Welcome and Good Wishes

We are at a day of a New Year and of a New decade in the Millennium. It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you and extend Compliments of the Season to you all. Today, I hope that you all had a peaceful and restful festive season and that you have recovered your energies for another full year. Please accept my good wishes for lives, love and good health for you and your families.

The measles outbreak

We are meeting at a time when the African Union is mourning the loss of an illustrious health leader in the person of Dr. Mantombazana Tshabalala-Msimang, the former Minister of Health of South Africa who passed away late last year. She was a sister and indeed a friend of the people of Namibia. We remain grateful for her unconditional support at all times. Let us observe a minute of silence in her honor. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

In the world

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The President’s directives

I would like now to integrate some of your contributions and say a little more about the three important quotations from the Statement by His Excellency the President on the occasion of the First 2010 Cabinet meeting last January. I extracted these three quotes earlier this week and I am now directing some key officials here and in the provinces, to take measures to address these directives to my staff. This is what His Excellency had to tell us and I quote: “We are people in different parts of the country are demanding...”. I am going to continue to answer your legitimate calls and plans by expanding the availability of potable water, access to quality health care and education and by strengthening our responses to the challenges of HIV/AIDS, crime and unemployment”.

The President further said: “…it cannot be business as usual. Rather, we must boldly and proactively take initiatives that are going to make a real difference in addressing the problems that confront our nation. We must be bold and resolute enough to adopt and expand only those measures and approaches that are effective in yielding the desired results.”

A third important directive from His Excellency reads as follows: “I would like to urge all Namibians once again, to “get involved and participate” in making sure that health services are provided to all Namibians. Let us ensure that we take better care of the health of our people through proper planning at all levels. This implies that as political principals of different public institutions, the Ministers and their deputies must at all times keep their hands on the ‘wheel’ of the nation’s initiatives, and beseech Ministries and other relevant Cabinet Decisions by the Permanent Secretaries and their staff’ unquote.

Call to action – President’s directives and the Strategic Plan

The President’s directives are very clear. The year 2010, will be an implementation year, a year of action, a year which is results oriented and forward looking. This week’s session is known as the Management Development Forum. This is the best opportunity to re-think and build better and robust systems that will address the skewed health system. This measles outbreak gives us a bold opportunity to adapt our maps and approaches that are effective in yielding the desired results.

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Relevant to all of us, our Vision for the next 5 years starting now is for this Ministry to have “The Leading Public Provider of Quality Health and Social Services”. This is why, I am pleased to note that the Strategic Plan has been cascaded to all Regional and National Directors and as far as District and Intermediate Hospitals. All Namibians are therefore called upon to plan and implement plans consistent with the Plan. The Plan is aligned with the Namibian Balance Score Card for the financial year 2010/2011 that is linked to the National Health Strategic Plan. This Programme is another indicator of the Namibian Government’s big achievement and a first step of this Ministry towards the implementation of its Strategic Agenda.

I am also to state, for monitoring purposes, a standard reporting format and key standard indicators/measures have been developed and are to be addressed during this meeting. This calls for commitment, dedication, strong leadership and a sense of responsibility on the part of our Directors and Heads of Departments. We have to be accountable to our patients and clients, and especially to custom service’s satisfaction rating.

And this is therefore my sincere call to all of us to perform our duties with dedication if the Ministry to make a real difference in addressing the problems that confront our nation to its satisfaction and by living in our vision and mission. I am equally happy to note that the first item of the Programme has been deliberated on during this week’s Management Development Forum. I therefore wish to thank the Office of the Prime Minister, which will be the facilitator of this process. This is the Namibian Vision 2030.

I expect that during the next Enlarged Ministerial Management Committee Meeting of February 2011, this Ministry’s performance report should be presented and the outcomes should be discussed. This is why I am addressing this meeting at this early stage.

I further believe that the Ministry to the achievement of the Government’s Strategic Agenda, the SPAPA Party will continue to work in close collaboration with other stakeholders such as the WHO, the Evaluated and popular health interventions.

We need to have reasons to celebrate but also to be concerned. The ongoing measles outbreak is a reality check, a wake up call, but also a tremendous opportunity. The measles outbreak has uncovered many of the systemic issues that we have been battling with for the past 20 years as a young nation that inherited a fragmented and skewed health system. This measles outbreak gives us an opportunity to re-think and really see the challenges that will address the challenges of immunization, nutrition, sanitation, and other health determinants and risk factors of all health.

As you all know, the Namibian outbreak is not happening in isolation. There is a Southern Africa wider outbreak that has hit Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia in various degrees. As we speak, WHO teams are on the ground in these countries, including Namibia, investigating further and providing guidance for a better response. Indeed, you have also been aware that the Ministry has embarked on an eradication campaign for the entire population of Opuwo, to control the outbreak. We will also be vaccinating in Outapi, Okahandja and Rundu.

Reminiscing the unsung heroes

In Namibia

Allow me to pause for a moment to pay tribute to the armed forces of our health system, all these men and women, doctors and pharmacists, cleaners, security staff, uniforms dressers, nurses and other officers and other cadres that have passed away at the service of our nation, promoting or restoring our people’s health and preventing diseases. They deserve our respect and their dedication will always be remembered with profound gratitude.

In the Region

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Achievements

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I further believe that the Ministry to the achievement of the Government’s Strategic Agenda, the SPAPA Party will continue to work in close collaboration with other stakeholders such as the WHO, the Evaluated and popular health interventions. Our work, planning and decisions at all levels of the health sector must also be accountable to our customers, but also to our partners.

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