

## PRESS STATEMENT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ZAMBIA is currently facing the challenge of the cholera that has affected various Districts across the country.

The Medicines Research and Access Platform (MedRap) has noted with concern that the persistence of the cholera outbreak continues to impact the country, placing additional strain on communities and healthcare facilities.

Since Zambia recorded its first case in October 2023, more than 9,500 people have been affected and 374 deaths have been registered, with a case fatality rate of 3.9 per cent, a devastatingly high number.

National statistics indicate that about 9 out of 10 provinces are now reporting cholera cases with about 52 per cent of all cases in Zambia being children under 15 years, and Lusaka, as the worst affected district, shares over 90 per cent of the disease burden.

The cholera outbreak has rapidly gained momentum in the country placing an immense strain on the healthcare system and exposing vulnerabilities in sanitation and hygiene infrastructure.

We have observed that Inadequate access to clean water and sanitation facilities, and overcrowded living conditions, prevalent in many urban areas, exacerbate the risk of transmission.

The Government through the Ministry of Health and other government and non-government actors have put in place various interventions to respond to the surging cases of Cholera, as this is an emergency.

The outbreak has however, affected the provision of other healthcare services such as sexual reproductive health (SRH).

For instance, the cholera outbreak has resulted in barriers to SRH uptake owing to travel restrictions, and fear of infection among the members of the public. There are also barriers on the supply side such as lack of open facilities, workers, commodities, and services.

Furthermore, the cholera outbreak has the potential to negatively impact access to and utilisation of facility delivery, antenatal care, family planning, and HIV care.

MedRap is calling on all stakeholders to ensure that in the face of the various responses to the cholera outbreak out country is currently afflicted with, there is need to ensure that other healthcare delivery needs such as SRH services, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, cancer screening and treatment, remain uninterrupted.

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