to promote research in fertilisers and the improvement of soil health in line with the African Union thrust.

In the Nairobi Declaration, the Heads of State and Government also affirmed their commitment to the full operationalisation of the Africa Fertiliser Financing Mechanism, and the development and promotion of systemic national capacity building for locally relevant fertiliser and soil health management practices and technologies. The private sector was also urged to increase investments into Africa's fertiliser industry and promote sustainable soil management practices.

His Excellency the President, Cde Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa highlighted the need to strengthen agriculture extension services, communication and education programmes in order to enhance fertiliser consumption. He commended the African Development Bank for setting up a Fertiliser Fund to boost the local production of fertilisers. The President called for private public partnerships in the upgrading and introduction of new technologies to scale up fertiliser production. He also implored those Member States that had not yet signed and ratified the Convention on the establishment of the Africa Centre for Fertiliser Development to do so.

On the sidelines of the Summit, the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Fisheries and Rural Development held a number of meetings with the following:

In addition, the Minister also addressed side events which were organized by AUDA-NEPAD, and NEPAD and NORAD.

6.0 DISEASES AFFECTING CHILDREN IN HURUNGWE DISTRICT: MASHONALAND WEST PROVINCE

Cabinet wishes to advise the nation that following reports on social media that children were dying in Wards 22 and 4 of Hurungwe District in Mashonaland West, multi-disciplinary District, Provincial and National Response Teams visited the affected communities to conduct investigations into the rumours.

Government will institute a mass vaccination campaign in Hurungwe District targeting all children in the affected areas. It is mandatory for all children to be vaccinated, attend school and receive medical attention. Government will take stern action against those that deliberately defy this Policy.

I THANK YOU