South African Pharmacy Council

4TH NATIONAL PHARMACY CONFERENCE 2026
A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE: ADVANCING PHARMACY TOWARDS 2050
11 - 13 October 2026 | Durban ICC, South Africa

ADDRESS BY MR MOGOLOGOLO PHASHA, PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PHARMACY COUNCIL, AT THE OPENING OF THE 4TH NATIONAL PHARMACY CONFERENCE

11 OCTOBER 2026

INKOSI ALBERT LUTHULI INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE COMPLEX, DURBAN

[Check against delivery]

Vice-President of Council and Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Mme Mmapaseka Steve Letsike

Members of the South African Pharmacy Council

Registrar of Council, Mr Tlala

Representatives of pharmacy associations and other Organised Pharmacy formations

Distinguished guests and delegates

Members of the Pharmacy profession

I will like to pay homage to the indigenous people of KwaZulu-Natal on whose land we gather today through to Tuesday for our 4th National Pharmacy Conference.

As I mentioned in the opening of the 3rd NPC at Sun City in 2019, I continue to rest the Presidential Chain until the next President decides whether to continue resting it or to explain its significance to the Profession as he or she wears it.

I stand before you today with extreme gratitude and a great sense of pride at what we have been able to achieve collectively as a profession over the years. The National

Pharmacy Conference has served not only as the apex convention of the pharmacy profession, but has had real impact on health policy direction, Council's programmatic work, and has served as an incubator for key policy position in the advancement of pharmaceutical services in South Africa. As a start, since the deliberations around human resources in pharmacy at first National Pharmacy Conference, we implemented education and training interventions and programmes that have seen the size of the pharmacists register grow by 45% from just above 13 000 to 19 500 in a space of 13 years. Similarly, the register of Qualified Post-Basic Pharmacist's Assistants has grown by 192% from 6 800 to just above 19 900 this year.

Among other indicators of the impact that this gathering has on policy, are the strides we have been able to make in expanding primary health services available in pharmacies and the specialisations in various sectors of pharmacy to ensure advanced skills across the pharmaceutical value chain, from manufacturing, radiopharmacy, clinical pharmacy and public health pharmacy, amongst others.

Session Chair; since the 2019 conference, Council has revised and implemented scopes of practice, qualification standards and course accreditation criteria for both the Primary Care Drug Therapy and Family Planning as expanded primary health care programmes. Input from the 2019 conference and stakeholder participation have predominantly shaped the aforementioned revision processes.

Furthermore, we have implemented new programmes in response to national health priorities. Among these is the Immunisation and Injection Technique programme which increases access and delivery capacity for the Expanded Programme on Immunisation. Pharmacies have demonstrated their capacity to deliver immunisation services at great scale, as well as to monitor and respond to adverse events following immunisation (AEFIs) during the COVID-19 pandemic vaccination drive, wherein they were the largest vaccinator outside the public healthcare system.

Ladies and gentlemen, another programme implemented since the last conference is the Pharmacist-Initiated Management of Antiretroviral Therapy (PIMART) – a key programme in increasing the human resource capacity needed for tackling HIV/Aids by preventing new infections and suppressing viral loads in persons living with HIV thus increasing life expectancy. I am happy to share that, at long last and following a protracted legal battle which reached the Supreme Court of Appeal, this programme

is presently being implemented albeit with a limited scope of practice until a refresher training programme is implemented. Though over the last two decades, the number of AIDS-related death reduced by more than two thirds from 261 000 in 2006 to 74 000 in 2026, more work still needs to be done to halt new HIV infections in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the objectives of the National Development Plan. We believe that adding PIMART to the national interventions against HIV/Aids will help South Africa move much closer to realising this imperative.

Colleagues, as I open the programme of the 4th National Pharmacy Conference, I would like to borrow from one of the founding fathers of our Rainbow Nation, Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, as he delivered the closing address during the 13th International Aids Conference in this very venue in July 2000.

And I quote:

> "I come from a long tradition of collective leadership, consultative decision-making and joint action towards the common good. We have overcome much that many thought insurmountable through an adherence to those practices. In the face of the grave threat posed by HIV/Aids, we have to rise above our differences and combine our efforts to save our people. History will judge us harshly if we fail to do so now, and right now".

End Quote.

While the health challenges our nation faced 26 years ago differ from those we face today, I would like to argue that the path to resolve them and the very fibre of the framework towards that path is strikingly similar – we need collective decision-making in our profession through dialogue and consultation, as well as a resolve to collaborate towards the greater good of the people of South Africa.

Colleagues, it is against this logic that I call upon all delegates here today to robustly engage the topics of deliberation and contribute to resolutions and recommendations that we can all rally behind as we exit the conference this coming Tuesday.

The conference programme is organised in tracks focused on issues affecting various sectors of pharmacy and their contribution to the national health care system, as well as plenary sessions congregating in this very hall to discuss and find solutions for

broader healthcare challenges facing the nation and key programmes for the delivery of healthcare services.

Universal health coverage can no longer stay a promise; it is a goal that must be attained now. In the same breath, the misuse and abuse of medicines including substances such as codeine and other pain management medicines, as well as the weight management interventions, need our immediate attention.

South Africans need to buy and drink medicines because they need them for their own health and not and definitely not, because they have a hope and a wish to win money, a car, electricity coupons, save on bank charges or have more cell phone airtime.

Another key challenge is rising deaths due to non-communicable and lifestyle diseases, which now contribute more than half of all natural deaths in South Africa. Yet, most of these diseases can be managed if detected early. The conference programme is also rich with workshops and sessions on best and innovative practices in medicine discovery, manufacturing, distribution, education and training, and the delivery of pharmaceutical services – we believe these will enrich your practice environments and ultimately better the lives of your patients, organisations, and the nation at large.

Ladies and gentlemen, I declare the 4th National Pharmacy Council programme open.

Ngiyabonga, thank you!