

Declaration on health and welfare in Southern Africa

Maputo, April 15, 1990

This Maputo Conference, an International Conference on Health in Southern Africa, held between April 9-15, 1990, has been a unique and unprecedented event at a moment of historic opportunity for the liberation struggle.

This meeting has had a special and remarkable character for three reasons.

1. It has brought together for the first time health and social welfare workers, anti-apartheid activists from the United States of America, the United Kingdom and other countries, organisations representing more than 54 000 health workers from within South Africa, and their counterparts and comrades from the ANC, Mozambique and all of the Frontline States.

2. It has addressed the urgent challenge, in this final and decisive stage of the liberation struggle, of formulating specific proposals, strategies and policies for the structure, organisation, financing and development of health and welfare services for a truly democratic South Africa.

3. Of further political significance, the Maputo Conference has been an expression of the Mozambique government's solidarity with progressive forces in South Africa, a recognition of our shared experience of the tyranny of apartheid and our mutual abhorrence of the deliberate destabilisation of Mozambique, and in particular of the appalling atrocities perpetrated by the apartheid regime. This shared experience - including the deliberate apartheid effort, both within and outside South Africa, to destroy the potential for full development of entire generations - united us as brothers and sisters.

This conference commits itself to:

- Transforming the existing health and social services in South Africa into a non-racial, accessible, equitable, cost-effective and democratic national health and welfare system.
- Promoting a new vision of health and welfare services as a tool of national development.
- Devising an appropriate social welfare policy for a future South Africa and to placing the development of this policy high on the agenda of the national liberation movement.
- Prioritising the development of a progressive primary care strategy as the basis for the provision of health and welfare services.
- Emphasising the importance of making realistic assessments of the resources required to meet national health and welfare needs equitably, and of researching means for mobilising such resources.

In line with the above commitments, high priority must be placed on applied health and welfare research and training. Communities, political organisations and research groupings should be mobilised to achieve this in the shortest possible time.

The conference devoted particular attention to the problems of financing future national health and welfare systems in South Africa, and recognised the need for further research. These debates need to be placed in the context of the specific characteristics of a mixed economy. Discussions around the role of the private health and welfare sector should be extended through health and community organisations, taking cognisance of effective international models.

Adequate primary health care and welfare services will require appropriate

personnel. The conference stressed the need for research and training, for the integration of ANC health workers at every level into the health sector, and for understanding of the role of traditional healers.

The participants are unanimous in their belief that the training and education of health and welfare workers is most effective and appropriate when it is situated in the community, and achieved through problem-based learning methods. The problems of accreditation of health professionals trained by different methods and through different institutions both within and outside South Africa, has to be addressed with the relevant authorities in order to maximise opportunities for employment of these individuals.

All delegates to the conference benefitted considerably from presentations of experiences in health and welfare services in the Frontline States. Some of these experiences, which have a direct bearing on the reconstruction of South Africa's health and social services, must be more fully explored. Everyone is fully committed to enhancing the quality of life of all the people of the Southern African subcontinent through regional cooperative endeavours, which would be encouraged and established once South Africa has obtained independence, democracy and freedom.

A number of issues of urgent priority were identified. This conference affirms the need to integrate women into all health and welfare initiatives, and points out that every proposal must specifically examine the consequences for women. The conference takes particular cognisance of the needs of children and families, and the damage that has been done to them by apartheid. That damage must be reversed. The worth and dignity of family life must

be restored. Childhood must be reclaimed. The conference stresses the importance of the health and welfare of workers, not only on the factory floor and the rural farm, but also in relation to the appalling community and environmental conditions which must be massively improved. To address the urgent problem of the return to South Africa of more than 20 000 exiles, the conference endorses the formation of a National Reception Committee, through which the ANC together with other progressive mass-based organisations, can work out concrete measures for the rapid and effective integration of returnees into South African social, political and economic life.

All those present are acutely aware that South Africa and indeed the entire Southern African region is facing a crisis over the HIV epidemic. Urgent action must be initiated immediately, as the State's programmes are fundamentally limited and seriously flawed. Commu-

nity-based initiatives are known to be more effective since they pay attention to the broader psycho-social implications of the disease. An alternative progressive campaign with the support of political and other representative organisations has to be set up immediately. An AIDS Task Force with strong political leadership is proposed to take this programme forward.

Finally, this Conference expresses our hope, our determination and our confidence.

Our hope is derived from the fact that all the nations in the region are accomplishing the complete decolonisation of the subcontinent of Southern Africa. The independence of Namibia is a recent example.

Our determination is to eradicate the last vestiges of racial oppression and colonial exploitation from the entire region.

Our confidence stems from our capacity for unity which has been affirmed

by the common sense of purpose which has brought together people from many nations, many origins and backgrounds, and many disciplines to address the short and longer-term tasks of charting the future of a truly democratic South Africa. □

Issued by the Conference Organising Groups:

The African National Congress; National Education Health and Allied Workers Union, National Medical and Dental Association; Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa; South African Health Workers Congress; Welfare Coordinating Committee; Ministry of Health, Mozambique; Committee for Health in Southern Africa (USA); Representatives from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Community Based Medical Education at the University of New Mexico; Anti-Apartheid Movement (London).

Other participants were:

The Deans of the medical schools of the Universities of: Edouard Mondlane, Mozambique; Ilorin, Nigeria; Newcastle, Australia; Zambia.

Representatives from the Frontline States: Angola, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia.

Representatives from FRELIMO, the WHO representative, Maputo; other Mozambican participants.

Representatives from the following internal South African organisations:

Congress of South African Trade Unions - health and safety group; Concerned Social Workers; Critical Health publication; Health Workers Society; Health Workers Union; Industrial Health and Safety Service Organisations; Islamic Medical Association; National Interim Women's Group; National Union of Students; Progressive Primary Health Care Network; Social Workers Forum; South African Black Social Workers Association; South African Council of Churches; South African National Students Congress; United Democratic Front.



Delegates to the Maputo Conference.