

SANAC NEWS

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NATIONAL LOTTERIES COMMISSION
LOTTO FUNDED

SANAC bids Farewell to Dr Xulu, now DG of Health

- SANAC Comms



Former SANAC CEO Dr. Thembisile Xulu

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Nelson Dlamini

This edition marks a significant transition for the organisation. After six years of dedicated leadership, Dr. Thembisile Xulu concluded her tenure as Chief Executive Officer on 30 September 2026 to assume the position of Director-General of the National Department of Health. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Secretariat, we extend our sincere appreciation for her strategic guidance, technical expertise and unwavering commitment to South Africa's multisectoral response to HIV, TB and STIs. We congratulate her on this well-deserved appointment and wish her every success in her new role.

In ensuring continuity, the Board has appointed Dr. Rogerio Phili, Executive Manager for Resource Mobilisation and Donor Coordination, as Acting Chief Executive Officer with effect from 1 October 2026. The Board has expressed full confidence in Dr Phili's institutional knowledge and leadership capacity during this interim period.

The articles in this issue reflect the breadth of SANAC's ongoing work. Efforts continue to secure a seventh voluntary licence for lenacapavir to expand regional manufacturing capacity and improve sustainable access across SADC Member States. A high-level China–SADC strategic exchange focused on pharmaceutical production, regional value chains and health commodity security. The Country Coordinating Mechanism advanced discussions on Global Fund Grant Cycle 8 preparations, sustainability planning and the need for clear transition arrangements. Provincial and district-level engagements, including the Gauteng TB Caucus Oversight Session and the Sedibeng District AIDS Council plenary, underscored the importance of stronger collaboration, accountability and attention to social determinants of health.

Women's leadership featured prominently this quarter, from Dr. Xulu's tribute at the launch of Professor Olive Shisana's memoir to her keynote address at the Pan African Women in Health Conference. These engagements reaffirm the critical role of women in shaping equitable and resilient health systems.

Finally, the Secretariat hosted its 2026 Wellness Day under the theme "Pause • Recharge • Connect," reinforcing the organisation's commitment to the physical, mental, financial and social wellbeing of its staff.

We hope this issue leaves you better informed, suitably inspired, and encouraged to continue the good work that drives our shared vision of ending HIV and TB as public health threats.

Happy reading!

Nelson

SANAC bids Farewell to Dr Xulu, now DG of Health

- SANAC Comms



Former SANAC CEO Dr. Thembisile Xulu

After six years of dedicated service, strategic leadership and commitment to South Africa's public health response, the Board of Trustees of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) bids farewell to former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Thembisile Xulu as she takes up her new role as Director-General of the National Department of Health.

Dr. Xulu concluded her tenure as SANAC CEO on 30 September 2026, marking the end of a significant chapter in the organisation's history and the beginning of a new phase in her public health leadership within the national government. Her appointment recognises her extensive experience in the health sector and provides an opportunity to apply that expertise to the broader administration and governance of South Africa's health system.

She assumed the role of CEO on 1 October 2020, at a defining moment for South Africa and the global health community. The country was grappling with the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which placed immense pressure on the health system and disrupted essential services, including programmes addressing HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Leading SANAC during this period required resilience, adaptability and a clear focus on sustaining the national response to the three epidemics. Throughout her tenure, Dr. Xulu provided strategic leadership that strengthened collaboration among government, civil society, communities, the private sector and development partners, reinforcing the importance of a coordinated, multisectoral approach to public health.

> *"Dr. Xulu concluded her tenure as SANAC CEO on 30 September 2026, marking the end of a significant chapter in the organisation's history and the beginning of a new phase in her public health leadership within the national government."*

Her leadership helped keep HIV, TB and STIs on the national agenda as the country confronted competing health priorities, evolving programme needs and significant funding challenges. Central to SANAC's mandate is the recognition that progress against these epidemics depends not only on government action, but also on meaningful partnerships, community participation and collective accountability.

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Dr. Xulu brought considerable technical knowledge and leadership experience to SANAC. Before her appointment, she spent more than 15 years at Right to Care, where she held several positions, including Manager of the HIV Expert Treatment Programme and Executive Director. She also served as Chief of Party for EQUIP, an African-led, USAID-funded international consortium that supported the expansion of innovative HIV treatment and prevention solutions across several PEPFAR-supported countries.

Her background in HIV and TB programming, health management and organisational leadership equipped her to guide SANAC in its coordinating role within South Africa's national response. Her experience also demonstrated the importance of combining technical expertise with effective governance, stakeholder collaboration and strong programme implementation.

Dr. Xulu's tenure further underscored the importance of placing communities and people affected by HIV, TB and STIs at the centre of decision-making. Meaningful engagement with these communities remains essential to ensuring that policies and programmes reflect lived realities, address barriers to healthcare and sustain progress towards national and global health targets.

As head of the SANAC Secretariat, Dr. Xulu worked in a complex multisectoral environment, bringing together government departments, civil society organisations, people living with and affected by HIV and TB, private-sector stakeholders and development partners around shared national priorities.

Her leadership highlighted the importance of maintaining strong partnerships and institutional coordination as public health needs evolved. It also reinforced SANAC's role as a platform for building consensus, supporting implementation of the National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs, and strengthening accountability across sectors.
Beyond programme coordination, her departure offers an opportunity to reflect on the values required to lead a national institution entrusted with such an important public health mandate. Technical expertise must be matched by ethical conduct, transparency, integrity and a commitment to serving the public interest.

> *"The strength of a LEADER lies not in their POWER but in their ability to EMPOWER OTHERS."*
>
> *- John C. Maxwell*

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Speaking on behalf of the Board and the organisation, SANAC Board of Trustees Chairperson Mr. Bonolo Ramokhele expressed appreciation for Dr. Xulu's leadership and dedication. He described her appointment as Director-General as recognition of her capabilities and contribution to public health governance.

