

BRIEF ON THE CHOLERA SITUATION IN LUSAKA

As you may be aware, Zambia is experiencing a Cholera outbreak declared on 6th October, 2017. The outbreak which is not peculiar to Zambia, has affected a number of countries in the Southern region. However, travelling to Zambia is safe as the outbreak is under control and localised to only a few areas in Lusaka.

The outbreak has affected mainly Lusaka District and more specifically five (5) densely populated peri-urban areas. The rest of the country is not experiencing Cholera outbreaks; the country, including Lusaka, remains a safe place.

The Government of the republic of Zambia has mounted a robust multi-sectoral response team and released the required resources from its Treasury to mitigate and control the Cholera outbreak in Lusaka. Through this approach, key interventions have been scaled up, among these being:

(i) **Escalation of the incident Command**

The Incident Command has been escalated to national level with the Minister of Health leading the command. The Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNHPI) remains with the responsibility of coordinating the technical aspects of the response. The Incident Command is meeting daily to get an update on the situation and map out daily to long term strategies.

(ii) **Establishment of Cholera Treatment Facilities**

Cholera Treatment units are active in all sub-districts, Chipata, Kanyama, Matero, Chawama, Chilenje and Bauleni to specifically try and stabilise the cases before transferring them to the Central Cholera Hospital.

(iii) **Increased Water Supply**

The Government has put up resources for installation of water tanks, extension of water kiosks and taps on existing networks. The communities most affected have access to free safe and clean water. In addition, free chlorine is distributed to these communities.

(iv) **Contact Tracing**

Contacts to all patients seen are being followed-up in their homes and given health education. Health promotion messages are shared in the affected communities to reduce the risk of transmission of the disease and stop further spread. In addition, disinfection of the homes and toilets, checking water sources and waste management are being conducted.

(v) **Resource Mobilisation**

A number of international and national organisations, cooperating partners and individuals have come forth to support the Government's efforts to mitigate the

problem by providing; medical and non-medical supplies, medical equipment and tools, equipment for waste management, transport and technical support.

(vi) **Escalated Waste Management**

With the support of the Defence Forces and Security wings, the cleaning up of the Central Business District of Lusaka including markets, roads, and drainage systems has been escalated. The teams are also supporting the clean-up of public facilities in the areas affected. Youths and traders in the affected areas have been engaged to support the clean-up.

(vii) **Health Promotion and Communication**

Health promotion and community engagement has been escalated. Various communication channels including print, radio, television, jingles, drama, door-to-door campaigns are being used to communicate health messages and information.

(viii) **Oral Cholera Vaccine Campaign**

In addition to all the other interventions to protect the public, a Cholera vaccine campaign has been launched targeting firstly those in the affected areas, then the vulnerable in the community including children, the elderly, food handlers and the front liners in the response.

Considering all these interventions, we anticipate a reduction in cases within the next few weeks.