

**COOPERATION  
BETWEEN  
THE EUROPEAN UNION  
AND SOUTH AFRICA**

**The Cooperation Council**

**Brussels, 1 October 2012**

**UE-ZA 4914/12**

**NOTE**

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Subject: Health report

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The Health Development Forum (HDF) met for the first time on 22 September 2009 and since then at regular pace in different formats, in Brussels and interchangeably in Pretoria and most recently through video-link. These meetings and interactions have provided a useful platform for exchanging experiences and information on the respective policy frameworks and initiatives.

Building on the initially identified five priority areas for health sector dialogue, namely: a) the crisis of human resources; b) health economics and financing; c) health information systems and epidemiological surveillance; d) HIV & AIDS; and e) gender issues; two subjects were further proposed as "super-priorities" for 2011/2012.

- Health economy/financing and
- The crisis in human resources for health (HRH)

These should be placed against the backdrop of the implementation of the 2009 South African Health Sector Ten Point Plan and of the 2010 Negotiated Service Delivery Agreement (NSDA) on health between the Minister of Health and Ministers of seven other government departments, focussing on certain specified targets in four output areas as follows: a) increasing life expectancy; b) improving maternal, child and women's health; c) combating HIV, AIDS and TB; d) strengthening health system effectiveness.

In this context two priority issues have emerged in the period as core areas of EU-SA joint health dialogue forum for the JCC.

Re-engineering primary health care at national/provincial and district level: Since at the heart of the current plans and efforts to transform the health services in South Africa and considered as a foundation for a single and equitable health system context, the EU agreed to provide technical and financial support in this respect under its Primary Health Care Sector Policy Support Programme.

The process of policy development for a National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme as a central feature of current reform efforts underway in SA and a central feature of the domestic policy/political debate. In this respect the EU supported the 7-8 December 2011 NHI Conference in South Africa also contributing with experts to the discussions and experience sharing from the European perspective, providing input to the policy reflection on the development and implementation of NHI in South Africa. This should represent one of the pillars in the further development of the dialogue.

As a follow-up to these exchanges experts from both sides gathered and discussed the matter further on 7 and 25 June 2012 and agreed on the following points as a way forward:

- Vision: set out context for co-operation on health and South Africa's future aspirations regarding Sector support within the overall framework of future EU-SA Development cooperation.

- Recruitment and retention of specialist health care staff: area of focus for future EU-SA dialogue/partnerships given its importance to the success of the NHI and its pilots (particularly in remote rural areas). In this respect linkages with EU MS in a position to assist should be facilitated. The idea to step up cooperation with e.g. universities, and professors as well as with graduated students who want to get working experience in South Africa.
- Finance for health: The on-going NHI pilots require technical expertise and experience; exchanges on possible overarching models for the financing of health care (including private sector collaboration, pricing, performance based systems, risk and fraud management and pilot monitoring systems) are essential. Linkages with EU Member States for gathering "lessons learned" to be facilitated in support of the dialogue.
- Importance of EU-SA regional co-operation dimension (including SADC and AU). South Africa has an important regional role to play in this respect for assisting in the development of the health sectors of neighbouring countries. A regional HRH workshop on circular migration and other intervention strategies would be one of the areas that SA and the EU would cooperate on.

Leveraging other expertise to support the health dialogue.

- The forum agreed that full advantage should be taken of the vast knowledge and experience that exist within the EU member state institutions and other health care institutions and experts within these states and within South Africa. It was agreed that their participation would support the SA-EU health dialogue forum.

Both SA and the EU acknowledged the importance of the health dialogue forum (HDF) and contribution to the overall SA –EU strategic partnership. The EU is commended for its primary health care sector budget support program which is expected to have massive impact on the restructuring of the health system in South Africa, particularly the facility revitalization project. Sector budget support should define future development cooperation agreements.