"On behalf of the Board and the entire organisation, I wish to thank Dr. Thembisile Xulu for her extraordinary vision and dedication. Dr. Xulu has demonstrated exceptional leadership, technical expertise and a steadfast commitment to ethics, integrity and public health governance. Her elevation to Director-General is a clear recognition of her capability, dedication and the transformative work she has driven within our organisation," said Mr. Ramokhele.

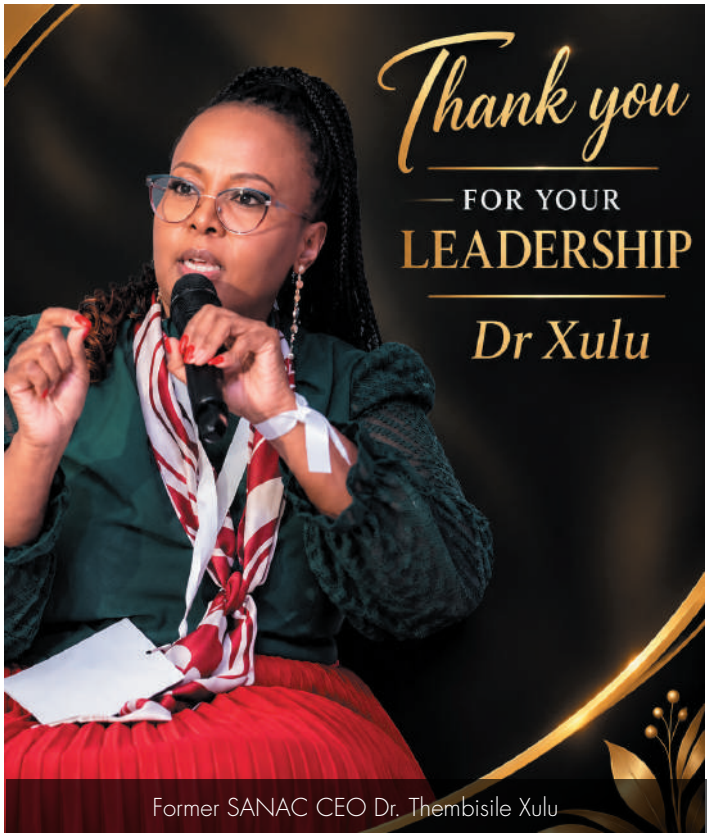
"While we are saddened to see such an impactful leader leave SANAC, we are immensely proud to see her take on this prestigious new role. It is a testament to Dr. Xulu's world-class capability, and we wish her every success in this next chapter," he added.

As Director-General of the National Department of Health, Dr. Xulu assumes a new responsibility at the centre of South Africa's public health administration. Her experience in HIV and TB programming, multisectoral coordination and health-sector leadership will be valuable as the country continues to address persistent health challenges and strengthen the delivery of essential services.



Acting SANAC CEO Dr. Roger Phili

Following Dr. Xulu's departure, the Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Rogerio Phili, Executive Manager: Resource Mobilisation and Donor Coordination, as Acting Chief Executive Officer, effective 1 October 2026.



Former SANAC CEO Dr. Thembisile Xulu

In this capacity, Dr. Phili will oversee day-to-day operations and guide the organisation's strategic priorities while the Board conducts a comprehensive process to appoint a permanent successor. "We are fortunate to have an executive of Dr. Phili's calibre and institutional knowledge already serving within SANAC," said Mr. Ramokhele. He added that "the Board has full confidence in his leadership to ensure seamless continuity for employees, partners and stakeholders during this transition period."

> *"Following Dr. Xulu's departure, the Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Rogerio Phili, Executive Manager: Resource Mobilisation and Donor Coordination, as Acting Chief Executive Officer, effective 1 October 2026."*

SANAC Advances Regional Access to Long-Acting HIV Prevention Through Lenacapavir Licensing Initiative

- Karabo Makgato

South Africa is advancing efforts to secure a seventh voluntary licence for lenacapavir, a long-acting injectable medicine for HIV prevention. The initiative aims to expand regional manufacturing capacity and support sustainable access across Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States.

The initiative was highlighted at the third Southern African HIV Clinicians Society (SAHCS) Long-Acting HIV Treatment and Prevention Conference, held at The Maslow in Sandton on 15 September 2026.



Dr Thembisile Xulu (third from left) pictured with other delegates who attended the third Southern African HIV Clinicians Society (SAHCS) Long-Acting HIV Treatment and Prevention Conference

> *The initiative was highlighted at the third Southern African HIV Clinicians Society (SAHCS) Long-Acting HIV Treatment and Prevention Conference, held at The Maslow in Sandton on 15 September 2026.*

The specialised one-day event brought together stakeholders from across the HIV response to discuss emerging long-acting antiretroviral (ARV) options for treatment and prevention.

Speaking at the conference, former SANAC Chief Executive Officer Dr. Thembisile Xulu stressed that equitable access must remain central to HIV innovation. South African communities, researchers and young women played a significant role in generating evidence that demonstrated lenacapavir's effectiveness. However, the absence of a voluntary manufacturing licence covering the region raised important questions about equity, participation and access to life-changing health innovations.

Dr. Xulu said this concern prompted SANAC to coordinate a national effort involving the National Department of Health, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, National Treasury, the private sector and civil society to pursue an additional voluntary licence.

"Local manufacturing is not an end in itself, but fundamentally an access agenda," she said. Regional production could strengthen security of supply, improve affordability, develop local pharmaceutical capabilities and contribute to the long-term sustainability of HIV prevention programmes.

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SANAC continues to coordinate the initiative nationally, while regional demand aggregation is being advanced through the existing SADC Pooled Procurement Services (SPPS) platform. By using established structures, the initiative seeks to avoid creating parallel mechanisms.

Through an open, competitive and transparent process, South African manufacturers were invited to express interest in producing components of lenacapavir, including the injectable formulation, tablets and active pharmaceutical ingredient (API). Once the process was completed, the selected manufacturers were formally recommended to Gilead for consideration, enabling licensing discussions to proceed.

