



**SOUTH AFRICA'S INPUT
INTO THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE OPEN
WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS,
18 JUNE 2013
NEW YORK**

Health and development.

South African Policy Framework.

South Africa's approach to health follows a rights-based, people-centred and inclusive approach. It should always be remembered that people are both the means and ultimate beneficiaries of initiatives to promote development.

- South Africa believes that gender perspectives to be mainstreamed across all health goals and targets.
- South Africa is committed to the advancement of women's rights consistent with our constitutional framework, our values and our international obligations. In this regard, our constitution promotes women's rights as human rights.
- South Africa's position on sexual and reproductive health and rights is framed by the South African constitution, the Maputo Declaration and the African Charter on Human Rights. These documents explicitly include girls, youth and adolescents as having the right to access sexual and reproductive health services. South Africa's approach is aligned to its international treaty obligations i.e. International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, Beijing Platform of Action, CEDAW, International Conference on Population and Development.
- South Africa's has a progressive legislative environment where our international obligations as signatories of relevant human rights treaties and instruments have been translated into national legislative frameworks capable of delivering on these commitments.
- South Africa's development is affected by what happens in the region and the world. Success will depend on the country's understanding and response to such developments. South Africa therefore supports a strong focus on implementation at both the international and national levels.
- South Africa works towards more affordable and equitable access to health services and medicines, particularly for women, children, persons

with disabilities and other vulnerable groups most vulnerable to multiple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

- Mainstreaming of gender into budgeting processes is critical to the building of equal societies. Therefore gender responsive budgeting should be incorporated at all levels of budgeting planning processes across all spheres and levels of government.
- Universal and inclusive access to healthcare services-explicit targets should be set to reduce socio-economic, gender, age and other forms of inequality. Inclusion of vulnerable groups i.e. women, children, youth, elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Greater focus should be placed on prevention policies, programmes and interventions in areas of communicable and non-communicable/lifestyle diseases and reducing tobacco use and the misuse of alcohol and other drug-related substances.

What further efforts are needed to continue working on the unfinished health MDGs and what approaches are most likely to yield positive and significant health outcomes, especially for the poor in the post-2015 period?

- It is of utmost importance that work continues on the health related MDGs (lowering maternal and child mortality and, fighting HIV & AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria).
- South Africa is fully supportive of the proposal for the implementation of Universal Health Coverage, which has been proposed as a key intervention to improve global health as part of the international development agenda beyond 2015. In this regard it should be noted that countries have different “starting points” in their readiness to implement it.
- South Africa’s view is that focus should be maintained on the existing UN development agenda, particularly the implementation of past decisions, undertakings and commitments, i.e. implementation of the outcomes of past Summits and Conferences. Means of implementation remain critically important. Development partners must be encouraged

to honour their ODA and finance for development commitments made at various high-level conferences and forums that may be linked to achieving specific health goals and targets.

What are countries' experiences and views with regard to the best strategies to reduce inequality and inequity in health coverage and access, particularly regarding the need to reach disadvantaged groups such as women, adolescents, indigenous people, migrants, and other vulnerable populations?

- Health has remained one of the apex priorities of the South African Government. "Health for all" is one of the fifteen objectives that constitute the South Africa's recently adopted National Development Plan (NDP) which sets out fifteen objectives that the Government wants to achieve by 2030. It aims, inter alia, to:
 - Increase life expectancy from birth to seventy years;
 - Improve tuberculosis prevention and cure;
 - Reduce maternal, infant and child mortality;
 - Reduce prevalence of non-communicable chronic diseases;
 - Reduce injury, accidents and violence by 50% from 2010 levels;
 - Coordinate the deployment of primary healthcare teams;
 - Ensure access to health care of equal standard, regardless of income; and
 - Prioritise filling of posts with skilled, committed and competent individuals.

- South Africa is currently piloting the National Health Insurance (NHI) in ten sites across different provinces. The Government regards NHI as a means of bringing about Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Government regards NHI as a means of bringing about UHC.

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The South African Government has initiated public-private-partnerships to rehabilitate public hospitals as a key component of the National Health Insurance (NHI).

