



COMMUNIQUE BY THE NANGO HEALTH SECTOR

RESPONDING TO THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK

“Coordinated actions to prepare and respond to COVID-19 infection in Zimbabwe”

The Zimbabwe Health Sector Civil Society Organizations under the auspices of the National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (NANGO) and Zimbabwe AIDS Network (ZAN) engaged through various platforms, in view to come up with a common position on the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) that has been declared a global epidemic by the World Health Organizations on 30 January 2020 and is spreading rapidly and causing untold mortalities.

PREAMBLE

CONCERNED that any potential spread of COVID-19 has social, economic, and security threats for the country. Further, taking into consideration that the Constitution of Zimbabwe, Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Transition Stabilization Program, National Health Strategy and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are strategic agendas for the socio-economic transformation of the health sector in the country, will be severely disrupted by disease outbreaks such as the COVID-19 if there are no measures for timely coordination, collaboration, and communication of bold decisions.

COGNIZANT that any potential COVID-19 spread in Zimbabwe would be devastating in light of the multiple health challenges that we already face, which include: (1) incapacitation of health personnel; (2) acute shortage of essential drugs owing to foreign exchange incapacities (3) existing endemic diseases such as HIV, TB, and Malaria, (4) antiquated health equipment and infrastructure, with limited resilient to numerous disease outbreaks;

NOTING the role of public health institutions to respond to public health emergencies as declared by WHO and all relevant stakeholders;

ALSO NOTING and COGNIZANT of the strong evidence that health security depends on the establishment of resilient and adaptive national health systems, with a clearly defined public health coordination mechanism which are well funded;

ACKNOWLEDGING the efforts by the Ministry of Health and Child Care, other stakeholders including CSOs, Private sector and the statement by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe in response to COVID-19 outbreak.

THE CSOS HEALTH SECTOR

COMMITMENT to coordinate our efforts and collaborate with other stakeholders the Government included in the response to COVID-19.

WELCOME the statement made by Government to enhance the capacity to respond to any potential cases of COVID-19.

ENHANCE community-based monitoring and surveillance for COVID-19.

ENSURE effective communication and community engagement by sharing correct, apt and timely information concerning COVID-19.

CALL UPON the Government of Zimbabwe to consider the following actions as part of the national response:

- To restrict entry into the country of people coming from countries with confirmed cases;
- To facilitate the repatriation of citizens who may want to come back home, but ensure that they are properly assessed to identify potential cases of COVID-19;
- To ring fence national resources to support a robust national response and
- To enhance the mental wellbeing of people in quarantine zones and for health care providers.

CALL UPON CSOs to consider the following actions as part of the national response:

- To redesign programming methodologies including reviewing conferences, workshops and international travel;
- To enhance workplace safety issues through providing hand sanitizers and scale down on meetings; and
- To ensure the wellness of staff members through introducing flexi working hours.