

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Key-note address by

Ambassador Marcus Cornaro,

Head of the EU Delegation to South Africa

Closure Event

Primary Health Care Sector Policy Support

Programme

Soshanguve, Pretoria, Saturday 07 October 2017

Relevant Twitter accounts: [@stefanomanservi](#) ; [@europeaid](#); National Department of Health:[@HealthZA](#),; EU Young Leader for Health 2014 from SA ('influencer' with many Twitter followers): [@ChoonaraShakira](#); Citizen journalism & medicine monitoring initiative: [@HealtheNews](#); Official Twitter account of the World Health Organization: [@WHO](#); Global coalition on universal health coverage: [@UHC_Day](#);

Hashtags: [#HealthForAll](#); [#globalhealth](#), [#UHCday](#), [#HealthForAll](#), [#GlobalGoals](#); [#SouthAfrica](#). [#UHC2030](#): [#equity](#). [#EU](#), [#SDGLive](#)

Hon. Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi
Director General of Health, Ms Precious Matsoso
My friends, the European Union Member States Ambassadors European
Ambassadors and other Colleagues here present
Senior Government Officials from National Provincial and Municipal levels
Members of the Community,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here today to celebrate one of our most successful joint programmes, the Primary Health Care Sector Policy Support Programme, the PrimCare.

As Ambassador of the European Union to South Africa, I would like to spend a few words celebrating the **long-last partnership** between South Africa and Europe in the health sector:

- The European Union has a longstanding relationship with SA which dates back **before 1994**. The Special Programme for the Victims of Apartheid channelled funds to the NGOs in charge, among other, to provide health services to disadvantaged areas and discriminated citizens.
- After the 1994 democratic elections, our relations have gone from strength to strength and since 2007 we have established a **Strategic Partnership**. South Africa is the only country in Africa with which we have a Partnership, covering many different sectors from science and technology to peace and security through migration and energy.... **International cooperation** is an important element of our partnership, with an overall budget of approx. 3.7 BN RAND (Euro 250 million) for the 2014-2020 period.
- We have a "**value added**" **approach** to international cooperation in South Africa. This translates into enabling the Government to identify innovative, creative, experimental activities to address systemic issues. If successful,

such activities may then be replicated with the Government's own resources. We take a similar approach with civil society organisations which complement the government's own programmes. The PrimCare we celebrate today is a concrete example of this 'value-added approach'.

- The provision of funding is one aspect of our international cooperation. **Policy dialogue** to learn and discuss from each other's experiences is an equally important factor of the equation. I would like to thank you Hon Minister and DG for the **exceptional quality** of the dialogue we are having with your Department and for your coordinating effort in policy dialogue with the Donors. The dialogue with the Department of Health has always been well structured, regular and coordinated.
- In health alone, since 1994, the EU has committed bilaterally over 300 M€ – almost 5 billion rand– to the South African health sector, chiefly to support primary health care and fight HIV/AIDS.
- This investment is in addition to the important contributions of **our Member States**, such as Germany, France and Italy, and our commitment to the multilateral organisations, such as the World Health Organisation and the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.
- Concerning the Global Fund I would like to remember that the EU and Member States actually **contribute to almost 80%** of its budget.
- Today we are celebrating a Programme that is very dear to our hearts. Its closure **does not mean** that the EU stops supporting the health sector in South Africa.
- Through the local office of the World Health Organisation, we provide technical assistance for the roll out of the National Health Insurance. This assistance (up to January 2019) has been channelled first through the 6 work streams informing the policy and now is supporting the NHI Fund for the concrete implementation of the policy.

- Social security and universal health coverage are sectors of particular importance and **expertise** in the European Union. All our 28 Member States have well-developed machineries that run social security safety nets and public health insurances for their citizens.
- As just discussed with Hon. Minister Motsoaledi, we will be proud to **sponsor peer-to-peer interactions** between civil servants from our systems with their counterparts in South Africa to support the running of the NHI. A number of different mechanisms are available for South Africa. This new type of engagement, on an equal-to-equal partnership is crucial in promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- The EU also provides substantial funding for **health research**. Most of the funding is allocated to clinical trials to test new drugs and diagnostics for HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis through the **European and Developing Countries Clinical Trial Partnership (EDCTP)**, since 2003.
- **South Africa is, by far, the African country benefitting most from our investment in health research**, with a leading regional role. EDCTP implements a **governance model** of the 21st century where European and African countries have **equal say** in priority setting.
- As an example, this programme has two Headquarters, **one in the North**, in the Netherlands and **one in the South, in Cape Town**, inside the South African Medical Research Council, to represent the African component of this partnership for innovation, investment and better care.
- Last Tuesday, 3 October, in Johannesburg, my embassy attended the launch of the **first Alumni network among African health scientists** who benefitted from European funding; **150 African scholars were presents, 30 from South Africa!** It is clear that the EU and Member States want to invest in the next generation of African scientists. The development of health

research also means stable high quality jobs and shared economic benefits both for Africa and for Europe.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to praise here the exceptional cooperation between South Africa and the EU in the health sector. Today we celebrate the successes of a very important programme. Let me assure you about the solidity of our Partnership as well as the willingness to continue to work together for a **long and healthy life for all South Africans!**