



Communication

Strategic goal Communication

Objectives in relation to improved communication relate to developing and implementing strategies for the flow of information:

- Among components of the National Health System, at national, provincial and local level.
- From the national Department to a range of stakeholders, including the general public.

The year saw a marked intensification of the public debate on HIV/AIDS largely through the mass media. The Department focused on improving interaction with the media, managing heavy demands during build up to the Medicines Act court case. This was assisted by the appointment of a media liaison officer in the Minister's Office.

- The Inter-provincial Communicators' Forum was re-activated as a vehicle to co-ordinate communication initiatives.
- Numerous launches and campaigns served as opportunities for the Minister and senior officials to interact with stakeholders in various provinces.
- Internal Departmental communication was promoted by publishing a monthly newsletter and by organising occasional meetings and social events.

Strategic goal International Co-operation

Because South Africa was the current chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, it fell to the Ministry of Health to host the 25th NAM Health Ministers Meeting in Johannesburg in March 2001. The meeting enabled a considerable group of developing countries to position themselves in relation to the World Health Assembly held in May.

South Africa also co-ordinates the Health Sector of the Southern African Development Community. During the year, South Africa ratified the SADC Protocol on Health Co-operation. An implementation strategy for the protocol is being finalised, taking account of the re-organisation of SADC. Among the priority areas for co-operation is HIV/AIDS for which a regional strategy has been developed.

The Basic Agreement between South Africa and the World Health Organisation was signed in December 2000, facilitating access to technical assistance.

Various bilateral agreements were entered into, including:

- A Co-operation Agreement with China (November 2000).
- A Declaration of Intent with Brazil (December 2000).
- An agreement on overseas volunteers with Japan (January 2001).
- A Bi-Lateral Commission with Lesotho.
- A revised agreement with Cuba (March 2001).

A range of foreign health professionals, working in terms of inter-governmental agreements, contributed to improved health care including: The Cuban doctors, Tunisian eye surgeons and United Nations volunteers.

