

Foreword by the Minister of Health

When we started the term of office of this government in 2004 we set ourselves a series of goals which we sought to achieve when this term ends in 2009. These goals are contained in a document which we called "Strategic Priorities for the Health Sector 2004-2009" (popularly called the 10 Point Plan) Whilst we have some way to go between now and 2009 I am satisfied that we are on track with respect to delivery on our vision which is 'an accessible, caring and high quality health system'.



I am re-committing both my Ministry and the Department of Health to working closely with provinces and local government to ensure that we deliver on all the promises that we made in 2004 when we took office. I realise that there are several challenges that need to be met in our quest to truly transform the health sector. One of these is the need to get better collaboration between the private and public health sectors. To this end we are well on the way to drafting a Health Charter for the sector. However, given that the Charter is a voluntary instrument we have to explore creatively how to pool our resources so that every South African has access to a caring and high quality health system that is affordable.

We have prioritised primary health care as the point of entry into the health system. The primary health care approach calls for, inter alia, community participation. This means that we need to work closely with communities to ensure greater responsiveness to their health needs and for greater accountability. Part of the process of community participation is the need for communities to take some responsibility for their health. This means in particular, living healthy lifestyles and reducing risky behaviour. The Department has a healthy lifestyle programme, which we are committed to strengthening but we need communities to also take the lead in this regard.

The Department, as is reflected in this Plan will improve our health facilities and the quality of care that we provide in these facilities, both clinics and hospitals. In this regard we plan to introduce a hospital improvement plan in April 2006. With respect to health programmes we have prioritised two programmes in line with the decisions taken by WHO/AFRO. During 2006 we shall launch a TB Crisis Plan to deal more decisively with the burden of disease from TB as well as an Accelerated HIV Prevention Plan.

While we have prioritised these health programmes we will not neglect all other aspects of health service delivery. However, we will continue to do many things that we have done in 2005/06.

During this year we shall launch and begin implementation of the Human Resources for Health Plan. As will be appreciated human resource development in particular is a medium term project. This means that whilst we may be able to strengthen human resource planning and management in the short term, the results of changes in production will only be appreciated in the medium term at best.

I wish to thank the Deputy Minister, the MECs for Health and the officials of the Department of Health for their commitment during 2005/06 and have no doubt that they will redouble their efforts during 2006/07 to ensure a better life for all.

I commit my Ministry to the achievement of the priorities and activities that we have included in this Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Tshabalala'.

Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang
Minister of Health
Date: 18/02/2006