**Address by (MP) Cde Annah Gela on the Budget Vote Debate for the Department of Health**

**11 July 2019**

The ANC rises in support of Budget Vote 16 on Health. ANC policy has always been biased to the working class and has placed the marginalized and poor at its centre. The 52nd National Conference resolved that Health should be one of the two key priorities of Government and envisioned this second phase of transition to be characterised by ”decisive action to effect economic transformation and democratic consolidation, critical both to improve the quality of life of all South Africans and to promote nation-building and social cohesion”.

The ANC in its January 8th Statement reiterated its commitment to putting in place a quality system of national health care. A Health Care system where all South Africans must be able to access quality health care based on need and not on their ability to pay or their overall socio-economic situation. This commitment reinforces a character of a caring organisation that values the importance of access to quality health care, not Poor health care for the Poor! Members I am strongly inclined to agree with Mahatma Gandhi” It is Health that is the real Wealth and not pieces of Gold and Silver” hence it is of paramount importance that we invest bulk of our fiscas to waging a serious offensive against both communicable and non-communicable diseases.

As such, Government has maintained the balance between the number of policy interests, based on priority and urgency, by ensuring that the National Department of Health receives one of the largest share in budget allocation. This is expressed in National Treasury’s commitment to allocate R51.4 billion to the Department of Health (DoH) in the 2019/20 Financial Year, an increase from R47.1 billion in the 2018/19 Financial Year.

1. **Preventing and Treating Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases**

ONE ROUND, ONE CONDOM!

NO CONDOM, NO SEX!

Combatting HIV and AIDS remains a priority of the ANC-led Government. The Department is committed to the 90-90-90 targets of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. In this regard, the HIV and AIDS component will receive the bulk of the grant allocation in order to continue the implementation of universal test-and-treat policy for ARV treatment, and to provide services intended to prevent HIV. The ANC-led Government has made substantial progress on its policy responses to the epidemic and implements various interrelated interventions to mitigate and cease the spread of HIV. Some of these interventions include, but not limited to:

* The National Strategic Plan (NSP) for HIV, TB and STIs 2017-2022 – which serves as an overarching policy plan for South Africa;
* South African National Sex Worker HIV Plan 2016-2019;
* National Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy;
* Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE);
* Young Women and Girls Programme sponsored by the (Global Fund); and
* Zazi; She Conquers Programme.

In pursuit and realisation of Outcome 2, *A long and healthy life for all South Africans*, as envisioned by the National Development Plan-Vision 2030, South Africa is investing significantly on various interventions in the area of Primary Health Care. Some of the essential interventions to improve primary health care in South Africa include:

1. Roll-out of the Male Medical Circumcision (MMC) programme– which is an aggressive rollout intended on reducing the number of men who are living with HIV. It is envisioned that scaling-up MMC should have significant health benefits not only for men but also for women in South Africa.
2. Fixed-dose combination (FDC) antiretroviral pill: The recent introduction of FDC antiretroviral pill is one of the greatest successes that the ANC-led Government has made following the outbreak of HIV and AIDS epidemic. FDC antiretroviral pill is a once-daily dosage and makes it easier for those living with the virus. is hassle free as it improves adherence and portability.
3. Implementation of Momconnect – which aims at strengthening health services and reduce maternal and child mortality.

Tuberculosis has been identified as the leading underlying cause of death in South Africa. The scourge of the disease is a global phenomenon, and as such, collective effort is required to tackling it. I would like to implore Members of this august House to heed the call and be part of the global action known as the Global TB Caucus, which was first established in October 2014. It is a worldwide network of Parliamentarians which former Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, co-chairs and which galvanises Parliamentarians to become champions in the fight against TB.

At their plenary sitting in September 2018, the National Assembly and NCOP resolved to establish a coordinating body for the Caucus in South Africa, which is intended to raise awareness and would support efforts to accelerate the elimination of the disease by 2030 – in line with targets set by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. I urge this 6th Parliament to continue where our predecessors left off, and ensure that the South African Chapter of this Caucus is re-established and work towards realising its mandate gets undertaken.

1. **Conclusion**

The transformation of the health system has presented itself with new challenges which need to be addressed. But it is worth noting that there’s steady improvements by the Department, particularly Programme 3, as it is an important programme for service delivery.