

**CLOSING REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS, Ms NOMANTU NKOMO-RALEHOKO DURING THE GDoH STRATEGIC LEKGOTLA HELD ON AT MISTY HILLS FROM THE 04 AUGUST 2023.**

Distinguished guest, colleagues and honoured participants,

As we draw the curtains on this important strategic session for the Gauteng Department of Health, I stand before you with a heart full of gratitude and admiration for each and every one of you. We have embarked on a journey of transformation, united by a common vision of providing quality healthcare services and creating a healthier and more equitable Gauteng.

I want to extend a special word of appreciation to our invited guests, whose presence and expertise have added immense value to our discussions. Your insights and perspectives have been invaluable, and we are honoured to have had you with us throughout this session. Your support and engagement are testaments to the strength of our collective commitment.

"The tide has turned - finishing stronger." This powerful theme resonates deeply with the essence of our deliberations. It serves as a poignant reminder that no matter the challenges we face, we have the power to change the course of events and emerge stronger from the storm. We have come a long way, and today, we stand on the cusp of a new era of progress and success.

Colleagues, out of this Lekgotla, our vision as a department is clear: to provide quality healthcare services and create a healthier and more equitable Gauteng. This is not just a distant dream; it is a tangible reality that we are actively building. We are the architects of better health outcomes for our communities, and it is our unwavering dedication that will bring this vision to life.

To achieve our goals in this last mile of the 6th Administration, we must maintain a sense of urgency and agility. We are in a race against time, and the finish line is the improved health and well-being of every person we serve. This requires us to be proactive, innovative, and adaptable in our approach to challenges and opportunities.

On Day 1, we set the stage for our strategic planning session, as we began by emphasizing the importance of Health and Wellness, exercising together to live our message. It is with great pride that we can say the tide has turned for the Department

of Health. As we approach the last mile of the 6th Administration, we must maintain a sense of urgency and agility in delivering our services.

We celebrate our successes, such as improvements in audit outcomes and the digitization of forensic pathology services, as well as addressing surgical backlogs. We have become a beacon for other Health departments in the country, even surpassing the Department of Education. However, this is just the beginning, and we must use our successes as a benchmark to identify areas for improvement.

Our focus moving forward includes improving audit outcomes, particularly in asset management recons and reducing fruitless and wasteful expenditure. Enhancing oncology services, prioritizing the wellness and safety of both staff and patients, and boosting staff morale and performance are vital aspects we must address.

In addition, we must strive for cutting-edge medical enhancements and set the ambitious objective of opening a Centre of Excellence for Mental Health. By keeping our vision of providing quality healthcare services and creating a healthier and more equitable Gauteng at the forefront, we can shape a brighter future for our communities.

During this strategic session, we had the privilege of receiving seven insightful presentations from our oversight partners and interested groups. These partnerships are of utmost importance as we strive to improve our budgets, financing, and focus on achieving the targets and priorities we have set for ourselves. Our partners will play a crucial role in helping us enhance the quality of services we provide to our patients, wherever they may be.

**Let me briefly highlight the topics covered in these presentations:**

**Presentation 1:** Dr. Koku from the World Health Organization (WHO) provided an overview of global public health issues and how they relate to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This presentation shed light on opportunities for optimizing our performance in the context of the broader global health landscape.

**Presentation 2:** Prof. Laetitia Rispel from Wits University spoke about revitalizing health, unleashing potential, building resilience, and navigating change. This presentation offered valuable insights into how we can adapt and thrive in the face of evolving challenges.

**Presentation 3:** The Provincial Treasury, represented by Mr. R. Rasivhetshele and Ms. V. Human, provided an overview of the financial context of the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH). Understanding this context is crucial in making informed decisions about resource allocation and utilization.

**Presentation 4:** Mr. G. Gotz from the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) addressed population growth, poverty, inequality, and social mobility, with a specific focus on their impact on health outcomes. This presentation highlighted the interconnectedness of social factors and health.

**Presentation 5:** Prof. L. Chauke from GDoH and Wits University presented the latest chapter of the National Saving Mothers Report. This report is essential in guiding our efforts to improve maternal and child health outcomes.

**Presentation 6:** Mr. T. Masilela from the Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (DPME) discussed performance on the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), key debates, critical performance questions, and emerging directions. This presentation helped us assess our progress and identify areas for improvement.

**Presentation 7:** Mr. S. Mtshali and Mr. L. Akhalwaya from the Office of the Premier (OOP) presented the 2024 Provincial Budget prioritization framework and a performance dashboard on elevated priorities. Understanding budget priorities is vital in ensuring effective resource allocation to meet our strategic goals.

On Day 3, the strategic session culminated with the commissions engaging in fruitful discussions, focusing on three critical tasks: setting the scene and reflecting on past performance, reimagining health services, and developing roadmaps towards the end of the term.

The discussions had been intense, extending late into the night, and all the commissions successfully crafted roadmaps to guide us towards achieving our goals. In the morning, a tree planting ceremony symbolized our growth together as the Department of Health. Just like a tree's parts work in harmony for survival, we emphasized the need to function as a cohesive unit to scale the heights of delivering quality healthcare services and taking healthcare in Gauteng and South Africa to new heights.

As we bring this successful 3-day session to a close, I am reminded of former President Mbeki's quote: "Those who complete the course will do so only because

they do not, as fatigue sets in, convince themselves that the road ahead is still too long, the incline too steep, the loneliness impossible to bear and the price itself of doubt value." You have all fully demonstrated your resilience against all odds, and I have no doubt that you will finish strong.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your active participation and unwavering dedication. Your commitment to this strategic session has been exceptional, and it is because of your collective efforts that we have achieved so much in these past few days.

A big thank you goes to our esteemed guests and the MMCs for gracing us with your presence and valuable insights. Your support and engagement have been instrumental in making this session a resounding success.

I also want to extend my appreciation to our presenters for sharing your expertise and knowledge with us. Your contributions have enriched our discussions and provided us with valuable perspectives to consider.

To the organizing team, led by Ms. Tsholofelo Adelekan and her team, thank you for your meticulous planning and flawless execution. Your hard work behind the scenes has made this gathering possible and successful.

To the Acting HOD and the team from my office, your support and dedication have been invaluable in ensuring the smooth running of this session. Your commitment to the Department of Health's vision and goals is commendable, and I am grateful for your unwavering assistance.

And last but not least, a special thank you to Peter and the Vortex team for their excellent facilitation throughout the session. Your professionalism and expertise have ensured that our discussions were productive and focused.

As we leave this session, let us carry the spirit of resilience, determination, and collaboration with us. The road ahead may present challenges, but I have no doubt that together, we will overcome them and achieve our vision of providing quality healthcare services and creating a healthier and more equitable Gauteng.

Thank you once again to each and every one of you. Your dedication and commitment to the goals of the Gauteng Department of Health are truly commendable. Let us go

forth, finishing strong, and making a lasting impact on the health and well-being of our communities.

Thank you, and may we continue to work together towards a brighter future for all.