



health

Department of
Health
FREE STATE PROVINCE

OPENING ADDRESS BY MEC ES MABE ON THE OCCASION OF THE FREE STATE HEALTH SUMMIT, PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE OF THE FREE STATE (PACOFS), BLOEMFONTEIN

16 July 2009

Minister Motsoaledi
The Premier
MECs present
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health
Leaders of Political Parties
Representatives of Trade Union Formations
Director-General Thami Mseleku
Dr Nwaila and Heads of Department (HoDs)
Officials at levels of government
Leaders of the our Health Sector system of governance
Experts
Health Professionals
Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) formations
Ladies and gentlemen

Good Morning,

I wish to welcome you all to this important gathering that brings together diverse representatives of our Free State community .I am confident that, drawing from the collective wisdom of us all gathered here today we will indeed rise to the occasion and confront honestly and robustly the problems confronting our health care system.

Health problems have many and complex causes. Some of these were aptly stated in the state of the nation address, the state of the province address and during the occasion of the presentation of the budget vote of the national Department of Health.

It was therefore not by accident that health was decided as a priority. Even the issues put forward to the agenda of this summit such as health sector financing, human resources challenges facing the system, supply chain challenges, the NHI and transformation of health care services echo the challenges I said our leaders have addressed in different platforms.

Our programme based on a ten point plan will remain our fundamental departure point in making decisive interventions in dealing with the problems confronting our Health system. This plan is comprised of the following:

- Provision of strategic leadership and creation of a social compact for better health compact
- Implementation of a National Health Insurance (NHI)
- Accelerated implementation of the HIV and AIDS Plan and increased focus on tuberculosis (TB) and other communicable diseases
- Overhauling the health care system and improve its management
- Improve human resources (HR) planning, development and management
- Improving the quality of the health services

- Revitalisation of the health infrastructure
- Mass mobilisation for better health for the population
- Review of the drug policy
- Strengthen research and development.

This plan, we will implement after the occurrence of the economic meltdown that has affected many countries of the world today especially the poor and developing nations. The resulting consequence is that the delivery of social services including health takes a serious knock. It is therefore befitting that as we deliberate that we remember one of the important perspectives once articulated by Martin Luther King Junior that; "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor and sick, it cannot save the few who are rich but suffering from eating disorders. Development that perpetuates today's inequalities in wealth and in health is neither sustainable nor worth sustaining.

It is for this reason that we are gathered here together and committing all the necessary resources to combating the scourges plaguing our country in general and our beloved province in particular by focusing on the pillars of the health sector reform as elucidated above in improving efficiency in health.

The department of health will make a deliberate effort during the presentation of the budget vote on 22 July 2009, to outline practical steps we will take in implementing this plan. We are anxiously awaiting the outcomes of this summit, ready to do our best to implement the resolutions which will be agreed upon as the key pointers in taking us forward.

In conclusion programme director I wish to take the opportunity to also pay tribute to Nelson Mandela. In two days time he will be turning 91. This icon of our struggle, a legend, a true patriot, and a hero of our people has indeed shown us that there is no force that can defeat the spirit to serve humanity. We confirm his words that indeed our long walk to freedom is not yet complete until all our people enjoy a better life for all.

Let us therefore heed the call by the provincial government under the able leadership of the Premier E S Magashule to immerse ourselves all in community service activities that will be taking place in QwaQwa on Saturday.

In the name of this great leader-Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela we dare not fail in taking bold decisions to correct the deficiencies in our healthcare system.

Thank you very much.