Cholera Situation Update

Members of the press, distinguished ladies and gentlemen I am pleased to announce to you today that the 2017/2018 cholera outbreak is over after recording zero (0) confirmed cases for 14 continuous days. The outbreak which has lasted for approximately 8 months had spread beyond Lusaka district affecting by today 14th June 2018, 5935 cases and 114 deaths nationwide. Lusaka district alone recorded 5444 cases and 98 deaths.

I must emphasise that this outbreak could have been worse considering how wide spread it was in Lusaka District, the central and main distribution point on the country. The outbreak as quickly contained owing to unprecedented political will and leadership led by the President of the Republic of Zambia His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu who appointed a Committee of Cabinet Ministers to oversee and provide guidance to the response, chaired by the Minister of Health.

It goes without saying, that the multisectoral approach in responding to the outbreak was a major contributor to the containment and control of the outbreak. Allow me to commend and thank the various players in the response:

1. His excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu for his impeccable leadership and resource mobilisation;
2. Her Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia for coordinating and bringing to board the high level representatives from the different stakeholders;
3. My fellow Cabinet Ministers representing Local Government; Water, Sanitation and Environmental Protection; Office of the Vice President; Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher education and Lusaka Province;
4. Members of Parliament representing the affected areas in Lusaka, the Defense Forces and civic leaders for total engagement;
5. Multisectoral and bilateral partners for the resources and technical support. The generous support from the cooperating partners, corporate citizens & communities, cannot be overemphasized as a contributing factor to the mitigation of the outbreak;
6. Technical team led by the Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI)

I am sure that you are all as excited as I am that we have resolved the 2017/2018 cholera outbreak. However it is important that we take note that a re-occurrence of a cholera outbreak may occur considering the risk factors recognised in the just ended outbreak, these being:

1. Inadequate access to clean and safe water leading to households digging up shallow wells as an alternative source of water.
2. Poor sanitation in most households in cholera-affected areas
3. Contaminated foods from streets, some markets and other trading places that have inadequate sanitation facilities and no or erratic water supply
4. Poor personal hygiene practices
5. Inadequate waste management with indiscriminate disposal of waste

Considering the risks above, we must emphasise to all stakeholders that there is need for sustaining scaling up of key interventions particularly those of medium and long term.

Recently at the 71st World Health Assembly, the Government of the Republic of Zambia sponsored a resolution to ending cholera globally by 2030. This is in line with the global cholera control strategy launched by the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC) - ‘Ending Cholera: A Roadmap to 2030’. This strategy implores affected countries, technical partners, and donors to reduce cholera deaths by 90 percent and eliminate cholera transmission in as many as 20 countries by 2030.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia went further and took a bold step by announcing to the world its resolution to end cholera in Zambia by 2025. Zambia sponsoring this important resolution puts us in the limelight. The world is looking at us as the champions to lead this important agenda. This is major responsibility that requires commitment by all stakeholders in the different sectors including Water, Sanitation, Waste Management and Community.

Members of the Press, public, ladies and gentlemen I wish to remind you all that the Statutory Instruments
1. No. 79 of 2017, The Public Health Act (Laws, Volume 17, Cap. 295), The Public Health (Infected Areas) (Cholera) Regulations, 2017 and

2. No. 10 of 2018, Local Government (Street Vending and Nuisances) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 are still in force.
I wish to reiterate that we should all be responsible and abide to the agreed standards and guidelines in line with the Public Health Act regarding how we manage markets, trading places, schools and the ban on street vending.

Allow me to make a clarion call to action by all stakeholders centered on community participation and engagement; let us lead the way for the world to end cholera by 2030. May we all soldier on and ensure our call to action in eliminating cholera in Zambia by 2025 comes to fruition.

I thank you all

Signed
Honourable Dr Chitalu Chilufya
Minister of Health
LIST OF REFERENCES


2. Statement by the republic of Zambia to propose a resolution on Cholera prevention at the 71st World Health Assembly. URL: http://apps.who.int/gb/statements/eb142/PDF/Republic-of-Zambia-5.7.pdf
