

**WELCOME REMARKS BY HONOURABLE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND CHILDCARE
DR D.T. MOMBESHORA TO A VIRTUAL EXTRA-ORDINARY EMERGENCY MEETING
ON MPOX;**

WEDNESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2024

Salutations

Honourable Ministers of Health, it is my great honour to welcome you to this virtual EXTRA-ORDINARY EMERGENCY MEETING ON MPOX on the 4th of September 2024. Let me thank you all for attending this meeting which comes barely a few days after the SADC Heads of State meeting which we, Zimbabwe, just hosted.

I would want to start by congratulating Dr Faustine Engelbert Ndugulile of Tanzania for being successfully nominated for the WHO Regional Directorship. A big thank you to my sister Dr Matshidiso Moeti for the 10years of excellent service in that post.

Honorable Ministers, we are meeting today on the backdrop of a challenging Mpox outbreak affecting several countries in our continent. The SADC region is the most affected with over 80% of the cases. Al in all, there are over 17000 cases and 563 deaths that have been reported, with a case fatality ratio of 3.1%.

Let me remind you honourable Ministers that our region has just come out of a protracted cholera outbreak which took us more than a year to control and before that we were struggling with Covid 19. There are lessons learnt from these previous outbreaks which we should use to mitigate against current and future outbreaks.

Honourable Ministers, early outbreak response as a region using combined efforts as a block is very critical. As a region we can mobilize the much needed resources, in particular both financial and human resources needed for the response to Mpox and other outbreaks. We can deploy our experts to respond in the much affected countries and as such reduce the spread of the outbreak to other countries.

Honourable Ministers, we have an opportunity here today to come up with robust resolutions to tackle this outbreak.

Our deliberations today will be critical in determining the way the Mpox outbreak will evolve and should show results on the ground.

Let me thank you again for coming to this meeting. I wish us a fruitful discussion.