



Association of Healthcare Funders of Zimbabwe

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WELCOME REMARKS

Remarks by Mrs C. Nyamutswa the AHFoZ Chairman, at the AHFoZ Annual All Stakeholders Conference on health, at Elephant Hills Hotel, Victoria Falls 2 – 5 September 2014

- The honourable Minister of Health and Child Care, Dr. D. Parirenyatwa
- The members of the Executive Committee of AHFoZ
- Delegates from outside the Zimbabwean borders
- The president of the Zimbabwe Medical Association
- The Chairman of the Private Hospitals Association
- Invited Speakers
- Distinguished guests
- The media fraternity
- Ladies and Gentlemen
- All protocol observed

I welcome you all, to this important event on the AHFoZ calendar; the “AHFoZ Annual All Stakeholders Conference on Health”, whose theme this year is *“healthcare Puzzle: Retracing the steps and sustaining the momentum”*.

I wish to extend a very special welcome to our visitors from outside the Zimbabwean borders. To those who are attending the conference for the first time,

please enjoy the Zimbabwean hospitality and take time to explore the mighty Victoria Falls.

This is the 8th All stakeholders' conference on health. The first such conference was held in 2005. The previous conferences ran under the following themes:

2005 – Inaugural conference

2007- *“Promoting a sustainable Public-Private Partnership in the Healthcare Sector in Zimbabwe”*.

2009- *“Revisiting healthcare delivery and financing in Zimbabwe: The springboard to tomorrow”*.

2010 - *“Healthcare status in Zimbabwe: harmony, quality and sustainability for the industry”*.

2011 – *“Joining Hands towards quality Healthcare”*.

2012 - *“Healthcare puzzle: Finding the missing pieces*

2013 - *“Taking steps towards positioning the healthcare puzzle”*.

As you have probably observed, year 2014 is the fourth year we are running with a theme around “the Healthcare Puzzle”. This is indicative of the fact that solving the healthcare puzzle is proving to be a challenging dream to realize. Most importantly, it should be realized that this requires all stakeholders to play their part. It is not a question of AHFoZ issuing a script on how solve the challenges. It is with this understanding, that AHFoZ places great value on strengthening stakeholder relations and we would wish to have harmonious relationships with all service provider groups. While we may fail to agree on certain issues we believe that we should still look at the bigger picture rather than concentrate on our individual needs. The Government is counting on all the players in the private sector to keep that sector going. If we achieve that, we would have made our contribution towards the success of ZIMASSET, as healthy people make a healthy workforce, leading to a healthy economy. Improving the performance of our

health-care system through health care funding is without a doubt one of the most important challenges that our nation faces.

As AHFoZ, we remain committed to complementing the Government in providing healthcare through paying for the majority of the country's workforce so that the Government can direct the scarce resources towards the public sector. This assists in recording success towards the attainment the health related Millennium development Goals (MDGs).

Currently 90% of the private sector service providers' income comes from medical aid societies. This is a significant contribution to the healthcare budget. The guaranteed income from medical aid societies has enabled a number of service providers to remain in the country and to service the public sector as well.

With reference to regional delegates present, there is need to explore opportunities brought about by collaborating with each other at regional level. This can possibly be achieved through continuously exchanging notes and engaging in dialogue which strengthens the relationships. The need to work towards developing the healthcare sector through partnerships and collaboration at regional level, cannot be overemphasised. This would have numerous advantages including promoting medical tourism to the region. We should therefore always seriously think about what is it that we can do together at regional level.

AHFoZ members will continue to explore better ways of giving value to key stakeholders, especially the members who have entrusted their funds in us. At the core of this is carrying out fiduciary duties ethically.

The sector is in dire need for harmonization of diagnoses coding. I therefore wish to request you honourable Minister, to take the lead in driving the entire healthcare sector to move to the ICD10 coding structure. This World Health Organisation(WHO) coding structure would harmonise the coding for diagnoses across the public and the private sectors locally, regionally and internationally. Perhaps a national task team could be put together to drive this very important transition. We are lagging behind some of our regional neighbours on this. and globalization makes this transition a must.

As AHFoZ, we request the regulator to take into consideration emerging trends and facilitate the review of the regulatory framework to promote efficiencies. The Act needs be reviewed to make the regulations more relevant to today's environment. Among other things, if prescribed minimum benefits are going to be mandatory, they should each have fees to avoid problems being faced in South Africa where prescribed minimum benefits (PMBs) are being abused and assumed to be bottomless pits. We also believe there is scope to review the issue of provider networks to encourage competitiveness on cost and quality. The issue of reserves and solvency ratios also needs to be reviewed as it is being debated in a number of countries whereby the need to maintain reserves is being queried. It is argued that since this is "dead money" the current levels are too high and do not make economic sense. Therefore honourable Minister; these and other issues will require extensive consultations as part of "retracing the steps".

We also request the regulator to create a conducive working environment, taking into consideration the macro economical fundamentals prevailing. There is need to safeguard the fragile private healthcare sector, imperfect, as it may be, so that it continues to play its complimentary role. Since we are all part of a much bigger

environment, activities in our sector should be consistent with the entire economy and to ZIMASSET in particular. Ignoring the fundamentals creates discord and a high risk of bringing the sector to its knees. It is more prudent to preserve the good and replace the undesirable and limp on until the situation improves. Limping on in the right direction is better than going in reverse.

In conclusion, I wish call upon all participants to take ownership of this conference and apply our collective genius so that we bring issues to the surface and if need be, demystify those issues that require to be demystified. The two days are valuable to the sector and to our individual organizations.

Once again I welcome you all; enjoy the proceedings and God bless you!

I THANK YOU