

Republic of South Africa COVID-19 experience and multi-sectoral priorities for future pandemic preparedness

Mr. Wayne Ramkrishna
Deputy Director: Zoonotic Diseases
National Department of Health

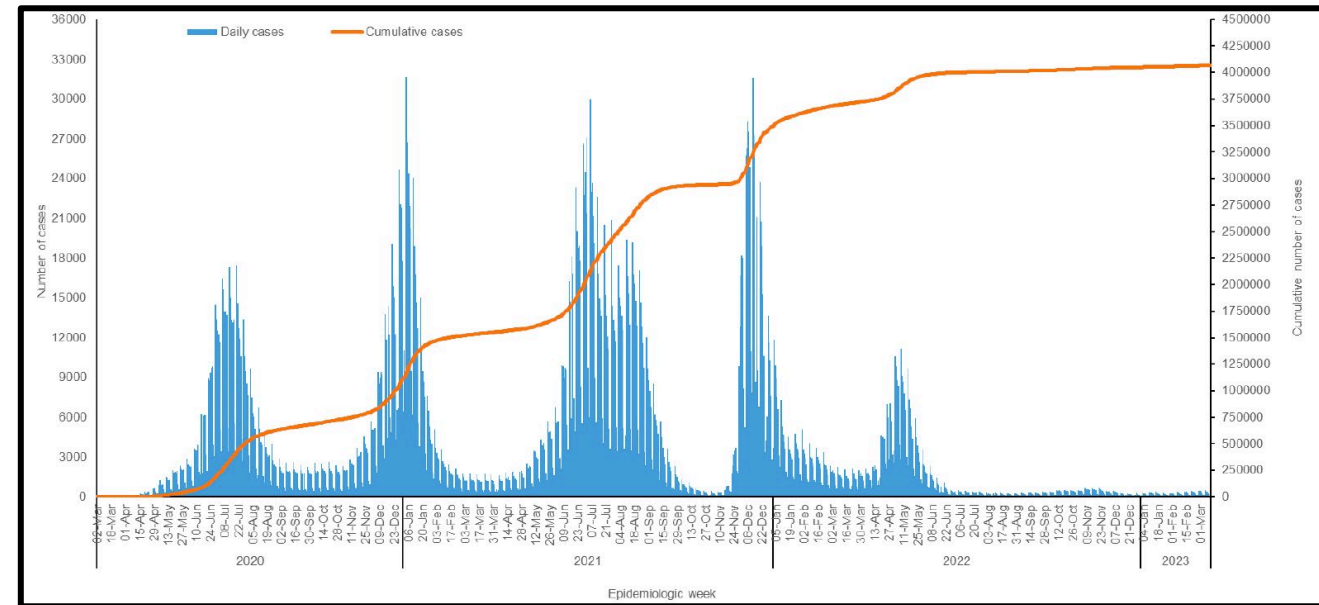
Member States Briefing 30 March 2023

Outline

- Country context and COVID-19 experience
- Key COVID-19 response best practices and challenges focusing on multi-sectoral actions
- Country priorities for multi-sectoral pandemic preparedness and resilience

South Africa COVID-19 trends

- **>4 million** confirmed cases cumulative
- **COVID-19 transmission is ongoing**, but all indicators **are stable**
- **Transitioning** the COVID-19 response into routine platforms and continued **vigilance** are paramount
- Planning to update **pandemic preparedness plan**



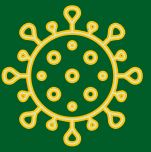
Highlights from COVID-19 multi-sectoral response best practices & challenges

Good practices	Challenges
<p>Coordination, governance, & leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swift resource mobilisation for rapid response (National Treasury, private sector, partners, donors etc) • Functional IMTs at national/ provincial level and Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) policy decisions • Whole-of-government response NCCC and NATJOINTS • COVID-19 grant: human resource surge for pandemic response • Risk based revision of Point of Entry (PoE) measures • Centralized personal protective equipment (PPE) reporting system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) meant unclear command and control • Linkages between NCCC, NATJOINTS and IMTs not always clear • Delays experienced in hiring surge workforce • Challenges in managing risks posed by cross-border truck drivers • Delays in PPE supply due to global shortages
<p>Community protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCCE TWG established in March 2020 and an RCCE plan developed • Launch of several media campaigns • Several campaigns by RCCE to scale up COVID -19 health education, promotion non-pharmaceutical interventions, vaccine uptake • District level mobilization through NGOs and area-based teams established, and social listening platforms set up to identify rumors, misinformation etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of RCCE sub-national committees delayed roll out • Sub-optimal engagement of special interest groups noted • Insufficient engagement for vaccine demand creation

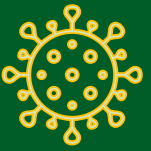
Country priorities for multi-sectoral pandemic preparedness and resilience

Examples of actions planned

Coordination, governance, and leadership

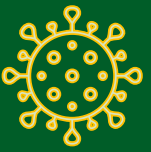


ACTIVITY	Responsibility	Timeline
Institute the operationalisation of PHEOC at National and Provincial levels including strong command and control structures <i>*PHEOC = public health emergency operations centre</i>	NDoH – (EMS Directorate/CDC) Provinces NICD	Short term
Review and revise inter/intra-governmental fora to communicate, plan, coordinate and govern across all spheres of government and all national government departments aligned to the One Health Strategy, integrated disease surveillance systems and PHEOC	NDOH - DG	Short term
Ensure sufficient resources available for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting up public health emergency operating structures & systems • for public health emergencies during unforeseen outbreaks/disasters that can be rapidly released from National Treasury & other funding sources 	NDOH – DG CFO	Short term
Establish a NAPHISA [National Public Health Institute of South Africa]	NDOH – DG	Short term



Recommendation	Person responsible	Time line
<p>A national policy framework and plan for pandemic response which integrates all sectors, institutions, structures (health and non-health) and clarifies roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>National Department of Health</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>A functional agile, Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) System including a health information system, with a unique identifier linking to other relevant systems (e.g. Home affairs for mortality data)</p>	<p>National and Provincial Department of Health National Institute for Communicable Diseases</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Invest in research and innovations for local production of vaccines, testing reagents, and consumables</p>	<p>National Laboratory Health Services NDoH</p>	<p>Short term</p>

Medicines, Consumables & PPE; HR; Supply Chain Management



Recommendation	Responsibility	Time line
Review the Human Resource for Health strategy, to include personnel categories for routine, essential and surge for emergencies	NDoH-HR	Immediate
Develop strategy for demand forecasting, quantification, quality assurance and special guidelines to expedite procurement during routine and emergencies	NDoH-Affordable medicine	Medium
Collaboration with Department of Labor & Employment and DPS to ensure that OHS be functional (policies, certification, infrastructure and behavior)	NDoH-HR	Medium

OHS – Occupational health and safety
 DPSA – Department of Public Service and Administration



- South Africa experienced one of the **most devastating COVID-19 outbreaks** on the African continent
- The **COVID-19 transmission has stabilized** since July 2022 and transition planning is currently underway
- South Africa is in the process of updating the **Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan** taking into consideration capacities built, lessons learnt, addressing the emerging challenges and gaps from the COVID-19 response



END.