

Masoyise Health Program Satellite Session - 7 June 2021

Organised labour input

Programme Director, Organised Business, Organised Labour, CCOD/MBOD, Department of Health, Department of Employment and Labour, may I safely say all protocols observed, I am greeting you on behalf of organised labour at the MHSC, who trusted me to speak on their behalf at this session.

It is an honour to be here to give an organised labour's response at Masoyise Health Programme's Satellite Session.

The initiating of WHO's End TB campaign aimed to conquer the global TB epidemic, with targets to reduce TB deaths by 95% and to cut new cases by 90% between 2015 and 2035, and to ensure that no family is burdened with catastrophic expenses due to TB. “

South Africa then responded by setting an objective to reduce TB incidence by at least 30%, from 834/100,000 population in 2015 to less than 584/100,000 by 2022.

In 2016 the Mineral Council of South Africa officially launched Masoyise i TB, we have, and we are still walking this path meticulously as a multistakeholder forum. The Campaigns delivered by Masoyise, sometimes in different selected official languages, which is testimony in delivering best in class in the South African Mining Industry when coming to managing TB, HIV and NCD epidemics have been of great value.

It is our view as Organised Labour at the Mine Health and Safety Council that the high TB screening of around 90% achieved by Mineral Council members mines was no nearer to the term called “Lucky” but was the results of the rigorous drive by Masoyise in promoting awareness to employees and highly supported by unions, which in return knock down resistant and see greater participation by employees. This journey by Masoyise reminds me of the speech by Springbok Captain Siya Kolisa after the Springbok won the World Rugby Cup in 2019 open quote *“So many problems in our country, but to have a team like this ... we know we come from different backgrounds, different races, and we came together with one goal and wanted to achieve it”* close quote, We are no doubt Masoyise Lives the values.

The National Strategic Plan is closely aligned with the National Development Plan, locating the struggle against HIV, TB and STIs within the broader struggle for economic and social

development. These are mutually reinforcing efforts: progress in reducing the burden of disease contributes to development, while faster development improves our ability to address the social and structural drivers of HIV, TB and STIs.

The mid-term National Strategic Plan (NSP) - 2017 – 2022 review points to the high burden in men and we know our industry is male dominated, therefore all forces in the industry need to come together to develop a programme of action, our worry is the respond and reporting by small mines.

We acknowledge and appreciate the work done by Masoyise Health Programme, but we want to urge commitment by companies in terms of reporting. The magnificent drive by Masoyise is poorly impacted by COVID-19 in mining, impacting the continuous monitoring of 90 90 90 strategy. Our efforts as unions of continuously encouraging workers to register themselves in companies ARV' s programme have been tested during this trying time of COVID-19, as these workers were categorised as a vulnerable employees, thanks to companies who follow guidelines for managing vulnerable employees in particular managing employees who are HIV positive, shame to those who send HIV Positive employees home irrespective of their strong cd4 counts, applying a blanket approach to employees living with HIV virus.

At the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting, a multi-sectoral group of partners launched a new initiative – called Ending Workplace Tuberculosis – aimed at engaging major businesses in the fight against tuberculosis. Initiated by the World Economic Forum; Johnson & Johnson; Royal Philips; Fullerton Health; the Confederation of Indian Industry; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and the Stop TB Partnership, this initiative will leverage the untapped potential of businesses in countries disproportionately impacted by TB to roll out awareness, detection, and treatment programs, to reach millions of workers, their families, and communities. That's exactly what Masoyise Health Programme is doing.

There is a need for structured and comprehensive guidance on health promotion, monitoring and evaluation and more emphasis to be placed on tracking trends, revive TB and HIV committees in all operations.

In closing

The Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, the deadliest in history, infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide—about one-third of the planet's population—and killed an estimated 20 million to 50 million victims, including some 675,000 Americans, before a vaccine was discovered.

As workers when an opportunity arises for us to receive COVID-19 Vaccines, lets grab that opportunity and be inoculated, do it for yourself, your loved ones and for the economy.

I will quote from our late former President Nelson Mandela, who was a global champion of people living with HIV and TB, as we commemorate a Human Rights Month, I quote

“Let us remind ourselves that our work is far from complete. Where there is poverty and sickness, including AIDS, where human beings are being oppressed, there is more work to be done. Our work is for freedom for all...” close quote.

I thank you.

Gabriel Nkosi
AMCU National Health and Safety
Coordinator