

Welcome address by Dr Temba Masilela (Policy Analysis Unit) at the "Health within a Comprehensive System of Social Security" colloquium, Pretoria 31st July – 2nd August 2007.

Dr ME Tshabalala-Msimang, Minister of Health

Dr Olive Shisana, CEO HSRC

Distinguished participants

It is my pleasure on behalf of the Human Science Research Council and the South African National Liaison Committee of the MOST Programme in Unesco to welcome you to this colloquium on "Health within a Comprehensive System of Social Security". This colloquium is the second to be hosted by the Policy Analysis Unit at the HSRC and we appreciate the interest and participation by various stakeholders in these processes of policy dialogue that we are facilitating.

In addition to our distinguished participants from various sectors in South Africa society, we also have participants who will speak to the experience in Latin America and the UK. You are all welcome to this colloquium which we see as the beginning of a series of research evidence-based engagements on this complex topic which so vitally affects the well being of so many of our people.

My brief welcoming remarks will be restricted to outlining the parts played by the Policy Analysis Unit and the MOST National Liaison Committee in launching this policy dialogue.

The Policy Analysis Unit at the HSRC was established in July 2006 and is fully funded by the national Department of Science and Technology to serve an independent analytical and impact assessment facility that facilitates the generation of policy recommendations based on research evidence and policy dialogues. Its activities and initiatives address the five national priority social policy areas of quality education, employment, poverty reduction, service delivery, and HIV and AIDS. The national government's Programme of Action specifies targets, implementation activities, and monitoring protocols in each of these social policy areas and assigns responsibility to various departments in the social, economics and governance clusters of cabinet. The Policy Analysis Unit accordingly collaborates with various national and provincial departments, implementation agencies, policy advocacy groups in civil society, and research programmes within the HSRC to enhance the implementation and evaluation of social policy.

The Management of Social Transformation (MOST) Programme at Unesco is the only UNESCO programme that

specifically fosters and promotes social science research. The focus of the current phase of the MOST Programme is on building efficient bridges between research, policy and practice and the Programme thus promotes -- at the national, regional and international levels -- a culture of evidence-informed policy-making.

The South African National Liaison Committee of MOST operates under the auspices of the South African National Commission for UNESCO and consists of the following people in their personal capacities: Dr Vusi Gumede (Policy Coordination and Advisory Services in The Presidency); Prof Daisy Makofane (University of Limpopo); Dr Edgar Pieterse (Premier's office, Western Cape); Dr Olive Shisana (HSRC), Chair; Prof Jonathon Jansen (formerly of the University of Pretoria); Dr Steven Friedman (Institute for Democracy in South Africa); Dr Temba Masilela (HSRC) , Secretariat; Mr Daniel Plaatjies (South Africa Social Security Agency); Dr Jimi Adesina (Social Science Network of South Africa); Ms Marguerita Schneider (HSRC) and Mr Wiseman Magasela (DDG in the Department of Social Development).

It is this advisory group that proposed that the Policy Analysis Unit focus on the following issues for the first series of policy dialogues and debates:

1. National health insurance and the financing of social protection;
2. Social crime prevention strategies and social cohesion;
3. The poverty reduction linkages between social assistance, work, and employment;
4. The translation of assets acquired through government programmes / subsidies into sustainable development;
5. Land reform, democratic governance, and migration;
and
6. Social inclusion in the context of youth unemployment, aging and chronic illness and disability.

We are therefore pleased to be welcoming you to the first of the policy dialogues jointly sponsored by the Policy Analysis Unit and the MOST National Liaison Committee.

To conclude my welcoming remarks, it is appropriate to note that this year the International Social Security Association is celebrating the 80 anniversary of its founding as an organization committed to the expansion of social security coverage. Overcoming the lack of access to adequate social security remains a huge challenge in many parts of the world and this colloquium should be seen as a contribution to the global effort to create a sound knowledge base for the

expansion of coverage. In deploying a broad conception of comprehensive social security we are highlighting both the 'protection' and 'promotion' dimensions of social security and must attend to both the demand and supply sides of expanding social security.

The programme of the colloquium, attempts to create space for a discussion of the main constituent parts in social security schemes; namely coverage, benefits, financing, and administration – and I would like to express my appreciation to my colleagues Dr Charles Hongoro, Ms Claire Botha, and Ms Arlene Grossberg for their tireless efforts that have helped to make this colloquium a reality.

On behalf of the Human Science Research Council and the South African National Liaison Committee of the MOST Programme in Unesco, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all the participants in this policy dialogue.