

SPEECH PRESENTED BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, DR JOE PHAAHLA, AT THE OPENING OF THE 24TH ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL COUNCILS OF AFRICA (AMCOA) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, AT THE SUN CITY RESORT, NORTH-WEST, SOUTH AFRICA ON 3 OCTOBER 2022.

Programme Director,

Ministers of Health of Namibia

World Health Organization Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Geneva, Switzerland

World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Africa: Dr Matshidiso Moeti

Premier of North-West Province, Hon Bushy Maape

MEC of Health, NorthWest Province, Hon Madoda Sambatha

DirectorGeneral, National Department of Health, Dr Sandile Buthelezi

Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) President, Prof Mbulaheni Simon Nmutandani

Acting HPCSA Registrar/CEO, Dr Thabo Pinkoane

Association of Medical Councils of Africa (AMCOA) President, Dr Kgosietsile Letlape

AMCOA Members

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen

Good evening and welcome to our wonderful country. I am pleased that finally, we could meet in person to engage on matters that are critical to our health systems.

Let me take time to reflect on the current reality, of which all of us know:

On the front lines of health emergencies, health workers are often the most vulnerable to infectious diseases when outbreaks strike. In the early months of the pandemic, health workers made up 14% of all new COVID-19 cases. It is estimated that anywhere between 80,000 and 180,000 health and care workers died from the virus between January 2020 and May 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a fundamental truth: that as society moves quickly, regulations and laws tend to be more static. Therefore, regulatory frameworks need to be made nimbler, agile, and responsive to meet the needs of modern society. This is also true in the regulation of scopes of practice as modern team-based care and technological advances are increasingly transforming health professional work. Despite the nexus between modernizing regulation and optimizing the health workforce, there is still a gap in knowledge around the impact of different regulatory models on health professional scopes of practice.

regulators, policymakers, academics, and service providers amongst others; to engage on regulatory matters pertaining to the healthcare regulatory environment. This conference has created a platform to exchange information and ensure meaningful collaboration among health practitioners' regulatory authorities, which will provide for the development of concepts and new approaches in the regulation of healthcare practitioners in the African context.

It is therefore my privilege to officially open the 24th Conference of the Association of Medical Councils of Africa. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you well as you continue to engage and learn from each other on “The Future of the Health Workforce and its Regulation” in the next four days.

To our visitors, I hope you will have an enjoyable time in our beautiful country.

I thank you.