



What is the Department of Health doing to eradicate TB?

Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi addressed the concerns raised during the TB Conference in his presentation. He emphasised the government's plans and strategies to stop the spreading of TB, to increase the identification and treatment of TB patients.

In his opening statement the Minister addressed the issue raised by Section 27 in regards of declaring TB as a state of emergency disease. "We can't declare TB as a state of emergency disease, I don't see a need. There are plans and programmes which we could implement to prevent the spread of TB but for these programmes to be successful they require help because they are massive and we would have to quantify the implementation. We have to move, work together and make noise about the TB programmes as much as we were vocal about HIV. We need to place TB treatment on the same hierarchy as we placed HIV in the past years" said Dr Motsoaledi.

The South African Department of Health has partnered with Health Departments from Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland with the goal to decrease the spreading of TB through miners and prisoners who have travelled through these different countries. These four countries are working on convincing other African countries to join this initiative.

The Minister also addressed the issue of civil society making a lot of noise about the implementation of TB screening in provinces and treatment not realising that the country doesn't have enough Doctors and Nurses, therefore, it is difficult to increase service delivery without people who are going to oversee the success of the services.

The minister mentioned that the Department is committed to:

- Find every TB patient
- Test every TB patient
- Initiate treatment for every TB patient
- Trace contacts of every TB patient
- Trace every TB patient lost to treatment

In conclusion, Dr Motsoaledi highlighted that people don't know what to do to prevent themselves from contracting TB so they have to learn to manage it, furthermore, people need to work together to eliminate the spread of TB.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About The Foundation for Professional Development (FPD)

The Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) is a South African Private Institution of Higher Education dedicated to building a better society through education and capacity development. FPD annually provides management and clinical training to 50 000 healthcare professionals and managers across Africa and has support the initiation on ART of more than 390 000 PLHIV. FPD also organises national and international conferences as a conduit to shape public and policy perspectives. FPD's involvement in conferences dates back to the Durban in 2000 conference where it provided the conference secretariat. For more information please visit www.foundation.co.za.

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