

éREPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**STATEMENT BY DR KALUMBI SHANGULA ON THE OCCASION OF THE
OFFICIAL OPENING OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2022.**

2 MARCH 2022

WINDHOEK

**Check against Delivery*

Director of the Programme
Hon. Dr. Esther Utjiua Muinjangue, Deputy Minister
Hon. Neville Ndoli, Speaker of the Children's Parliament
Mr. Ben Nangombe, Executive Director
Deputy Executive Directors
Our esteemed Development Partners and Civil Society Organizations
Senior Managers from both National and Regional Directorates
Our Valued Staff Members
Invited guests
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I extend my gratitude and best wishes for the Year 2022 to you all! The 2022 Management Development Forum is meeting under the theme: "Delivering Effective Service Efficiently, amidst COVID-19 Pandemic". The Ministry of Health and Social Services has established the National Management Development Forum, as the the first official engagement of each year. This year the event is slightly delayed.
2. The engagement seeks to map out health sector strategies and policy direction towards improved health outcomes for the ensuing year. The COVID-19 pandemic had devastating effects on our economies and livelihoods during the past two years. Many lives were lost and we experienced disruptions in all facets of the socio-economic and political landscape.
3. In an effort to protect and saves lives, restore livelihoods and rekindle our economies, the government continued to strengthen and implement stringent health protocols. One such measure has been a reduction in the number of people at public gatherings. The Management Development Forum of last year was held virtually for the first time. Although the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose challenges, it has brought some fundamental lessons that vaccinations, adherence to established and tested health standards on continued and sustainable manner, have the ability to successfully fight this monster, COVID-19.
4. Today, we are fortunate that we are hosting this important gathering together here at Windhoek Country Club and Resort. It is against this background that I commend you and applaud all of you for your hard work, dedication and synergies that we stood together as partners to pool our resources and expertise to meet the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. We demonstrated our tenacity, courage and resilience to respond to the demands of providing quality health and social services to our communities. Thus, I implore and call upon each and every one as captains of your entities in the health sector to continue strengthening our health system, in order to improve the quality of life of our

citizens. We must ensure that the gains we made in the implementation of different health priorities and interventions are not eroded or reversed. It is thus critical to redouble our collective resolve and efforts to work together in a more pragmatic fashion that will lead to improved health outcomes. This platform, National Management Development Forum, therefore presents an ideal opportunity to chart realistic and attainable strategic priorities and policy direction. In this regard, I wish to highlight the following critical areas that we should pursue to achieve our common goals.

4.1. Development of a New Five-Year Strategic Plan

4.1.1. The national efforts to attain health and social well-being of the Namibian population is spearheaded by the Ministry of Health and Social Services, which manages the public health care system. One of the main objectives is to ensure equal access to quality care by all citizens. Our actions in this regard are guided by the implementation and monitoring of a well-crafted strategic plan. The current Ministerial five-year Strategic Plan 2017/18–2021/2022 is coming to an end at the end of this month. I am pleased to inform this assembly that the Ministry of Health and Social Services in collaboration with development cooperation partners have undertaken a comprehensive study, the Health System Review, the second of its kind in Namibia.

4.1.2. The outcomes of this process will guide the development and compilation of the next Ministerial Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Health System Review will be completed soon, with guidance of well-experienced experts. The outcome will provide meaningful and comprehensive evidence-based information in preparation for the next Strategic Plan. The Health System Review reflects an in-depth analysis of the health system performance, weaknesses, strengths and challenges in five over-arching areas, namely: Governance Structures, Policies and Functions; Human Resources; Service Provision; Infrastructure; as well as Health Care Financing and Financial Planning.

4.1.3. I invite key stakeholders to partake fully in the development of the next Ministerial Strategic Plan, once the Health System Review process is concluded.

