



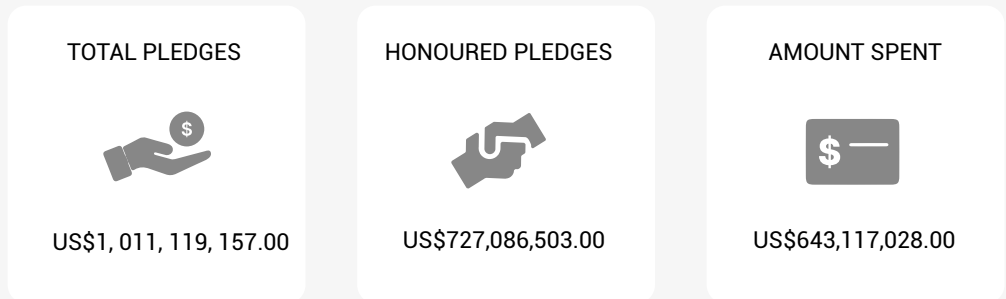
COVID-19 Resource Tracker

16.02.22

Overview

The COVID-19 Resource tracker is a ZIMCODD initiative to keep track of all resources pledged, received and expended by the Government of Zimbabwe in response to the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 to date. The aim of the COVID-19 Resources Tracker is to strengthen transparency and accountability by the government on COVID-19 resources while empowering citizens with information to hold the government to account for the allocation and utilisation of COVID-19 resources. The tracker is updated on a weekly basis.

Zimbabwe continues to mobilise resources internally and externally to respond to the devastating socioeconomic effects of COVID-19. Among other efforts, the government in the 2021 national budget has set aside ZWL7 billion to recruit more health personnel, procure PPEs, testing kits and sundries required in fighting COVID-19. The government also budgeted ZWL3.5billion to cushion 500 000 vulnerable households whose beneficiaries comprise of members in the informal sector, returning residents and children living on the streets. On 18 February 2021, the Government through the Ministry of Health and Child Care launched the vaccination program and as at 15 February 2022, a total of 4 318 495 Zimbabweans had been inoculated.



The government of Zimbabwe is commended for approving and extending the vaccination program to 16–17-year age group based on the available scientific data in line with the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe. This is commendable and will go a long way in curbing the surging COVID-19 cases that are occurring in schools and ultimately reaching the herd immunity target

Major Concerns & Recommendations

Vaccines

The fact that European countries continue to refuse to waive vaccine patents to allow jabs developed by its companies to be produced elsewhere at lower costs militate against African countries to attain herd immunity. This perpetuates Africa's dependence on the rest of the world for vaccines. The economic impact of low vaccination rates and the inability of African governments to provide the same level of financial help to struggling citizens as their European counterparts has pushed up to 40 million people into extreme poverty.

It is recommended that intellectual property rights related to vaccines be waived to enable wider production of vaccines. While a waiver would not compel companies to share their knowledge of vaccine production, it would protect manufacturers from potential patent infringement claims if they wanted to produce a vaccine on their own. Furthermore, it is important to take into account best practices as well as immediate and long-term effects of COVID-19 on social, financial and economic recovery. This information is critical in informing continued decision-making about the pandemic and the post-pandemic recovery of the economy.

The government of Zimbabwe relaxed the COVID 19 regulations on 28 January 2022 highlighting that all civil servants will now be required to work from their respective work stations. However, disheartening to learn is that the same government has decided not to pay unvaccinated civil servants as a measure of forcing them to get vaccinated. This is not far detached from the government's recent firing of teachers who were on strike demanding better wages. The move by the government shows little concern over the welfare of the civil servants who are already struggling to make ends meet.

The vaccination program as announced by the president remains voluntary thus, the government must employ persuasive instruments that will encourage and motivate citizens to get vaccinated.

Major Concerns & Recommendations

COVID-19 testing remains very high in Zimbabwe and unattainable for majority of the population with tests ranging from US\$30 to US\$70. At-home self-tests, which are free in developed countries, cost up to \$15 each. As such, the poor find it impossible to get a COVID 19 test and the necessary medication as this has been widely privatized across the country going beyond the reach of the majority who live in abject poverty. By doing so, the poor are denied their fundamental right to healthcare as well as protecting the lives of their families.

There is need for the government to ensure priority channeling of COVID-19 resources to health service delivery so that the public health institutions are well resourced with free COVID 19 test kits as well as medication. It is important that government makes COVID-19 testing accessible and affordable for the general population.

COVID-19 Funds

It is worrying that in the past two weeks, COVID-19 cases have more than doubled in Eastern European countries such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine.

Although Zimbabwe has been recording a decline in infections over the past few weeks, the government and citizens must not be complacent. The government must continue to upgrade health and sanitation services as well as upscale its vaccination program to strengthen the country's disaster preparedness drive.