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Africa has set itself the goal of further reducing inequalities in health care provision, to boost human resource capacity, revitalise hospitals

and clinics and step up the fight against the scourge of HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and other diseases.

- South Africa has implemented the Comprehensive Plan for the Treatment, Management and Care of HIV and AIDS as an intervention strategy to significantly reduce rates of new HIV infections and to aspire to universal access for those in need of ARV treatment.
- The South African Government is addressing the issue of the competitive remuneration of health professionals to incentivise the retention of key skills in the public health sector in particular.

How to balance policy priorities and investments to deal with the unfinished health agenda and at the same time to address shifting epidemiological profiles such as the emergence of non-communicable diseases globally?

- The emergence of non-communicable diseases globally will require the establishment of innovative public-private-partnerships and collaboration at the international level with all relevant stakeholders, including the UN system, private sectors, foundations and research institutions.
- Targeted international media and information-campaigns will need to be developed towards educating people on their healthcare rights and choices as part of prevention strategies including at schools.

What is needed in order to implement a possible goal/or targets relating to health?

- Work must continue on the health-related MDGs in relation to reducing child mortality rates (Goal 4), improving maternal health (Goal 5) and combating HIV and Aids, malaria, and other diseases (Goal 8). These priorities will need to be an integral part of any future post-2015 development goal.
- The neglect of sexual and reproductive health and rights and violence against women and girls constitute human rights violations that further entrench inequalities and erode educational attainment, health, and labour force participation for those affected. It also impacts negatively on prospects for achieving sustainable development across social,

economic and environmental spheres by undermining opportunities for bringing about greater balance between population and development dynamics and the planets resources.

- Respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, without discrimination on any grounds must be the foundation of a new global sustainable development agenda underpinned by the principles of equality, equity and social justice for all towards ensuring that “no one is left behind”.
- In the area of health and population dynamics, we need to fulfil the “unfinished” promise of the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action and the MDGs to ensure universal access to quality, affordable sexual and reproductive health information, education and services, with priority attention accorded to women, adolescents and youth, and communities living in poverty.
- For the foreseeable future, policies should be viewed through a “youth lens”, reflecting the rise of a largely youthful working-age population.
- Provide universal access to comprehensive sex education for all young people.
- Create an enabling environment through legal and policy reforms and public education for the exercise of human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, without discrimination, coercion or violence on any grounds.
- Foster shared rights and responsibilities of men and boys in private and public life, and end violence against women and girls through sustained prevention campaigns designed to end harmful practices against girls, including early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Employment and decent work and social protection.

- In the attainment of sustainable development it is crucial to place emphasis in the areas of decent work in employment and social protection, however significant emphasis should be given in ensuring equal wages for men and women, equal land rights, property and inheritance rights, access to productive assets, agricultural support.

- Achieving full employment, decent work and sustainable livelihoods is the only way to improve living standards and ensure a dignified existence for all. Rising employment, productivity and incomes are the surest long-term solution to reducing inequality.
- South Africa's national initiatives are combining trade-led growth strategies with proactive industrial, agricultural and services policies. These initiatives define productive capability formation and employment creation as two major policy objectives, seeking to incorporate them into a coherent and integrated policy framework. This new policy orientation is exemplified in South Africa's Industrial Policy Action Plan for 2010–2013. The revised Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP2) for 2011 – 2014 represents a consolidation and strengthening of plans and programmes which have been upgraded to augment government's intervention to support industrial development and employment creation and skills for the economy, to which innovation and technology has been added.
- There is a need for gender responsive labour policies as well as social protection systems such as affordable child care, care for the elderly, disabled, those living with HIV/AIDS without any biases. Additionally, there is a need for safe working conditions for all.

Education and Culture.

- Education should be the epicentre for sustainable development, particular attention should be put on the elimination of illiteracy among women, adolescent girls and young people. There is a need for universal access to secondary education for all children without discrimination. Importantly, though there is a need for focus on improving the quality and content of education and facilitating the transition from school to the work place.
- Young girls who fall pregnant during the school should be given adequate support, particularly those affected by HIV/AIDS in order to ensure that they complete their education. Furthermore, there is a need to place emphasis on comprehensive sexuality education.

End.