4.2. Implementation of the Performance Management System

Cabinet has approved a policy on implementation of the Performance Management System (PMS) in the Public Service. The aim is to foster a culture of results, efficiency and accountability in service delivery. At the level of implementation, the PMS was designed as a strategic operational tool for managing organizational, individual and team performance to realize organizational goals. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) oversees the implementation of PMS. Thus, PMS is an important result-based mechanism

how ministerial strategic plans are operationalized into annual plans at unit level and performance agreements at individual level of each staff member. I am encouraging the Executive Director to ensure that performance reviews are cascaded to the operational levels, following a systematic approach.

3. Actions towards attainment of Universal Health Coverage

- 3.1. Namibia as a Member State of the World Health Organization (WHO) and having subscribed to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Wellbeing for All at All Ages, has embraced the global effort to work towards achieving Universal Health Coverage.
- 3.2. The strategy is pivotal to the mission of the Ministry of Health and Social Services, which is to provide integrated, affordable, accessible, equitable, quality health and social services that are responsive to the needs of the population. The Ministry has taken the lead in multi-stakeholder dialogues, to craft a UHC Policy Framework. I call upon our partners in health to support this undertaking.

4. Expansion of capacity to offer internship

- 4.1. During the period 2014 to 2015, the Ministry sponsored over 700 students to undertake studies in various health-related fields abroad. These include programmes such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, physiotherapy, radiotherapy, and bio-medical engineering. In addition to the students sponsored by the Ministry, many other students also went to study in similar fields abroad funded by other institutions such as NASFAF and others, or through their own funding. After graduation, these graduates are required to undergo internship training at accredited health facilities. Over the past two years, the number of medical graduates requiring internship grew beyond the absorptive capacity of the accredited health facilities.
- 4.2. We have already started the process of expanding capacity at identified public health facilities to accommodate training for interns in various professions. A number of facilities have already been accredited by the Health Professions Councils of Namibia to offer internship training. Our next strategic plan should encompass the elements such as human resources, infrastructure, and medical equipment for robust training of interns.

5. Communicable Diseases

Communicable diseases still pose threat to public health. Although there are proven methods of prevention, more still needs to be done. It is therefore critical that our disease surveillance system is on high alert to ensure timely detection and implementation of preventive measures. The following are some of recent communicable disease outbreaks that were reported.

5.1. Hepatitis E Outbreak

- 5.1.1. The Ministry of Health and Social Services declared Hepatitis E virus (HEV) outbreak on 14 December 2017 in Windhoek, Khomas Region, which eventually spread to 13 regions, with Zambezi being the only region which did not detect Hepatitis E. This outbreak was more prominent in settings where access to potable water, sanitation, and hygiene is limited.
- 5.1.2. As of 30 January 2022, a total of 8 092 Hepatitis E cases were reported nationally, of which 2 124 (26.2%) were laboratory confirmed, 4 738 (58.6%) cases were epidemiologically linked and 1 230 (15.2%) cases were suspected cases. It is encouraging to note that in 2020, only four (4) HEV deaths were recorded of which two were maternal deaths. The first one occurred in February 2020, and the last one occurred in September 2020. Since, then no HEV deaths were reported.
- 5.1.3. This positive outcome is attributed to a timely, decisive and effective collaborative effort by a number of key stakeholders, including Government agencies led by the Office of Prime Minister and Ministry of Health and Social Services; Development Cooperation Partners such as World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), US Centres for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), Embassy of the Government of Japan, Corporate Entities such as City of Windhoek (CoW) and other local authorities, Namibia Institute of Pathology (NIP), University of Namibia (UNAM); Coca Cola Company Namibia, and Civic Organizations such as Namibia Red Cross Society (NRCS) and Development Workshop Namibia (DWN). The different media houses played a pivotal role in sensitizing our communities and their complementary effort is highly appreciated.
- 5.1.4. Today, I am pleased to declare the END to Hepatitis E Virus outbreak in the country. The Ministry of Health and Social Services and stakeholders will continue to monitor any occurrence of new cases through our sensitive and reliable surveillance system.