Through SPPS, SADC Member States are also being asked to provide country-level volume estimates. Aggregating regional demand will help establish the market certainty needed to support manufacturing and supply planning.

The initiative comes as long-acting HIV prevention options gain momentum globally. In July 2025, the World Health Organization recommended twice-yearly injectable lenacapavir as an additional HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) option, recognising its potential to expand prevention choices.

Conference discussions emphasized that scientific progress must now translate into effective implementation at scale. Expanding choice and autonomy for people accessing HIV services must be matched by health systems capable of delivering new prevention options efficiently, sustainably and equitably.



The then SANAC CEO Dr. Xulu speaking at the third Southern African HIV Clinicians Society (SAHCS) Long-Acting HIV Treatment and Prevention Conference

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Celebrating Prof. Olive Shisana's Legacy of Leadership and Public Health Transformation

- Karabo Makgato



Prof. Olive Shisana delivering the keynote address at the book launch

> *In her address, Dr. Xulu paid tribute to Prof. Shisana's extraordinary contribution to public health, describing her as a leader whose influence has consistently extended beyond formal positions and titles. "For more than four decades, your leadership has had one defining quality: you did the work before anyone gave you the title for it," Dr. Xulu remarked.*

A powerful reflection on leadership, resilience and health equity marked the launch of Prof. Olive Shisana's memoir, Seeing Through the Storm: Leading Through Crisis and Change. Former South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) CEO Dr. Thembisile Xulu attended the event, which took place during Women's Month.

Held at the Nelson Mandela Foundation in Houghton, Johannesburg, on 20 August 2026, the launch celebrated the remarkable life and career of one of South Africa's most influential public health leaders. It also offered an opportunity to reflect on decades of service, the transformation of the country's health system and the enduring importance of courageous, evidence-based leadership.

In her address, Dr. Xulu paid tribute to Prof. Shisana's extraordinary contribution to public health, describing her as a leader whose influence has consistently extended beyond formal positions and titles. "For more

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than four decades, your leadership has had one defining quality: you did the work before anyone gave you the title for it," Dr. Xulu remarked. She recognised Prof. Shisana's determination to lead and serve despite the barriers faced by Black women during apartheid and beyond.

Prof. Shisana's career spans some of the most defining periods in South Africa's history. As the first Director-General of Health in democratic South Africa under President Nelson Mandela, she helped establish a unified national health administration after decades of fragmentation and racial inequality under apartheid.

Her leadership later extended to the World Health Organization (WHO), where she contributed to global



Former SANAC CEO Dr. Thembisile Xulu and Prof Olive Shisana (Centre) speaking during a panel discussion at the book launch.


Attendees at the book launch

health programmes, and to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), where she became its first female chief executive. She also served as Special Adviser on Social Policy to the President of South Africa, contributing to policy discussions on health systems and social development.

Her work in HIV research and public health has been particularly significant. Through population-based HIV surveys and evidence-informed policymaking, she helped deepen the country's understanding of the epidemic and strengthen the evidence used to guide its response. Her contribution received further recognition in March 2026, when Stellenbosch University awarded her an honorary Doctor of Science degree in Medicine and Health Sciences for her commitment to public health transformation, social justice and evidence-based policymaking.

Ultimately, the book launch celebrated a life dedicated to transforming institutions, challenging inequality and creating opportunities for others. Prof. Shisana's journey demonstrates how evidence, determination and a commitment to social justice can shape public policy and inspire generations of leaders.

As Dr. Xulu concluded, the occasion was not only about celebrating a book, but also about honouring the life behind it. "Dr. Olive Shisana taught us that she did not ask for a seat at the table. She built her own table!" The former CEO's tribute captured the enduring significance of Prof. Shisana's contribution to South Africa's public health community.


Seeing Through the Storm Book Launch

Women Reimagining Health Leadership

- Karabo Makgato



Pan African Women in Health (PAWH) 2026 Conference

Former SANAC CEO Dr. Thembisile Xulu delivered a powerful keynote address at the Pan African Women in Health (PAWH) 2026 Conference in Sandton on 26 August, challenging African health leaders to rethink how sustainable, equitable and resilient health systems are built, and, importantly, the role women must play in shaping their future.

The two-day conference brought together leaders committed to increasing opportunities for women in health and grooming the next generation of female African health leaders and actors.

Speaking under the conference theme, "What now? African Women's Role in the New Global Health Architecture," Dr. Xulu placed women at the centre of the continent's health transformation, drawing connections between leadership, community action, innovation, care and the principles of Ubuntu.

In her keynote address, Dr. Xulu challenged stakeholders to consider whether Africa's health systems are sustainable, equitable and resilient enough to meet the challenges of the future, and what role women must



former SANAC CEO Dr. Thembisile Xulu delivering the keynote address at PAWH

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play in shaping that future. She framed her address around four interconnected pillars: collaboration and collective action, leadership, talent and innovation, and systems, the future of health, wellbeing and Ubuntu purpose.

Putting people at the centre, Dr. Xulu emphasised that sustainable health systems must begin with people and communities, particularly through strong primary healthcare. Primary healthcare is where communities experience the health system directly, from immunisation and contraception to HIV treatment, tuberculosis diagnosis and mental health support. It is also where trust in the health system is either built or broken.



Attendees at the PAWH Conference

> *Drawing on the legacy of the 1956 Women's March, Dr. Xulu ended with a powerful Pan-African call to action: "No African woman should have to carry the future alone. We must carry it together. We must lead it together. And together, we must build the health systems our people deserve."*

She stressed that health is co-created through collaboration between policymakers and communities, researchers and patients, governments and civil society, and the public and private sectors.

Reflecting on the HIV response, Dr. Xulu highlighted how communities, women, young people, people living with HIV and activists became leaders who demanded access to treatment, challenged stigma, improved health literacy and held institutions accountable. "The greatest lesson of the HIV response was not simply clinical. It was democratic," she said.

