

**PHC contribution to the speech of the Hon. Richard Kamwi – 11-01-08**

The health system in Namibia is founded on the Primary Health Care approach adopted by the Global WHO member states community in 1978, Alma Atta, Russia. For Namibia, Primary Health Care approach has been implemented to ensure that all citizens access to all health and social development. This is being achieved through the provision of clinics, outreach and community based health care services. The latter is central to Primary Health care.

Over the period of seventeen (17) years of the implementation of Primary Health Care programme a lot of gains were made in the areas of child survival and maternal health. The ministry has put in place all possible strategies to address child and maternal health. As a strategy, prevention of HIV/AIDS from mother to child has been rolled out to all regional hospitals and some facilities. The road map strategy is also in place to address specifically the reduction of maternal mortality. The Reach Every District approach is being implemented in Namibia addressing child mortality and improving immunization coverage to 74%. Disease Surveillance strategy and Emergency Management Action Plan are some of the tools in place aiming at monitoring and immediate responding to disease outbreak. In 2006, my ministry with the government, community and development partners supports managed to halt the polio and cholera outbreaks (2007).

A lot of essential services are being implemented to prevent disease and unnecessary deaths as well as social problems. The Health Promotion Strategy will soon be launched and this tool is to ensure that people are well informed on health and social issues so that they can take full responsibility of their own health. For example they should take care of their own general hygiene such as washing of hands prior to eating to promote healthy practices.

My ministry has planned a Health System review to take place early this year 2008. Primary Health Care is one of the components of this effort.

Despite all the successes, gains of Primary Health Care are being lost due to inadequate resources for outreach services, re-emerging diseases such as polio and cholera and HIV/AIDS which is the direct cause of death for mothers and babies. More and more children are made orphans by this disease in the recent demographic health survey conducted by the ministry, maternal mortality has increased from 27 per 100 000 live births to 449 per 100 000 live births and the trend for the under five years old is similar. .

For the government to reverse this trend it is imperative to recognize and strengthen the efforts of the ministry and its development partners. More resources in terms of money, materials and human are needed. Primary Health Care as a disease prevention approach is central and key to sustainability of all our health efforts.