



Plot 35 Central Street
Jesmondene, Lusaka
info@metazambia.org
www.metazambia.org

REPORT MeTA ZAMBIA MEETING WITH MINISTER OF HEALTH

MEETING HELD AT NDEKE HOUSE ON AUGUST 8, 2013

On August 8, 2013 MeTA Zambia team met Minister of Health Hon Joseph Kasonde MP at 15.30 hours in his office. The team comprised of the chairperson Hon Lazarus Chota, Secretary General Goodwell Lungu, member and Zambia Pharmaceutical Business Forum president Ruth Mudondo, Pharmaceutical Society president Liyoka Liyoka and WHO technical adviser on MeTA Billy Mweeta. Others attending the meeting from MeTA were Masautso Phiri acting Coordinator and camera person Mr. Zindaba Ngwenyama.

In attendance with the minister were Dr Lisulo Walubita and Mr. Chikuta Mbewe deputy director Pharmaceutical Services.



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Part of the team in the minister's office Dr Joseph Kasonde during the Policy Dialogue meeting. From left to right is Hon Lazarus Chota MeTA chairperson, next to him is Mr Billy Mweetwa from WHO followed by Mr Goodwell Lungu the MeTA Secretary General and next to him the Minister. Dr Kasonde will attend the Round Table meeting and emphasized more action and less talk from MeTA Zambia

The MeTA Zambia chairperson introduced his teams and as an opening remark he said this was a second meeting after the first early in 2013 when MeTA Zambia was seeking office space from the Ministry. He told the minister that when the PF was in opposition he moved a motion in Parliament seconded by Hon Yamfwa Mukanga on medicines issues. Though the motion was defeated it did make its point heard. He informed the minister that MeTA Zambia has since been offered office space by the

Pharmaceutical Society of Zambia. He said this second meeting was aimed at briefing the minister.

Mr. Liyoka Liyoka provided information from a prepared document which recognized the government as a major stakeholder with whom collaboration with MeTA Zambia would add value to the pharmaceutical sector. He said MeTA Zambia wanted to be involved in the pharmaceutical sector as a partner with the government.

Ruth Mudondo outline the pilot phase studies including Private sector Mapping, Challenges facing local manufacturers, Disclosure Survey and the Price Component in Public and Private. She also mentioned the position papers on Counterfeit and Substandard Medicines and on the Tanzania Accredited Drug Dispensing Outlets (ADDO) which government had accepted in the new law setting up Health Shops. She added that MeTA Zambia wanted to build on these pilot phase studies in implementing the second phase.



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Ms Ruth Mudondo emphasizing a point during the policy Dialogue meeting with Health Minister Dr Joseph Kasonde

In addition to these observations Goodwell Lungu said the MeTA Zambia visit was to make government aware that the second phase had started. During this phase MeTA Zambia will be able to inform the public of government measures in its procurement of various medicines including ARVs that are presently in short supply. He also informed the minister that MeTA Zambia is also meeting the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



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WHO's Billy Mweetwa said his organization was providing Technical Support to MeTA Zambia. He said the WHO was happy to be associated the Ministry of Health whose stance was universal access to medicines. He also said that within the supply sector lack of accountability in the pharmaceutical industry should be addressed. He further said that on prices MeTA had learnt from the Extractive Industries Initiative where transparency and accountability were important and had yielded good results. He added that in conclusion he should mention DFID the funders of MeTA.

In response the minister Hon Joseph Kasonde said there were three points he wanted to raise

- a) He wanted to recognize the valuable contribution MeTA Zambia was making and wanted to encourage MeTA Zambia to continue doing so
- b) Current approach of the ministry fits in a move of emphasis the supply chain in providing medicines across the country. In the past shortage of medicines was always blamed on lack of money. The complexity of the whole process was not allowed to show because everyone talked about lack of money. "When we trebled money available this made no impact until there was change of attitude," he said.

The change of attitude has emphasized the view – "Access to medicines now as the current policy of the ministry as a result areas of success – availability, affordability and accessibility – all now show up in the process. So the MeTA second phase is very much timely."

- c) The ministry was not satisfied – now the MOH is now looking at everything systematically. He noted that the private sector was a disappointment as was the pharmacy profession. The private sector was not ready to be involved while the profession was a stumbling block with regard to Health Shops. Some pharmaceutical companies are now ready to be involved



On the prepared document the minister said these needed to be reset so that they can be used to monitor the system. He said there was a lot to do adding “we need a systematic tool for monitoring.”

In conclusion Ruth Mudondo reminded the minister about the multi-stakeholder nature of MeTA Zambia. She said it was important to emphasize transparency in the way drugs are selected and procured in the country. It was important to concentrate on transparency.

In conclusion the minister told the team that he was ready to get involved with MeTA Zambia activities. “Let us have the Round Table meeting,” the minister said so that “I can speak out.” He emphasized that the Round Table should end up with action points.

Liyoka said his organization PSZ had reorganized itself.



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Hon Lazarus Chota back partially to the camera bidding farewell to Health Minister Dr Joseph Kasonde looking on is acting Coordinator Mr Masautso Phiri and behind him is Chikuta Mbewe MeTA vice chairperson.