

The South African health improvement plan

From Ten-Point plan to Negotiated Service Delivery Agreement

In July 2009 the new South African administration released its Programme of Action, which included a ten-point plan for the improvement of the health sector (2010-2014).

In 2010 the Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, reaffirmed his commitment to the following priorities of the plan. They are:

1. Provision of strategic leadership and creation of a social compact for better health outcomes.
2. Implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI).
3. Improving the quality of health services.
4. Overhauling the health care system and improving its management.
5. Improving human resources management, planning and development.
6. Revitalisation of health infrastructure.
7. Accelerated implementation of the National HIV&AIDS and STI National Strategic Plan (2007-2011) and increased focus on TB and other communicable diseases.
8. Mass mobilisation for better health for the population.
9. Review of the drug policy.
10. Strengthening research and development.

These commitments were formalised in a Negotiated Service Delivery Agreement (NSDA) that was signed in by the Minister of Health and seven other cabinet ministers in September 2010.

The Negotiated Service Delivery Agreement (NSDA) is a charter that reflects the commitment of key partners to achieving the goals of the government's Programme of Action. For the health sector, the priority is improving the health status of the entire population and to contribute to Government's vision of **A Long and Healthy Life for All South Africans**.

To this end, the government has identified four outputs for the health sector. These are:

- Output 1: Increasing Life Expectancy.
- Output 2: Decreasing Maternal and Child mortality.
- Output 3: Combating HIV and AIDS and decreasing the burden of disease from Tuberculosis.
- Output 4: Strengthening Health System Effectiveness.

Linked to these outputs are clearly articulated indicators and targets. Major targets include the following:

- Life expectancy must increase from the current 53.9 years for males and 57.2 years for females to 58 years for males and 60 years for females by 2014.
- The Maternal Mortality Ratio must decrease from an estimated 625 per 100,000 to 100 (or less) per 100,000 live births by 2014.

- The child mortality rate must decrease from an estimated 104 deaths per 1,000 live births to 20 per 1,000 live births by 2014. The MDG country report estimates child mortality rates at 104 per 100,000.
- The TB cure rate must improve from 64% in 2007 to 85% by 2014
- 80% of eligible people living with HIV and AIDS must access antiretroviral treatment.
- New HIV infections must be reduced by 50% by 2014.

Re-engineering the health system to one that is based on a primary healthcare (PHC) approach, with more emphasis on promotive and preventive healthcare will underlie all interventions needed to achieve the outputs. Tangible improvements in the effectiveness of the health system must be attained and corroborated by empirical evidence that clearly links to the four output areas.

In terms of strengthening the health system's effectiveness with regards to key health indicators and overall contribution to population welfare, the Department of Health has identified the need to overhaul key components within the spheres of financing, pooling of resources, purchasing and provision of health services. This will be done through the implementation of the National Health Insurance - a mechanism that will allow us to better harness the human, financial and technical resources within the public and private sectors and use these enhanced resources to improve the impact with which they contribute towards the achievement of the above stated 4 output areas.

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