

DE BEERS GROUP

Honourable Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of SANAC, Mr David Mabuza

Acting Minister of Health: Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane

Inter-Ministerial Committee Members

Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phaahla

Co-Chairperson of SANAC, Ms Steve Letsike

MEC for Health in Gauteng: Dr Nomathemba Mokgethi

CEO of SANAC, Dr Thembisile Xulu

CEO of SABCOHA, Mr Siyabonga Jikwana

President of COSATU, Ms Zingiswa Losi

Chairperson of SABCOHA, Dr Lesego Rametsi

Deputy Chairperson of SABCOHA, Dr Tshepo Sedibe

Leaders of Civil Society

Private Sector Task Team Members

Colleagues from the Private Sector Forum

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon and all protocols observed.

- I am truly humbled to be here today as the newly appointed Chair of the Private Sector Forum at this defining moment in our collective efforts to achieve an HIV free society by 2030.
- The fight against HIV/AIDS and TB started and continues to be a fight in support of human rights. As an advocate for an inclusive society, I believe that wherever we live, whatever our circumstances or our place in society, our gender or sexual orientation, our race, religion or beliefs, we are all equal in human rights and we are all deserving of dignity.
- Almost 40 years into the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the work is still not done as there is still so much more we can collectively do in our efforts and investments to advance the human rights of people living with HIV.
- I am certain many of us still remember the momentous AIDS Summit held in Durban in the year 2000, where over 5000 activists protested outside the main event, calling for a more concerted response to the prevention, treatment and care of HIV/AIDS and TB.
- Those early years of the millennium were arguably the most challenging; the scourge of HIV/AIDS and TB had reared its head globally, placing enormous challenges on the global health system, and challenging “big business” to shape a rapid and sustainable response.
- At the very same AIDS Summit, the late former President Nelson Mandela made this powerful call, and I quote: “In the face of the grave threat posed by HIV/AIDS, we have to rise above our differences and combine our efforts to save people. History will judge us harshly if we fail to do so now, and right now.”
- The fight against HIV/AIDS and TB has come a long way since then, with significant progress in the number of infection rates and access to medication as well as care and prevention programmes.

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- However, the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been felt across all sectors of our society, including the private sector. We continue to see the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods – with many lives lost to despair, stigma and exclusion.
- The argument for great private sector involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS and TB is by no means an exclusion of government and civil society. We are here today to show a united front, and to say, “we are all in this together”.
- As leaders in various industries across the economy, we are digging even deeper to sharpen our collaborative efforts to fight HIV/AIDS and TB, which is important now in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fight against Gender Based Violence and Femicide.
- We bring along with us a wealth of experience in our efforts to respond to HIV/AIDS, TB, and STIs as part of our safety, health, and wellbeing workplace and community programmes.
- We believe in the power of partnerships, and we continue to work closely with Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), Black Business Council (BBC), South African Waste Pickers Association (SAWPA), South African Informal Traders Association (SAITA) and the South African Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS (SABCOHA), in implementing the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of “good health and wellbeing”.
- Some of our key milestones include providing access to ARVs and other care and prevention programmes to our employees and communities, as well as preventing mother-to-child transmission – all of these were reached through collaboration across all sectors.
- Together, we have built health care facilities, invested in health research, and provided health screenings to thousands of South Africans across Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Free State, North West, and Gauteng.
- This is our opportunity to reinvigorate this spirit once again as we work towards ending the HIV/AIDS and TB epidemic.
- We therefore commit to continue working in partnership with government, civil society, labour, development partners and various other stakeholders in implementing the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS, TB, and STIs.
- As the SANAC Private Sector Forum, we pledge the following:
 1. To ensure that the private sector participates fully in all SANAC structures at sub-district, district, provincial and national level. This entails launching Provincial Private Sector Forums across all provinces.
 2. To contribute to the achievement of the goals of the National Strategic Plan on HIV, TB and STIs.
 3. To strengthen and accelerate workplace screening programmes for HIV, TB, STIs, COVID-19, and non-communicable diseases.

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4. To intensify the role of the private sector in the Cheka Impilo National Wellness Campaign, as well as any future campaigns, by:
 - Fast-tracking of community screening for HIV, TB, STIs, COVID-19 and non-communicable diseases.
 - Supporting efforts of finding the missing TB patients.
 - Reporting private sector HIV, TB and STIs data to SANAC.
 5. To participate in, and support HIV, TB and STIs related activities at national, provincial, district and sub-district levels, including:
 - World AIDS Day
 - World TB Day
 - TB and AIDS conferences
 - Sexual and Reproductive Health campaigns.
 6. To promote human rights by addressing stigma, discrimination, and lack of confidentiality in the workplace, as they relate to HIV and TB.
 7. To address gender-based violence and femicide and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in the workplace, to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV.
 8. And finally, to mobilise resources to support the programmes of SANAC.
- We fully appreciate the role that the private sector plays in our society and the responsibility we have towards shaping a better future for all South Africans.
 - We also acknowledge that we do not have all the answers, however, as President Mandela said, history will judge us harshly if we fail to act now.
 - What the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us, is that we can achieve amazing things if we pull in one direction with compassion and humility.
 - On behalf of the Private Sector Forum, we say, the SANAC tripod – made up of Government, Civil Society, and the Private Sector – is now complete and standing firm as all three components are in place.
 - From now henceforth, we look forward to walking this journey with you towards an HIV-free generation.

Thank you.