

**DRAFT STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, DR ZL
MKHIZE**

**COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN
SOUTH AFRICA**

G20 MEETING

17 SEPTEMBER 2020

Your Excellencies, Deputy Prime Minister, the Ministers, the
Director General of WHO Dr Tedros

Thank you for the opportunity to address this august gathering of joint
Health and Finance Ministers of the G20.

Firstly, the South African Government wishes to congratulate Saudi
Arabia on hosting the G20 joint Minister's Meeting, especially during
these trying times that we face due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

South Africa also wish to acknowledge and appreciate the leadership
and sterling efforts of the World Health Organisation in coordinating
and supporting the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and
the central efforts of Member States.

We welcome the joint statement prepared for adoption by the
summit.

We reemphasize our commitment to the G20 initiative on financing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to improve the resilience, prevention, preparedness and response of health systems through protecting and investing in public health.

South Africa also recognise the important link between investment in public health and economic resilience and growth, both in overcoming the current crisis and in building long term sustainability and prosperity. We join the international community in efforts to minimize the global economic disruption and strive towards strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth.

South Africa has the highest detected cases of COVID-19 on the African Continent, rising to 13 000 recorded positive cases per day during the peak in July. We are glad to report a reduction to approximately 2000 cases per day in the last seven days. We are concerned about the possibility of resurgence but we remain vigilant and ready to respond.

Only the availability of the vaccine will save humanity from the the pandemic and we call for equity and transparency in the development and availability of vaccine. South Africa is committed to the global solidarity and cooperative effort to achieve this.

Led by the President and the Minister of Finance in South Africa, our response involved increased resource allocation to strengthen

prevention, surveillance and case management at all our health facilities, contact tracing and quarantine as well as a nationwide mass community mobilisation campaign on non-pharmaceutical interventions.

Multi-sectoral response, including both the public and the private sectors, has been crucial in containing and mitigating the spread of the infection.

I must commend the sterling efforts of our health professionals across the board, from the community health workers to the clinicians and academics, that have worked tirelessly to bring the pandemic under control in South Africa. We commit to ensuring their protection at all times.

South Africa supports the G20's collective priority to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and alleviate its health, social and economic impact on households and businesses, and continue to safeguard people's lives and livelihoods, support global economic recovery, and enhance the resilience of the health and financial systems.

I thank you.