Healthy Lifestyle Day, on 26 February 2010, in Cape Town, South Africa, to highlight the importance of eating a balanced diet as part of the epidemiological transition we are facing with and to encourage our people, young and old, men and women, to embrace healthy lifestyles and reduce modifiable risk factors. In this regard, we underscore the importance of early detection, appropriate treatment, proper nutrition, and, most importantly, healthy diets and sedentary life style. I would like to invite you all to join SADC in celebrating the Day.

The International Health Partnership and its related initiatives

The second one is the International Health Partnership and its related initiatives. I would like to talk about the Global Health Initiative, a partnership that puts the Paris and Accra principles on aid effectiveness into practice, with the aim of improving health services and health outcomes, particularly for the poor and vulnerable. The Paris Principles, endorsed by 44 donors and signed by 62 countries, set out fundamental commitments to national ownership, harmonize among agencies, managing for results and mutual accountability. The H6 Principles for health improvements that count – are now the H6 principles for health improvements that count, the Paris Principles for health improvements that count – are now the H6 principles for health improvements that count, the Paris Principles for health improvements that count – are now the H6 principles for health improvements that count, the Paris Principles for health improvements that count. It is important to recognize that these principles are a commitment to making the best use of whatever expertise is available at the UN level and to the WHO, and to improve consultation, communication and coordination, in line with their commitments.

The Global Health Initiative

Let us bring together the development countries, development partners and civil society organizations. Although Namibia is not yet a member of the H6 Principles, we are supportive of this global partnership and we are happy to have all the initiatives that are currently being implemented. We have signed up to the Global Health Initiative, the Paris Principles, the Accra Principles and the Global Fund.

The Global Health Initiative shares with you all the fact that we are in a global health epidemic, the fourth most deadly disease in terms of the number of people who die from it. It is a pandemic that is caused by a virus called HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that there are 36 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, and that 2.5 million people die from AIDS every year. In Namibia, we have 80,000 people living with HIV/AIDS, and 6,000 people die from AIDS every year. This is a global epidemic that affects all countries and all peoples, and it is a challenge that we must all face together.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the Ministry of Health and Social Services for its continued successes and achievements and congratulate the Health sector on the implementation of the Ministry’s Strategic Plan and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through its Directorate of Hospitals, Division’s Management Plans, so that we can be assured of the continued success of the health sector.

In so doing, we need to leverage the strengths of our development partners, the civil society, the private sector and academia. We need to be able to call upon the expertise of our development partners, and we need to be able to leverage the skills that exist out there, while the time is now, in the best interest of our nation.

Finally, I wish you all a productive 2010.