

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
OUTBREAK OF CHOLERA AND OTHER DIARRHOEAL OUTBREAKS IN THE
COUNTRY

The Minister of Health (Dr Chilufya): Mr Speaker, I thank you for granting me this opportunity to update the House and the nation at large on the threat of cholera and ebola in the country.

Sir, on 29th January, 2019, the Ministry of Health through its disease surveillance intelligence unit, the Zambia National Public Health Institute, investigated and confirmed a case of cholera from Kabana Area in Lusaka's Chipata sub-district. The index case was a thirty-eight-year-old male from Kabanana who presented at Chipata level one hospital with dehydration caused by severe diarrhoea and vomiting. Laboratory testing revealed cholera as the cause of the disease. Five days later, another case involving a thirty-eight-year-old female from Garden Chilulu was confirmed for cholera.

Mr Speaker, five more cases have since been confirmed with the last case confirmed on 12th February, 2019. A total of seven confirmed cases have been recorded from Kabanana, Garden Chilulu, Kamwala, Kabanana Overspill and Mutendere. All cases presented with severe dehydration due to acute diarrhoea and vomiting and all patients were treated in the cholera treatment centres within the sub-districts in which they reside. A number of cases that were investigated proved negative.

Sir, today marks nineteen days after the last case of cholera was recorded. I, therefore, declare the cholera outbreak over in Lusaka.

Mr Speaker, I wish to remind the House that this time last year we were at the peak of the cholera outbreak and we saw 5,346 persons affected with ninety-seven deaths. However, in the recent outbreak, we have only recorded seven cases and no deaths.

Sir, I wish to remind the House that cholera is a diarrhoeal disease caused by vibrio cholerae mainly spread through contaminated food and water. Symptoms include rapid onset of diarrhoea and or vomiting, abdominal pains, muscle cramps and body weakness. If untreated, the infection results in rapid and severe dehydration and death within twenty-four hours.

Sir, the Government of the Republic of Zambia under the leadership of His Excellency Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu has strengthened health security measures and through the National Public Health Institute has strengthened epidemic preparedness and response. Through this response, we activated the emergency operating centre in Lusaka District and escalate health promotion and education. Furthermore, we heightened disease surveillance and set up cholera treatment units across Lusaka. Environmental mitigation measures were escalated and clean up commenced while capacity building and the establishment of rapid response teams were activated.

Mr Speaker, engagement of key stakeholders did take place particularly the Zambia National Service (ZNS), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the community, the marketeers themselves, and they all responded very well. Sister Ministries such the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Water and Sanitation, and the Office of the Vice President participated in the robust Multi-Sectoral response that resulted in the arrest of the outbreak in no time.

Mr Speaker, may I also report to the House that there is an ongoing Ebola Virus Disease in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia sharing a very long border with the Congo is at risk. As of 4th March, 2019, a total of 900 Ebola Virus cases have been reported in the Congo, including 835 confirmed case, and sixty-five probable cases. Among these 565 deaths have occurred and represents the case fatality rate of six-three per cent.

Mr Speaker, Zambia as put up measures to ensure that the Public is protected from the Ebola virus disease and these include;