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Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Press Release:
Independent TB, HIV, PMTCT Programme Review
National Department of Health**

Johannesburg, South Africa. **3 April 2014.** The National Department of Health commissioned the first Joint Review of the HIV, TB and PMTCT Programmes in June 2013. The main purpose of this independent review, which was led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team of South African and international reviewers, was to assess performance of the programmes, documenting what is working and where the programmes need to be strengthened. A key feature of this review was to assess the extent of integration of these programmes at health facility level. The review was conducted in 21 of the 52 districts and with visits to 100 health facilities across South Africa during September and October 2013.

This review shows that significant progress has been made in the implementation of HIV, TB and PMTCT programmes since the previous reviews were conducted in 2009. The positive impact of the scale up of these programmes has resulted in the decline of new HIV infections (especially amongst children), TB infections and a reduction in mother to child transmission rates. There is been also a notably decline in mortality associated with HIV and TB.

Due to rapid scale up of Antiretroviral treatment (ART), over 2 million people were on treatment in 2012, a four-fold increase in the number of people receiving ART between 2009 and 2012, making this the largest ART programme globally – this data has been corroborated by the recently released HSRC HIV household survey results. The HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT) campaign, launched in 2010, resulted in about 15-20 million tests for HIV and over three million people screened for TB, and there is universal coverage of PMTCT services. The rollout of Gene-Xpert technology nationally has been a major milestone, enabling TB patients to be diagnosed early and treated.

The review made recommendations at strategic and operational levels for further scale-up and improvement of HIV, TB and PMTCT services.

The Department of Health welcomes the results and recommendations of the report which are in four main categories i.e. achievement of national targets; integration of services; Quality and effectiveness of services; and Cross cutting health systems strengthening interventions.

Whilst progress has been made, there are areas that have gaps including: HIV and TB treatment coverage among children and adolescents; Medical Male Circumcision coverage; HIV, TB services coverage for key and high risk populations; TB treatment outcomes; Retention of patients-in-care.

The Department of Health takes this report seriously, and will incorporate the recommendations of the report into programming, to ensure the National Strategic Plan (NSP) targets are met and work towards realising vision 2030 of the NDP, which envisions a health system that works for everyone.

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