Dr. Xulu noted that although women are central to African health systems as nurses, community health workers, researchers, caregivers and public health practitioners, they remain underrepresented in positions where key decisions are made. She called for a shift from women's participation to women's power and influence, asking whether women are able to shape budgets, policies and priorities once they are at the decision-making table.

She also highlighted the importance of recognising the leadership that comes from lived experience, noting that women working directly with communities possess valuable knowledge that must inform health governance.

Dr. Xulu concluded her address by emphasising that health is inseparable from dignity, mental wellbeing, education, economic opportunity, nutrition, safety and freedom from violence. She also called attention to unpaid care work, much of which is carried by women without adequate recognition or support. "A sustainable health system is one that values care. Measures care. Supports care. Finances care. And shares care."

Drawing on the legacy of the 1956 Women's March, Dr. Xulu ended with a powerful Pan-African call to action: "No African woman should have to carry the future alone. We must carry it together. We must lead it together. And together, we must build the health systems our people deserve."

SANAC and UNAIDS Coordinate China-SADC Visit to Strengthen Partnership on Pharmaceutical Manufacturing and Regional Health Security

- Nelson Dlamini

A high-level delegation from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and China convened in South Africa from 31 August to 4 September 2026 for a strategic exchange focused on strengthening pharmaceutical manufacturing, regional value chains and health commodity security across the region. Coordinated by the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) and UNAIDS, the visit formed part of ongoing efforts to advance regional collaboration, knowledge exchange and health systems strengthening.



Five-day SADC-China Strategic Exchange Visit to South Africa on Pharmaceutical Manufacturing and Regional Value Chains



Five-day SADC-China Strategic Exchange Visit to South Africa on Pharmaceutical Manufacturing and Regional Value Chains

Held in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, the five-day mission brought together government representatives, development partners, financial institutions, business coalitions and pharmaceutical manufacturers to explore opportunities for expanding local and regional production of medicines, diagnostics and other health technologies. The programme also created a platform for dialogue on sustainable manufacturing partnerships, investment opportunities, and strategies to strengthen regional health security and supply chain resilience.

The exchange focused on deepening Africa-China cooperation by connecting market intelligence, demand forecasting, regulatory readiness, technology transfer and innovative financing mechanisms. Participants engaged in discussions on regulatory harmonisation, investment promotion and the development of sustainable manufacturing ecosystems, while visits to pharmaceutical production facilities provided valuable insights into production capacity, operational models and innovation.

A key objective of the mission was to identify investment opportunities and blended financing solutions that could accelerate local manufacturing and support pooled procurement initiatives across the region. Delegates

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Five-day SADC-China Strategic Exchange Visit to South Africa on Pharmaceutical Manufacturing and Regional Value Chains

also explored ways to improve demand visibility, strengthen regional procurement systems and enhance the security and reliability of health commodity supply chains across SADC Member States.

The mission is expected to generate a set of actionable recommendations to advance regional pharmaceutical manufacturing, including a market access and regulatory landscape brief outlining priority markets,



Five-day SADC-China Strategic Exchange Visit to South Africa on Pharmaceutical Manufacturing and Regional Value Chains

> *A key objective of the mission was to identify investment opportunities and blended financing solutions that could accelerate local manufacturing and support pooled procurement initiatives across the region.*

procurement pathways, regulatory considerations and key barriers to access. These outcomes are anticipated to contribute to a more resilient and self-sustaining regional health sector while further strengthening economic cooperation between SADC and China.

By fostering strategic partnerships, knowledge exchange and investment-ready opportunities, the initiative marks an important step towards expanding Africa's pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity and improving access to essential health commodities. It also underscores the growing commitment of SADC, China and their partners to building stronger, more resilient health systems that can meet the region's current and future health needs.

South Africa's CCM Advances Discussions on Global Fund Sustainability and HIV & TB Priorities

- Simangaliso Motsepe


Former SANAC CEO and CCM Chair Dr. Thembisile Xulu

The South Africa Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) held its quarterly meeting on 29 September 2026 in Johannesburg. Hosted by the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), the meeting brought together key stakeholders, including the Global Fund Country Team, the Local Fund Agent, government institutions, development partners, Provincial Councils on AIDS, civil society and private-sector representatives.

The meeting focused on preparations for Global Fund Grant Cycle 8 (GC8), including initial discussions on GC8 implementation arrangements and a review of GC7 grant performance, as outlined in the Oversight Committee Report. Discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening governance, improving programme implementation and ensuring the sustainability of South Africa's HIV and tuberculosis (TB) response amid tightening global funding constraints.

A key issue was whether the current implementation model—comprising the National Department of Health (NDoH) and three civil society Principal Recipients—remains the most effective and efficient arrangement for GC8, given the Global Fund's guidance that countries should reduce the number of Principal Recipients. Participants considered implementation capacity, programme performance, operational costs and value for money, while stressing that future decisions must be transparent and evidence-based. They also noted the anticipated reduction in the GC8 allocation and the expectation that GC9 may be the final round of Global Fund support, underscoring the need for clear sustainability and transition plans to protect essential services.


L-R: Limpopo Head Of Secretariat Ms. Conny Raphahlelo, former SANAC CEO & CCM Chair Dr. Thembisile Xulu and CCM Co-Chair Ms. Mulalo Murudi

Addressing sustainability, former SANAC CEO and CCM Chair Dr. Thembisile Xulu highlighted the development of the second version of the National Sustainability Framework, emphasising that "sustainability extends beyond financial resources to include governance, service delivery and social enablers". She explained that the framework had been presented to provinces to help identify their respective strengths

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and weaknesses, assess progress and determine where further support is required.

Dr. Xulu further emphasised the importance of maintaining high-quality programmes that can be sustained and supported. She noted that government cannot be everywhere and that effective partnerships and implementation structures are essential to maintaining service delivery.

