

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

Wednesday, 24th January, 2018
The National Assembly met at a Quarter-past Two o'clock p. m.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON THE

OUTBREAK OF CHOLERA IN CHEGUTU

**BY THE HON. MINISTER OF HEALTH AND CHILD CARE, DR
PAGWESE DAVID PARIRENYATWA.**

Mr. Speaker Sir, I thank you for granting me this opportunity to present a statement on the outbreak of cholera in Chegutu Mashonaland West Province and to indicate the measures that the Government has taken to contain the disease.

Honourable Speaker.....

- 1.1 A cholera Outbreak has been reported in Chegutu Municipality in Mashonaland West Province on the 18th of January 2018. To date there **are 65 cases** (3 confirmed and 3 probable) and **Four (4) deaths have** been recorded. We think the index case was an 80 year old female who succumbed to the disease at home on the 8th January 2017.
- 1.2 Subsequently people who attended this initial funeral and other subsequent funerals linked to the initial case started presenting for treatment at the hospital.

- 1.3 A cholera test done on the 19th of January 2018 on one of the deceased confirmed Cholera Vibrio Ogawa. Two other samples also tested positive for the same strain of cholera. All these tests were confirmed at National Microbiology Reference Laboratory (NMRL).
- 1.4 May I remind the house that Chegutu District was one of the Districts worst affected by the 2008/2009 cholera outbreak.

Chronology of events

- 2.1 On the 8th of January 2018, an 80 year old female sought treatment from a private clinic for diabetes, hypertension and watery diahorea and was sent home where she later died the same day.
- 2.2 On the 9th a home funeral in the community was done were 3 men were tasked with the burial ritual
- 2.3 On the 13th a 2nd death of 47 year old male who participated in the burial ritual occurred in the hospital. This patient presented 4 days after falling ill.
- 2.4 A 3rd death of 72 year old male who also participated in the ritual occurred on the 16th January and ,
- 2.5 The 4th death was of a 71 year old male, which occurred on the 18th and whose funeral was partially supervised on the 19th.
- 2.6 It is very critical to note that all these suspected cases are all linked to funerals that occurred in the locality.
- 3.1 Chegutu Municipality has a critical shortage of water due to aging water reticulation infrastructure like most towns in Zimbabwe and this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- 3.2 When clean water is pumped, it tends to mix with sewer due to constant breakdown of water and sewer reticulation infrastructure.

This is not happening in Chegutu alone but in many other cities and towns including Harare.

- 3.3 The old infrastructure can no longer cope with the huge influx of people now depending on this old aging infrastructure which was constructed long time back
- 3.4 There is rampant vending in undesignated places, including selling of meat and fruits on pavements. People buy and eat all these on the streets in unhygienic condition putting themselves at risk of cholera and other diarrhoeal or enteric diseases such as typhoid.
- 3.5 People should desist from eating foods cooked or prepared in unhygienic conditions. We encourage people to practice good hygiene practices, wash hands before eating food, after visiting the toilet and after changing nappies. Drink only safe water which should have been boiled or treated with treatment chemicals.
- 3.6 Let's avoid big gatherings during outbreaks such as these ones, let's not shake hands at these gatherings particularly at funerals. In the event of death in the community due to cholera, funerals should be supervised by health workers.
- 4.1 A recent assessment conducted by my team as well as the city to Matapi Flats which I have also visited, to assess the drivers of Typhoid which are the same as those of cholera revealed that the conditions of living for that community are very deplorable
- 4.2 At Matapi flats and other flats in Mbare there is human waste, burst sewer pipes, uncollected refuse, litter, rampant vending in undesignated areas of all sorts of food is taking place
- 5.1 We also managed to quantify in monetary terms what is needed for the time being for repairing of the aging infrastructure at Matapi flats especially sewer pipes, toilets and washing areas only will need

between \$16,000 and \$25,000. This is something that can be done and will not cost no more than \$500,000 to complete.

- 5.2 The Ministry's National Rapid Response Team were last week conducting cholera preparedness assessments to Chirundu and Kariba border posts.
- 5.3 We were concerned and remain so that the huge number of travellers to and from Lusaka where a huge cholera outbreak has been reported could as well spread into the country.
- 5.4 It was paramount that we put in place screening mechanisms at these borders for travellers, quantification of needs in the event of cases occurring there, put temporal holding camps or treatment facilities there, preposition commodities and to sensitize other government departments on cholera.
- 5.5 Multisectorial Taskforce committees have been activated at these border posts and are functional. They meet daily to deliberate on control measures at border posts including Victoria Falls

Action taken so far to contain the outbreak in Chegutu:

1. All the provinces have been put on high ALERT for cholera in Zimbabwe and are holding taskforce meetings in preparation for any cases.
2. A treatment camp closer to where the patients are coming from has been set up at Chinengundu clinic in Chegutu. Those that are sick or

who have signs and symptoms of cholera illness are encouraged to come for screening and treatment.

3. Supplies are being mobilized and transported to the treatment camp and these include adequate IV Fluids, antibiotics, disinfectants and NFI.

4. Health education campaigns using door to door visits and contact tracing are being done. We are also sending short messages on mobile phones so that people get information on cholera.
 - 4.1 The preparation and consumption of foods at funerals and other gatherings should be supervised by health workers.
 - 4.2 Avoid shaking of hands during gatherings to avoid spread of cholera

5. Active surveillance including contact tracing of persons who attended the funerals of the cholera deaths are being followed up in Harare and other areas

6. Control of food vending in undesignated areas is being enforced including inspection of food premises

7. Water trucking is being done with the help of a mining company in the area so that people have clean safe water for drinking

8. The District Civil Protection Committee has been activated and meetings are being held twice daily and are being chaired by District Administrator to tackle the cholera outbreak

9. The Provincial Medical Director for Mashonaland West Province and his team are on the ground to render support to control this cholera outbreak.

10. The National Rapid Response Team (NRRT) is also on ground working with the province and the district.

10.1 We have activated the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Health (IACCH) which is chaired by my Ministry for resource mobilization. Our partners in health have been mobilized and are on the ground: these are WHO, UNICEF, MSF Belgium, GAA (*German Agro Action*), Oxfam

10.2 We have also activated the thematic committees on Cholera comprising of all government departments, Uniformed Forces, donors and partners and these are meeting daily here in Harare and in Chegutu to deal with this cholera outbreak.

10.3 These committees are

- Health and Surveillance
- Health Education and social Mobilization
- Coordination
- Logistics and Supplies
- Water Sanitation and Hygiene

10.4 I have personally visited the Chegutu twice to render support and get first-hand information on the outbreak. I have had meetings

with the DMO and his Team, visited the patients admitted in the treatment ward, and visited the locality where the cases are emanating.

10.5 I have conducted a press conference on the 22nd of January 2018 and informed the nation about cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe.

10.6 ALL OF US HAVE A RESPONSABILTY TO CONTAIN THIS CHOLERA OUTBREAK and I RECOMMEND THAT:

- *We raise awareness in our constituents, suburbs, villages, schools and where ever we come from so that people get information on cholera.*
- *Let's have an uninterrupted supply of water all the time.*
- *People should boil their water before drinking it.*
- *As usual avoid shaking hands at funerals*

I urge radios, television and print medias to talk about cholera