

Speaker 1 — Dr Ntombi Sigwebela

Chief Executive Officer, Health Systems Trust

11:00 – 11:05

Opening remarks

5 minutes

Ms Jeanette Hunter, Ms Thulile Zondi, Dr Vallabhjee, colleagues from the National and Provincial Departments of Health, the National Treasury, Statistics South Africa, our academic and civil society partners, fellow researchers, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen...a very warm welcome to the launch of the District Health Barometer 2024/25.

Thank you for making the time to be with us today.

For nearly two decades, the District Health Barometer has been Health Systems Trust's flagship publication. Its purpose is straightforward: to hold up a district-level mirror to the South African public health system, so that those who plan, manage and deliver care have timely, credible evidence to act on.

The DHB is built on a simple conviction: that data, when presented clearly, disaggregated to the district, and placed in context, becomes a tool for accountability and a lever for improvement. It allows a district manager in Alfred Nzo, or a facility manager in Zululand, or a policymaker in Pretoria, to see where we are and where we need to go.

This 2024/25 edition comes at an important moment. The health system is navigating persistent inequities, workforce pressures, a dual burden of communicable and non-communicable disease, and real fiscal constraints. It is also the moment at which we are preparing to implement National Health Insurance and move decisively toward Universal Health Coverage. Evidence, district by district, has never mattered more.

A publication of this scope is not the work of one organisation. I want to place on record our sincere appreciation to the National Department of Health for access to data from WebDHIS and for sustained partnership over many years and we thank National Treasury for expenditure and human-resources data.

I also want to recognise our more than 40 contributing authors, from the National and Provincial Departments of Health, from universities, research councils, UNICEF, the WHO country office, and from civil society. The DHB is a collective achievement.

Most of all, I want to acknowledge the district and facility managers, and the health workers, whose daily commitment to routine data collection makes every number in this book possible. You may never meet most of them, but this publication is, in a real sense, a record of their work.

Our Programme is tightly scheduled, so let me not stand between you and our colleagues. I would like to now hand over to Ms Zondi, whose cluster are the stewards of the data system on which the DHB depends. Over to you Ms Zondi...