The CCM emphasised the need to make bold, strategic and forward-looking decisions in preparation for GC8. It also underscored the importance of prioritising investments that promote long-term sustainability, strengthen country ownership and support a gradual transition towards reduced reliance on Global Fund financing.



Members of the South Africa Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism

The meeting also raised concerns about gaps in TB services, particularly in the mining sector. Participants highlighted the need for appropriate representation on the GC8 Technical Task Teams (TTTs) to strengthen technical input and develop practical approaches to addressing these gaps during the development of the GC8 Request for Funding. Discussions further emphasised the importance of defining and strengthening health systems to improve implementation and prepare for future funding transitions, particularly as South Africa plans for the sustainability of Global Fund-supported programmes.

Funding priorities for HIV and TB were also discussed, including a proposed allocation split of 75% for HIV and 25% for TB. Further national-level deliberations are required before the CCM considers and potentially endorses the proposed split at its next meeting. The proposal was informed by the distribution of disease burden and risk.

The meeting also received an update on funding for lenacapavir (LEN) demand-creation activities. Following stakeholder consultations and the submission of revised documentation by civil society Principal Recipients, the Global Fund approved US$3 million on 9 September 2026 for demand-creation activities aligned with the National Department of Health's framework. The funding is intended to support efforts to raise awareness of and demand for lenacapavir and other prevention options as part of the national HIV response.

The quarterly meeting also marked Dr. Xulu's final CCM meeting as Chair and SANAC CEO before taking up her new role as Director-General of the National Department of Health. Her departure comes at a significant time for the CCM as it considers future Global Fund implementation arrangements, sustainability planning and the strengthening of national health systems.

The discussions formed part of the CCM's ongoing efforts to strengthen governance, accountability and strategic oversight of Global Fund-supported programmes, while ensuring that planning for future grant cycles supports effective implementation, sustainable service delivery and South Africa's continued response to HIV and TB.

"the Global Fund approved US$3 million on 9 September 2026 for demand-creation activities aligned with the National Department of Health's framework. The funding is intended to support efforts to raise awareness of and demand for lenacapavir and other prevention options as part of the national HIV response."

TB Caucus Calls for Stronger Collaboration to Accelerate Gauteng's TB Response

- Simangaliso Motsepe

The Gauteng Provincial Legislature, in collaboration with the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), hosted the TB Caucus Oversight and Multisectoral Stakeholder Engagement Session on 22 July 2026. The session brought together government, civil society and development partners to discuss Gauteng's tuberculosis (TB) response and strengthen collective efforts to end the epidemic.



Dr. Candice Bailey from TBAC and SANAC TB Technical Advisor Mr. James Mmekwa

The session focused on the state of TB in the province, TB burden, implementation of the 2026 End TB Plan and lessons from multisectoral interventions. Discussions highlighted the importance of stronger collaboration, improved access to testing and treatment, and greater accountability for service delivery.

Mr. Themba Ngwenya from the provincial TB directorate presented Gauteng's performance, highlighting steady progress. Between January and June 2026, 317,887 TB nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) were conducted against an annual target of 930,813. During the same period, 12,703 patients started TB treatment, representing 49.5% of the province's annual target of 25,663.

The presentation also noted that challenges remain despite these efforts. These include late presentation at health facilities, high rates of TB and HIV co-infection, and patients being lost to follow-up. Poverty, overcrowding, undernutrition and food insecurity further increase vulnerability to TB and can make it difficult for patients to adhere to treatment and recover fully.


Gauteng TB caucus Oversight and Multisectoral Stakeholder Engagement Session

Dr. Masindi Mashapha, Assistant Director at the Department of Social Development (DSD), provided an update on the newly launched DSD TB Strategy and highlighted the importance of addressing the social and economic factors that contribute to the TB epidemic. She said: "TB places a significant financial

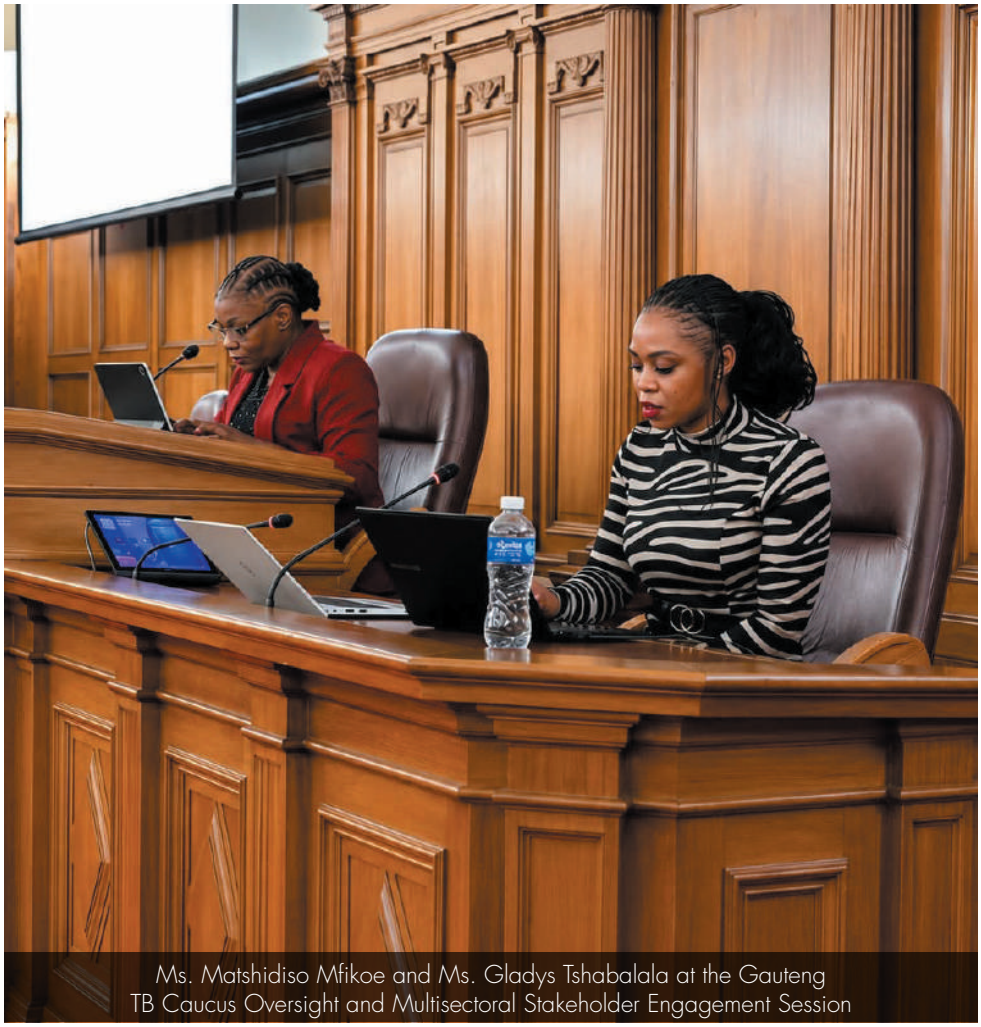
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burden on patients and their households through medical expenses, transport, food and accommodation costs, as well as lost income for patients and caregivers. These pressures can force vulnerable families to deplete their assets or adopt coping strategies that further affect their wellbeing."

