

### GOVERNMENT ASSURES SAFETY OF IMMUNIZATION DRUGS

Harare 20 July 2012 (New Ziana) –Drugs used to immunize children against diseases are safe and cannot be blamed for the deaths and illness that occurred soon after the week-long immunization program carried out last month, a cabinet Minister said on Friday.

The government embarked on a program to immunize children against measles and polio last month targeting more than two million children below the age of five.

Health and Child Welfare, Henry Madzorera told a press conference that vaccines used were safe and pre-qualified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe (MCAZ).

The comments come in the wake of reports that some of the immunized children were reacting to the vaccines.

“WHO ensures that all vaccines used in Zimbabwe are safe, effective and from reputable companies and were pre-qualified,” said Madzorera.

“Locally MCAZ ensures quality, efficacy and safety of all medicines and this includes integrity at all levels up to when the vaccines are administered to the children,” he said.

Madzorera said some mild reactions were expected during immunization

“A reaction in the form of rash, abdominal upset is to be expected on a mild or moderate scale,” he said.

“Some reactions occur because some children are allergic to vaccines or its stabilizers,” he added.

Commenting on the same issue WHO country representative, Custodia Mandhlate said vaccine manufacturing processes met WHO standards and the drugs were not designated for particular markets.

“Vaccine manufacturing processes have been certified that they meet minimum WHO standards for manufacturing vaccines for human consumption,” she said.

“Same vaccine batches are made for both developed and developing countries. There are no designated vaccines for particular markets,” she said.

At least 103 percent of the targeted 1 566 444 children were immunized for measles.

New Ziana