



Ministry of Health and Child Care

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE: 20 MARCH 2020

The Ministry would like to inform the nation that the National Microbiology Laboratory has confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in Zimbabwe today. The patient is being managed in Victoria Falls and more details will follow.

As of the 19th March 2020, more than 200 000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 8 778 deaths have been reported from more than **160** countries globally. According to the WHO, it took over three months to reach the first 100 000 confirmed cases, and only 12 days to reach the next 100 000.

The number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Africa has continued to increase, with 769 confirmed cases and 19 deaths being reported from 34 countries on the continent. To date, seven SADC member states have reported confirmed cases of COVID-19.

The Ministry remains on **HIGH** alert to the COVID-19 pandemic.



The Ministry would like to advise the nation that on Thursday 19th March 2020, a 25-year-old Zimbabwean lady suspected of COVID-19 was admitted at Wilkins Infectious Disease Hospital. She had travelled to Rwanda on 8th March 2020 and returned on 15th March 2020. Rwanda is one of the African countries reporting local transmission of COVID-19. Upon admission, her temperature was normal. A sample was collected for COVID-19 testing and we will give an update of the test results.

The Ministry would also like to advise the nation that on Wednesday 18th March 2020, the alert Port Health Team at Beit Bridge border post identified another COVID-19 suspect case who was travelling from Northern Cape to Malawi aboard a bus. She was immediately admitted under isolation at Beit Bridge Hospital as she was coughing and had a fever. Samples were collected and ferried to the National Microbiology Reference Laboratory for COVID-19 testing. Again, we will give an update of the test results. All samples received at the NMRL this week for COVID-19 testing (including four from Beitbridge and one from Bulawayo), have tested **Negative**.

The Ministry is also following up on the contacts of a German traveller who was in Zimbabwe between the 4th to 13th March 2020 and was recently diagnosed of COVID-19 in Namibia.

The Ministry would like to remind everyone to avoid unnecessary travels to and from countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19. Travellers are also advised to practice good personal hygiene.

- Wash hands with soap and water frequently or use an alcohol-based hand-rub,
- Cover your nose and mouth with tissue paper or flexed elbow when coughing and sneezing
- Follow proper food hygiene practices
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, coughing or sneezing

If you suspect COVID-19 disease, or wish to obtain more information on this disease, you are advised to call the following Ministry of Health and Child Care **TOLLFREE HOTLINE** numbers for assistance: **+263714 734 593** or **+263774 112 531**.

SECRETARY FOR HEALTH & CHILD		
(02)	CARE	(02)
SECRETARY OFFICE		
20 MAR 2020		
P.O. BOX CY 1122, CAUSEWAY		
ZIMBABWE		