Dr. Mashapha also highlighted the critical roles of the DSD, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the National Development Agency (NDA) in addressing these challenges. She said: "Their contributions include social assistance, food security and sustainable livelihoods, psychosocial support, substance-abuse prevention, and services for vulnerable children and families. These interventions complement healthcare services by helping to address the circumstances that may prevent patients from completing treatment and achieving better health outcomes."

Discussions also highlighted ongoing TB interventions, including strengthening community screening and testing, improving the linkage of diagnosed patients to treatment, tracing patients who miss appointments, and providing nutritional and psychosocial support. Integrated approaches to HIV and TB services, together with community education and awareness campaigns, are essential to improving health-seeking behaviour and reducing stigma.

SANAC TB Technical Advisor Mr. James Mmekwa emphasised the importance of collaboration and shared accountability in strengthening the TB response. He highlighted "the need for effective medical interventions, sustained political leadership, strong partnerships and active community participation to advance efforts towards ending TB."
Honourable Bandile Masuku, Chair of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature



Ms. Matshidiso Mfikoe and Ms. Gladys Tshabalala at the Gauteng TB Caucus Oversight and Multisectoral Stakeholder Engagement Session

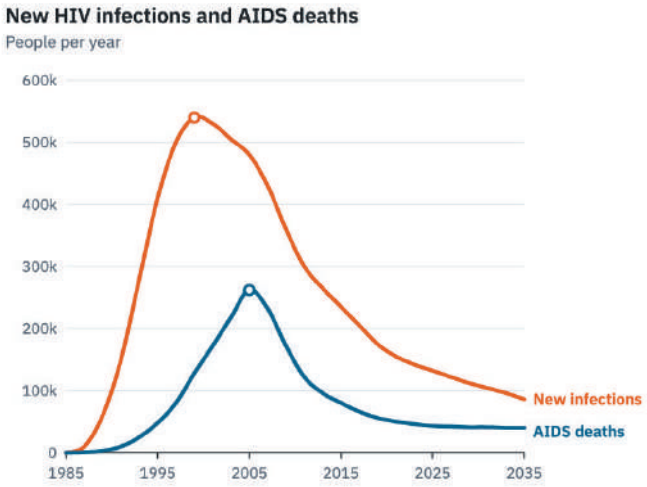
TB Caucus, said the TB Caucus and civil society have an important role in supporting these efforts. This includes raising community awareness, addressing TB-related stigma, supporting local screening campaigns, identifying barriers to accessing services, and holding government accountable for delivering quality TB services. His remarks echoed those of Ms. Gladys Tshabalala, the then SANAC Civil Society Forum Provincial Chairperson in Gauteng.

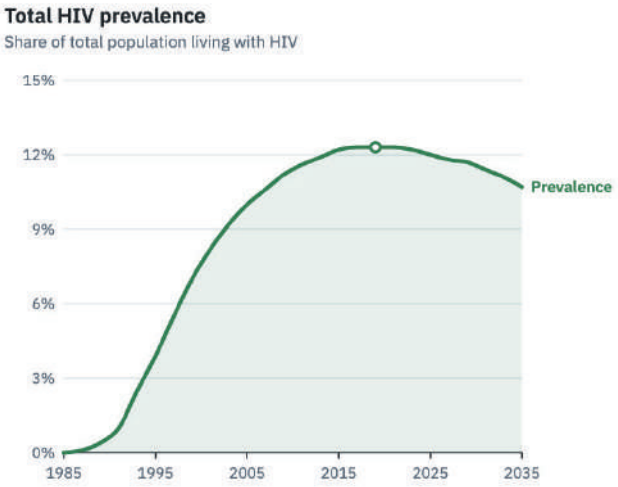
The session reinforced the need to move beyond a purely biomedical approach to TB and adopt a holistic approach that addresses the social and economic inequalities affecting prevention, treatment and recovery. Stronger cooperation among government departments, healthcare providers, civil society, development partners and communities will be essential to improving patient outcomes and accelerating progress towards ending TB in Gauteng.

"SANAC TB Technical Advisor Mr. James Mmekwa emphasised the importance of collaboration and shared accountability in strengthening the TB response."

From Crisis to Progress: The SANAC Situation Room Tracks South Africa's HIV Epidemic

- Zwebuka Khumalo





South Africa has made significant progress in reducing new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths over the decades. Insights generated using the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) Situation Room illustrate the evolution of the country's HIV epidemic, highlighting both the gains achieved and the work that remains to end AIDS as a public health threat.

The Situation Room's analysis traces the epidemic from 1985 to 2035 as highlighted by the diagram above, comparing trends in HIV prevalence, new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. The data illustrates how the epidemic escalated during its early years, reached critical peaks and subsequently began to decline as prevention efforts and access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) expanded.

