



**COGTA**  
Health  
National Treasury



## **World Environmental Health Day Commemoration and National Environmental Health Indaba Declaration 2021**

**WE**, the **DELEGATES** of the 2021 World Environmental Health Day Commemoration and National Environmental Health Indaba, drawn from the political leadership and officials of national Department of Health, Cooperation Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), National Treasury (NT), South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and municipalities, training Institutions and non-governmental organisations in the Republic of South Africa, on 28 to 30 September 2021 at the Emperors Palace, Ekurhuleni, Gauteng; of our own free will, to reflect on matters impacting on the delivery of Environmental Health Service in order to strengthen the delivery of the Services. Guided by the theme: **“Prioritising Environmental Health for healthier communities in global recovery”**.

WE ARE INSPIRED by the keynote address by the Deputy Minister of Health; the address by the Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the address by the Chairperson of South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Municipal Health Services (MHS) Working Group.

We APPRECIATE the participation of the International Federation of Environmental Health, Africa Region, the World Health Organization (WHO), Institutions of Higher Learning, and our sector partners.

We MOURN the loss of our fellow environmental health workers who died in the line of duty.

We CONGRATULATE and recognise the achievement of doctoral degrees by fellow colleagues in the sector.

We NOTE the consensus as expressed by all speakers on the centrality on environmental health to community health.

We FURTHER NOTE the common ground and consensus reached on the following sub-themes:

- Powers and functions
- Funding
- Environmental health human resource requirements
- Governance and leadership
- Environmental health information
- Environmental health personnel development
- The state of environmental health development in South Africa in view of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (4IR).
- The importance of protecting natural environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation, food security for the health of the community
- The necessity to refocus attention and resources, especially funding to preventive than curative interventions

**We therefore resolve as follows:**

### **1. On COVID-19 response**

- Environmental health professionals should participate in all Joint Operations Committee (JOCs) dealing with COVID-19.
- National Departments must standardise messages, communication, protocols and guidelines on COVID-19, such documents must be vetted by the relevant departments before being released.

## **2. Governance and leadership**

- That COGTA should provide leadership in all metros and districts to adopt human resource policies to meet the minimum staffing norms for MHS within three financial years in the same model as treasury implemented appointment of competent finance staff and establishment of budget and treasury departments as mandatory in municipalities.
- COGTA and the NDOH ensure the revival and functionality of District/Metro Health Councils (MHC).
- Assets procured during the response to disasters should be donated to district municipalities. Such resources should remain available for use within the district.
- Coordinate awareness on MHS and capacity building for councillors and managers on environmental health services.
- Management in municipalities must ensure that MHS is properly funded and resourced to respond to pandemics or any other disaster in line with disaster management plans.
- That Department of Health should finalise effective/ commencement date of Section 83 of the National Health Act [Environmental Health Investigations].
- Municipalities must ensure that their disaster risk management response plans are inclusive of MHS responsibilities.
- National and provincial departments join and support SALGA in the induction of councillors after the elections to ensure that the function is accorded the necessary service delivery status by municipalities in the new term of local government.
- Political commitment and intervention are needed to ensure that national norms and standards for environmental health are complied with.
- National Department of Health should ensure that norms and standards compliance become an auditable function.
- Performance management of municipal senior managers should contain MHS as a key performance area.
- Together with the review of legislation, COGTA should review funding for MHS.
- COGTA should ensure the effective rendering of MHS to the entire South African society and that the required resources are provided.
- Consider partnering with the Department of Basic Education and the private sector as a mechanism of entrenching behaviour change to community health issues.

## **3. Powers and functions**

- Reconcile the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, 1972 (Act 54 of 1972), authorisation and Minister of COGTA adjustment of powers and functions to address the policy and legislative state of flux in respect of which municipalities should perform the function.
- Develop a clear Framework for Capacity Assessment and adjustment of powers and functions between district and local municipalities regarding municipal health.

## **4. Training and development**

- All spheres of government should prioritise continuous training and development for environmental health.
- Invest in human capital development.
- Research and development.
- Training of personnel on technology utilisation.

## **5. Funding**

- The national Department of Health, National Treasury and COGTA should investigate the feasibility of grant funding for environmental health services.
- Review of the contribution of the national fiscus towards the funding of the MHS function.
- Explore the possibility of income generation sources for MHS.
- Assessments of municipal budgets by provincial and national treasuries must include consideration of the extent of funding of MHS function.

- Municipalities must spend and use the available resources efficiently and optimally.
- A full costing study on Municipal Health Services should be undertaken to inform budgeting for MHS by Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC)
- A comparative study on the expenditure incurred on the curative versus the preventive interventions be undertaken, of South Africa with BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) countries through Statistics South Africa.

## **6. Technology and information management**

- Build 4IR infrastructure.
- Inequality in the tools to address technology must be immediately attended to
- Government Must ensure the availability of ICT Infrastructure and Maintenance thereof in view of the 4IR.
- SALGA, NDOH and the representatives of the municipalities must lead in centralising the development and piloting of the information management system and review the dataset.
- A working committee comprising of SALGA, Department of Health, National Treasury and COGTA should be established and convened within a month from today, to follow up the implementation of this declaration challenges.

**ACCORDINGLY, WE ADOPT** this declaration on the 30 September 2021. As delegates of the World Environmental Health Day Commemoration and National Health Indaba, we remain unshaken and united to inspire and be agents of positive change, innovation and consistent action towards the realisation of our aspirations and realisation of the long and healthy life of our communities.