



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY  
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND CHILD  
CARE OF ZIMBABWE,  
HONOURABLE DR OBADIAH MOYO,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE DE MINIMIS  
VIRTUAL SESSION OF THE  
SEVENTY-THIRD  
WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (WHA73)  
18 MAY 2020**

**President of the 73<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of The Bahamas, Her Excellency Mrs. Keva Bain;**

**Director General of the World Health Organisation, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus;**

**Distinguished guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Let me begin by congratulating you, Madam President, and the bureau on your election to preside over these proceedings.

Allow me, also, to express our sincere condolences to the families who lost loved ones and our solidarity with all countries.

Zimbabwe commends Dr Tedros, the entire WHO staff and the global health workforce for their hard work, especially nurses and midwives whom we are commemorating this year.

In response to the COVID-19 threat, His Excellency, President Mnangagwa, declared a state of national disaster on 17 March 2020 and announced the postponement of major national events and discouragement of travel to and from high risk countries.

Zimbabwe recorded its first COVID-19 case on 21 March 2020 and introduced a national lockdown on 30 March. This saw the banning of public gatherings and enactment of physical distancing measures. The lockdown which has since been partially relaxed, will remain in place for the foreseeable future. We have recorded 44 cases, 17 recoveries and four deaths. Going forward we plan to increase the number of tests per day but are hampered by lack of access to supplies.

To improve COVID-19 surveillance, we re-purposed polio GIS technology for real-time surveillance, contact tracing and follow-up, with a mobile app linked to a real-time country dashboard. One of our challenges was quickly

decentralizing operations to provinces. Significant progress has been made on that score.

Our response has been a combination of health promotion and prevention measures based on raising awareness and community mobilization. Use of face masks is mandatory. Since February 2020, we have instituted travel restrictions with a 14-day quarantine for returning residents. We continue to strengthen our public health rapid response teams to conduct case investigation and screening of contacts and high-risk groups.

In conclusion, let me express my Government's gratitude to the WHO, development partners and countries that have provided support to our response.

Thank you, Chair.