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, South Africa experienced a sharp increase in new HIV infections, which peaked at more than 500,000 annually around 1999–2000. As infections accumulated across the population, the number of people living with HIV continued to rise, placing an increasing burden on individuals, families and communities.

Although new HIV infections began to decline, AIDS-related deaths continued to increase, reaching their highest levels around 2005. This time lag reflected the severe consequences of infections acquired during the 1990s, when access to antiretroviral treatment (ART) was not yet widespread. Many people developed advanced HIV disease, underscoring the devastating impact of the epidemic during this period.

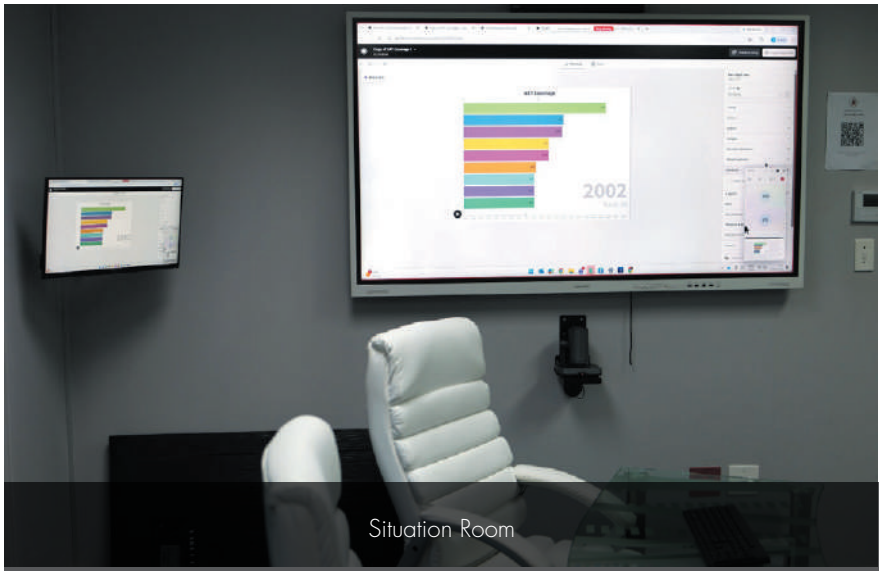
From around 2005 onwards, both new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths began to decline. This progress largely reflects the expansion of HIV prevention interventions and increased access to ART, which has enabled more people living with HIV to live longer, healthier lives. While the number of people living with HIV remained high and continued to increase for several years, the analysis indicates that HIV prevalence eventually stabilised, with a slight decline projected after 2020.While the number of people living with HIV remained high and continued to increase for

> *South Africa has made significant progress in reducing new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths over the decades.*

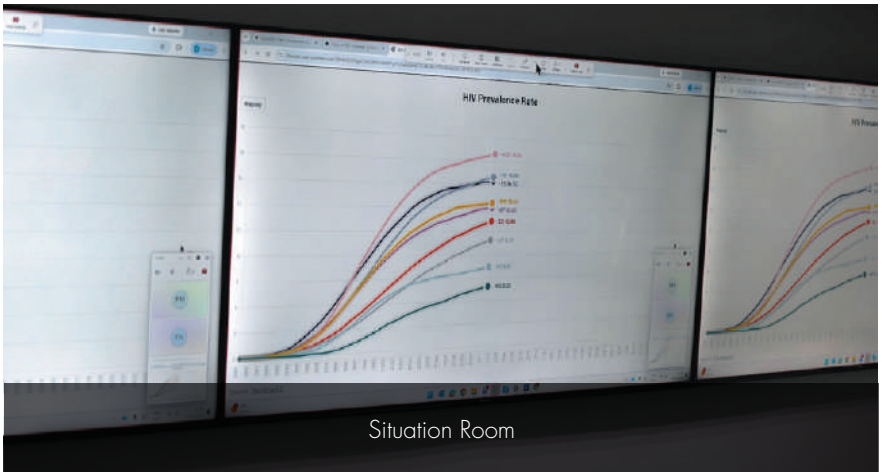
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SANAC Situation Room



Situation Room



Situation Room

several years, data indicates that prevalence eventually stabilised, with a slight decline projected after 2020.

This trend highlights an important distinction: as people live longer with HIV due to treatment, the total population living with the virus may remain substantial even as fewer people acquire HIV and fewer die from AIDS-related causes.

Despite the progress achieved, HIV continues to affect a significant number of people in South Africa. Maintaining and accelerating the gains will require sustained investment in HIV prevention, testing, treatment initiation and adherence, alongside targeted interventions for key and priority populations.

The work that Situation Room does reinforces the importance of using data to understand epidemic trends, identify persistent challenges and inform strategic planning and decision-making. Reliable data and evidence-based interventions remain essential to strengthening the national response and ensuring that services reach the people and communities who need them most.

Sedibeng District AIDS Council Reviews Progress Against its HIV, TB and STIs Targets

- Simangaliso Motsepe



Ms. Tsakani Mabasa, Head of Secretariat of the Sedibeng District AIDS Council

The Sedibeng District AIDS Council held its quarterly plenary meeting on 18 September 2026 at the Sedibeng District Municipality Offices in Vereeniging. Representatives from government, the Civil Society Forum and the Private Sector Forum reviewed progress, identified urgent challenges and agreed on priorities for strengthening the district's multisectoral response to HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

The meeting was led by AIDS Council chairpersons Executive Mayor Ald. Lerato Maloka and Mr. Zweledinga Mqwati. Discussions focused on performance during the April–June 2026 reporting period and the interventions needed to improve health outcomes across the district.

The quarterly report recorded notable achievements in testing and community outreach. A total of 108,419 HIV tests were conducted against a target of 87,519, while 16,756 TB tests were conducted using GeneXpert, exceeding the quarterly target of 13,539. Through its door-to-door education programme, the municipality visited 86,864 households and reached 247,360 people.