5.2. Malaria

Although Namibia has made significant progress over the last decade, the ongoing threat of malaria re-emergence is a key barrier to achieving elimination. The malaria burden, has surged over the past two years due to logistical challenges posed by Covid-19 and negatively affecting the procurement of the required insecticides. Some malaria endemic regions, particularly in the north and north eastern parts of Namibia still report outbreaks. The most recent malarial outbreak was reported in Zambezi Region during February 2022. We will spare no effort to attain our goal of malaria elimination in Namibia.

5.3. Tuberculosis

It is a matter of grave concern to note that we continue to observe missed or undiagnosed TB cases in Namibia. According to WHO statistics, this figure is estimated to be at 44%. The COVID 19- pandemic has further aggravated our capacities to detect TB cases, mainly through interruptions to the diagnostic supply chain, redirection of resources and the effect of restrictions. The intersection of HIV/AIDS and Covid-19 pandemics has detrimental effect on the control of TB. Certain public health measures required to control the spread of Covid-19 have led to societal restrictions, including lockdowns and curfews that have negatively impacted the economy, education and health. Specifically, with regard to persons with HIV, the Covid-19 pandemic has a negative effect on HIV testing, linkage to care, treatment access, availability of pre-exposure prophylaxis and other HIV prevention strategies. These disruptions may result in significant high numbers of new HIV infections and deaths. It is also worrisome that understaffing at both national and peripheral levels, including the inability to recruit and retain community health workers affects in the management of Tuberculosis in the country. I commend our partners for their support towards TB Programme. However, more funding and investment are needed to undertake case findings in the community.

6. Maternal and Neonatal Health

A significant reduction in institutional neonatal mortality was reported during the current strategic plan period, from 20/1000 live births in 2016 to 12/1000 live births in 2020. Notwithstanding this achievement, Maternal and Neonatal Health remains high on the agenda of our Ministry and our Government. Mothers and babies are still losing their precious lives under circumstances that could be prevented. Causes of maternal deaths are well-documented and could be averted through a comprehensive approach to address delays in getting appropriate care. It is, therefore, befitting that the next strategic plan includes strategies to improve Maternal and Neonatal Health in order to sustain progress achieved.

7. Non-communicable Diseases

Cardio-vascular conditions, diabetes mellitus, and cancers are prevalent among the general population. Preliminary findings from the Health System Review indicate an increase in number of deaths due to non-communicable diseases. Experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates vulnerability of individuals with multiple co-morbidities. Complications from non-communicable diseases place additional strain on the health system due to chronic nature of non communicable diseases. In this regard, the next strategic plan should include deliberate strategies to ramp up capacity of the public health system to provide essential services, such as renal dialysis. Additionally, strategies in the Non-communicable Disease Strategic Plan, launched in 2019 should be incorporated into the next strategic plan.

8. Pharmaceuticals and clinical supplies.

On the 28 February 2022, I launched quality assurance documents that, once followed to the letter, would ensure quality service to our patients and customers. However, we cannot assure quality of service in the absence of essential medicines and other medical products and commodities. Of late we have received with concern, shortage of certain medicines especially certain medicines for chronic ailments. In 2019, we resolved the problem related to availability of all medicines. We seemed to have fallen back. We have to re-engineer the procurement process to serve us well. Procurement of medicines and clinical supplies remains is a perfect candidate for inclusion in the next strategic plan.

9. The above list of priority areas is not exhaustive, but places a thrust on areas that we have to consider as we prepare our strategic plan for the next five years. The report of the Second Health System Review will be pivotal in shaping our strategic direction.

10. In conclusion, I would like once again to thank our staff members at all levels and our development cooperation partners for their dedication to duty. It is now my pleasure to declare the National Management and Development Forum 2022 officially open. I wish you all fruitful deliberations.

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