

## **'COVID-19 – Together we can beat it' -ZIMBABWE**

### **EPISODE 18: Being prepared for more corona and other viruses**

Over the last decades the world's population has been hit by a number of serious viruses which were all transmitted from animals to humans and have caused serious illnesses. These include AIDS, Ebola, SARS and now COVID-19. Global trends have contributed to this spread, and it is very possible more viruses and pandemics will follow. The world needs to start preparing for this. Health protection habits developed for COVID-19 could help protect us against the spread of future viruses.

#### **RADIO:**

*Start with playing the 'COVID-19 – Together we can beat it' song.*

Welcome to the 18<sup>th</sup> of our 'COVID-19 – Together we can beat it' radio programmes. We've come a long way together, and are almost at the end of our series!

***These programmes are brought to you by MIET Africa in partnership with the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health, to strengthen the SADC Region's response to COVID-19, with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.***

As you all know, the COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges for our country, communities and every one of us. In this programme, we talk about these and find solutions together.

Keep listening and have your say! Phone us on XXX, SMS us on XXX or send a WhatsApp message on XXX to be part of the conversation.

**And remember our PRIZES for lucky winners! At the end of this programme, we'll ask a question about today's topic. The first FIVE listeners who SMS or WhatsApp the right answer will get a FutureLife-Now! drawstring backpack and water bottle. Keep listening, and send us your answers!**

Over the past 17 weeks, we've looked at how we can protect ourselves against COVID-19, and about the many other challenges linked to the pandemic. Last week we appealed to religious, community and cultural leaders to be positive COVID-19 role models and set a good example for others.

This week, we face the scary likelihood that there will be more pandemics like COVID-19 and look at how we can be better prepared to face those.

Scientists say that it is very likely that the world will be hit by more viruses like the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. And they also say that the world should have expected a disease like COVID-19 and that our response started too late.

There have been several epidemics like AIDS, Ebola and SARS in recent decades, which were all caused by viruses that had been transmitted from animals to humans.

There are a number of things about COVID-19 that were not unexpected:

- It was caused by contact between humans and animals, and bats were involved.
- It first spread in a densely populated urban area.
- International air travel then spread it rapidly across the world.
- No-one knew of this new virus, until it was already causing havoc.
- It has had widespread and devastating health, economic and social impacts.

It is likely that the same factors could lead to more outbreaks and epidemics. Even though we can't say where and when, a new one is always lurking.

And there are a number of reasons to believe that there may be even more of these in future:

- Increasing urbanisation across the world is leading to more large, densely populated cities, which are ideal breeding grounds for viruses and diseases.
- Because of climate change and global warming, the range of certain viruses and disease carriers like mosquitoes are expanding.
- And as long as humans keep moving into animals' habitats and eating wild animals, it is likely that more viruses could 'jump' from animals to humans.

Scientists say that coordinated global research is needed so that the world can start to anticipate the outbreak of new diseases and either stop or mitigate them in advance.

And for us as ordinary citizens, COVID-19 has given us some tools for protecting ourselves against future outbreaks of diseases.

If some of the good health habits that we have developed to protect ourselves against COVID-19 continue to be part of how we live, we will make it more difficult for diseases to spread so rapidly.

#### **Remember our five Golden Rules:**

1. **Wash your hands with soap and water. Do it often, do it well.**
2. **Keep your distance when you go out. Two arms' lengths from others (1,5 metres).**
3. **Cover your face and do not touch it. Wear a mask when you go out. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.**
4. **Clean all surfaces and objects which you touch often.**
5. **Feel sick? Stay at home.**

And our **sixth Golden Rule: Meet others outdoors, or in indoor places with open doors and windows, where there is enough fresh air that circulate.**

Another unsafe practice which we as citizens of the world should avoid: **Don't tame wild animals as 'pets' and stop 'wet markets' where exotic wild animals are eaten.**

So let's hear from you! Did you ever think that a pandemic like COVID-19 could hit the world? And with what you know now, do you agree it is likely there will be more? What is your advice for how to prepare ourselves?

We're lucky to have our expert panellists, to share their insights.

<Introduce panellists>

#### **QUESTIONS TO THE PANELLISTS:**

<Alternate questions between panellists, and give time between questions for calls from listeners. Their questions and contributions come first!>

#### **Health specialist**

- 1 **How aware were you of previous epidemics like EBOLA and SARS, which were also caused by coronaviruses?**
- 2 **Could you explain to our listeners what the difference between an epidemic and a pandemic is?**

*<An epidemic is limited to one or a few countries, in a region. Pandemics are global epidemics that spread across the world.>*

- 3 Did you ever expect that there could be a disease that would spread as rapidly across the entire world as COVID-19, and that would affect health systems, societies and economies that badly?
- 4 Do you agree that it is likely that there could be even more epidemics/pandemics?
- 5 What has HIV taught us? Southern Africa is the region most heavily impacted by HIV. Do you believe that this has made us better prepared in our response to COVID-19? If so, in what ways?
- 6 What advice do you have for how we can be more prepared for future pandemics?

#### Youth

- 1 Did you know about EBOLA and SARS? And did you ever worry that there could be another disease that would have an even bigger impact?
- 2 AIDS is also caused by a virus, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (or HIV) that was passed on to humans from animals, and more people die from AIDS around the world every year than from any other disease caused by a virus. Do you believe young people know how HIV is spread and how they can protect themselves against HIV?
- 3 Young people are the future of our country and the world. Do you have any thoughts about how young people can protect themselves against the impact of diseases now and into the future?
- 4 What is your call to action for young people?

<AT END OF PROGRAMME:>

The moment that you've waited for - Our prize-winning question:

***Name 2 diseases caused by viruses that were passed on from animals to humans.***

SMS or WhatsApp your answer to us NOW. Also give us your name, age and where you live.

We'll announce the lucky winner's name next week, and tell you how we'll get your prize to you.

***<ANSWER: Two of the following: Ebola, SARS, HIV/AIDS or AIDS, COVID-19.>***