

## **Address by the Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe at the 18th International AIDS Conference, Vienna, 18 July 2010**

Programme Director;  
President of the Federal Republic of Austria, H.E. Heinz Fischer;  
Conference President, Mr Julio Montaner;  
Executive Director of UNAIDS, Mr Michel Sedibé;  
Ministers and Deputy Ministers present here today; and  
Distinguished delegates:

On behalf of the people and the government of South Africa, I thank the organisers of this 18th International AIDS Conference for inviting me to this important gathering.

I also wish to express our sincere appreciation to the government and the people of Austria for hosting this magnanimous event in this cultural hub and beautiful city of Vienna, which offers an abundance of history and inspiration. I thank our host for the hospitality given to our delegation since our arrival here yesterday.

A week ago an audience of over a billion people witnessed the dramatic conclusion to the 2010 FIFA World Cup. I am sure all would agree that, in the main, this World Cup provided pulsating excitement and memorable moments that will live on in football history.

On behalf of the people of South Africa and indeed the African continent, I wish to express our gratitude to all the 31 countries represented by their teams in the FIFA World Cup finals. I want to believe this sporting tournament has provided all of us with lessons we can apply in our collective approach to deal with the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

One of those lessons is the importance of teamwork even in the battle against HIV and AIDS.

Another lesson is the setting of targets, milestones, roles and responsibilities in order to achieve those goals. Support from local and international stakeholders has also proven to be priceless in supplementing our efforts.

The FIFA World Cup has emphasised the lasting importance of inter-dependence and cooperation with all stakeholders, domestic and foreign.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
The timeliness of our participation at this conference is important since we are here to learn, share experiences and compare notes in response to a common challenge.

Our objectives and messages have been consistent. Firstly, our government is unambiguous regarding the importance and efficacy of Anti-Retroviral Treatment.

We are taking all steps to ensure the availability and accessibility of treatment for the needy.

Working with our social partners, we have striven to ensure that our response to the pandemic is evidence-based, properly resourced and effective.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Allow me to share with you how South Africa is organising that wider response.

Our Medium-Term Strategic Framework builds upon the successes of the first fifteen (15) years of our democracy and draws from the lessons identified in the government's fifteen year review and issues that arose in our scenario planning process.

The scenario planning process identified a number of macro-social dynamics and trends that could present themselves in the long-term.

It posited that a number of new opportunities as well as some serious new risks could arise, in the context of possible scenarios.

This scenario planning process resonates with a similar project conducted by UNAIDS titled AIDS in Africa: Three Scenarios to 2025.

The UNAIDS document juxtaposes some of the issues raised in our own scenarios against the challenges posed by responding to the combined pandemics of HIV and AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB).

The scenarios throw into sharp perspective the tough choices and difficult decisions governments face in identifying priorities and tackling the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment in a background of unprecedented demand on health systems.

The recent message emanating from the counsel of the Champions for an HIV-Free Generation, chaired by former President Festus Mogae of Botswana, is meant to draw attention to the following:

- share experiences and encourage leadership to renew and revitalise the response to the HIV pandemic;
- highlight prevention of HIV as priority number one; and
- endorse a policy on medical male circumcision and infant circumcision as a matter of urgency.

In South Africa, and indeed in most countries in Africa, the Champions have initiated a discourse on the role of traditional leaders in educating communities about responsible sexual behaviour. We are acting on the belief that every instrument available in society must be used to address the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

In our country, we have deliberately embarked on a substantial HIV testing and counselling campaign. The aim is to allow the majority of our population to know their HIV status and thereafter act accordingly and where necessary, to access the expanded treatment and support services that are provided.

In addition to testing for HIV, people will also be able to receive other essential services such as screening for, amongst others, TB, blood pressure, sugar diabetes, and cholesterol levels. In effect, these diseases require a coordinated response.

Working with the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), which includes amongst other social partners, people living with HIV and AIDS, traditional leaders, performing artists, medical practitioners, researchers and scientists, women, children and youth, we are all working in unison under the theme, "I am responsible. We are responsible. South Africa is taking responsibility".

Programme director,

Over the past few years, we have made progress in many key aspects of our collective national response.

The Prevention-of-Mother-to-Child-Transmission (PMTCT) programme has seen dramatic improvement.

Anti-Retroviral Treatment is provided to well over 80% of diagnosed mothers, and in some of our 'priority districts' we are succeeding to reduce mother-to-child-transmission to below 6%.

Therefore, we continue to make the investments necessary and are working hard to ensure that they are proportionate to the response that is required even in the face of declining revenues.

The global AIDS reports show how much this investment has made in realising the right to health. We cannot let up now and allow the recession to take precedence over the right to health and the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Fellow delegates,

We must also strengthen our collective response by ensuring that Aid for AIDS does not result in the creation of parallel policy, parallel governance, and procurement systems in the recipient countries.

Rather, we should allow for country-led interventions that strengthen capacity in the respective countries.

We need renewed commitment for consistent, sustained and predictable financing mechanisms. I would argue that now is not the time to disinvest in health. We are pleased that the Global Fund has invested \$10.5 trillion into the response thus far.

We must all stay on course!

Most importantly, we need to be drawing lessons from responses to other diseases. One key lesson is that our response needs to be united, coordinated and comprehensive.

The UNAIDS \*Three Ones Principle \*should remain in force and I would also argue that a broader development framework that brings together the MDG's, the Universal Access Framework, the UNGASS Report and all other pertinent national reports is the obvious outcome to make this harmonisation effective.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The creation of a single unified framework that enables a broad reporting focus on the spectrum of economic, governance, socio-political and health issues will enable comprehensive planning and budgeting and will also allow us to apply a holistic and comprehensive analysis to key issues that need attention.

I am convinced that we are all moving in the right direction but the next step for us to overcome this pandemic will require harmonisation and collaboration across our national responses.

We have demonstrated that working together in partnerships across all sectors of society we can achieve much to ensure all of our people have access to good quality healthcare.

In conclusion, on behalf of the people and the government of South Africa, I reiterate South Africa's and indeed Africa's determination to realise an HIV and AIDS-free generation.

Ten years ago at the 13th International AIDS Conference in Durban, former President Nelson Mandela urged us to always act in solidarity with others. He said, I quote:

*"We want to move away from rhetoric to practical action. We need African resolve to fight this war. Partnership with the international community is vital. A constant theme in all our messages has been that in this inter-dependent and globalised world, we have indeed again become the keepers of our brother and sister. That cannot be more graphically the case than in the common fight against HIV/AIDS."*

I thank you.

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