Schools and community organisations also played an important role in awareness and prevention. Ms. Tsakani Mabasa, Head of Secretariat of the Sedibeng District AIDS Council, said approximately 13,648 learners and educators were reached through advocacy sessions addressing HIV, TB, learner pregnancy, bullying, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health, and substance abuse.

Despite this progress, the report highlighted challenges requiring urgent attention. The district's TB death rate stood at 12.8%, above the target of 7%, underscoring the need to strengthen early diagnosis, treatment adherence and patient follow-up. Improving HIV treatment outcomes, increasing the initiation of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and ensuring that survivors of sexual assault receive timely post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) were also identified as priorities.

"While the district is performing well on the first 95 of the HIV treatment cascade, gaps remain in the second and third 95 targets and require further attention," Ms. Mabasa said. "The district will use the upcoming World AIDS Day commemoration to intensify efforts and strengthen these critical components of the HIV response."

Executive Mayor Ald. Lerato Maloka emphasised the importance of a coordinated response to TB. "Ending TB requires coordinated action across government, research, healthcare, civil society, communities, development partners and the private sector. Early diagnosis requires active case finding, rapid diagnosis, contact investigation and TB prevention," she said.

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Attendees at the Sedibeng District AIDS Council quarterly plenary meeting

The meeting also discussed barriers to accessing food-support programmes, particularly transport challenges, as well as the need to establish dedicated AIDS Council secretariats in Emfuleni, Lesedi and Midvaal. Strengthening coordination and accountability among stakeholders remains essential for effective programme implementation and oversight.

Sedibeng District Municipality and its partners committed to intensifying HIV-prevention initiatives, strengthening TB awareness and follow-up, and improving collaboration among government departments, healthcare providers, municipalities and civil society organisations. Ms. Mabasa highlighted planned interventions, including the rollout of lenacapavir for HIV prevention, targeting key and priority populations such as the LGBTQI+

Sedibeng is the only district in Gauteng where the District AIDS Council is situated in the Office of the Executive Mayor, together with its Secretariat. This arrangement has enabled the Executive Mayor to play an active, hands-on role in the Council's work, demonstrating strong leadership and commitment to strengthening the district's HIV response. The quarterly plenary meeting reaffirmed the importance of a coordinated, multisectoral approach to addressing HIV, TB and STIs. Through stronger partnerships, community participation and sustained action on identified challenges, the Sedibeng District AIDS Council aims to advance the district's response and contribute to healthier, better-informed and better-supported communities.


Sedibeng District AIDS Council Chairperson Executive Mayor Ald. Lerato Maloka

SANAC Trains More Than 180 Participants to Support the 1.1 Million HIV Treatment Close the Gap Campaign

- Karabo Makgato



Participants at the onboarding and training programme

The South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) conducted an onboarding and training programme for more than 180 participants appointed to help implement a National Lotteries Commission (NLC)-funded project under the 1.1 Million HIV Treatment Close the Gap Campaign. Delivered in two phases over six days across two weeks, the programme brought together participants from inland and coastal provinces.

The programme provided refresher training to strengthen participants' understanding of the project and equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to coordinate and implement community-level activities across the country over the next three months.

Launched in 2025, the 1.1 Million HIV Treatment Close the Gap Campaign seeks to identify and support people living with HIV who know their status but have not yet started treatment. It aims to address this critical gap in South Africa's HIV response by linking more people to treatment and supporting their access to essential healthcare services.



Acting SANAC CEO Dr. Roger Phili

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The first phase of the onboarding and training programme took place in Pretoria from 16–18 September 2026. It brought together demand generation mobilisers, civil society sector coordinators and provincial coordinators from Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Gauteng and the Free State.

The second phase was held in Durban from 21–23 September 2026 for participants from the Northern Cape, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. It ensured that teams from the remaining participating provinces received the orientation and preparation needed to implement the project.



Demand generation mobilizers, sector coordinators, and provincial coordinators at the inland onboarding and training programme



Demand generation mobilizers, sector coordinators, and provincial coordinators at the coastal onboarding and training programme



Senior Human Resource Manager Ms. Nokuthula Ndlela

Speaking about the collaboration between SANAC and the NLC, Dr Roger Phili, then Executive Manager: Resource Mobilisation and Donor Coordination and now Acting Chief Executive Officer, expressed his sincere appreciation to the NLC for its steadfast support for SANAC in advancing two key national priorities: the 1.1 Million Campaign and the End TB Campaign. These initiatives reach deep into communities, connecting people with life-saving information, prevention services, screening, testing, treatment and care.

"Through this initiative, SANAC, with the support of NLC, aims to strengthen community-level mobilisation and coordination, support efforts to close the treatment gap and contribute to expanding access to HIV treatment across South Africa," said Dr Phili.

FEATURE ARTICLE

SANAC Wellness Day 2026: Pause, Recharge and Connect

- Karabo Makgato

SANAC reaffirmed its commitment to employee wellbeing by hosting its 2026 Wellness Day at its Centurion offices on Wednesday, 2 September, under the theme "Pause - Recharge - Connect."

Organised by the Human Resources Unit, the event gave employees an opportunity to step away from their daily responsibilities and focus on their physical, emotional, mental, financial and social wellbeing. It also highlighted the importance of creating a supportive workplace culture that encourages employees to prioritise their health, build resilience and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

In line with SANAC's employee wellness vision of developing and maintaining a healthy, dedicated, responsive and productive workforce, the programme offered a range of interactive activities, practical health services and expert-led wellness sessions.



Mr. Phindulo Nemavhidi and Ms. Millicent Masuku at the SANAC Wellness Day event



SANAC HR Manager Ms. Nokuthula Ndlela (Left) conducting a raffle

A key feature of Wellness Day was the provision of comprehensive health screenings, which gave employees an opportunity to assess their health and access essential wellness services. These included blood pressure and glucose testing, body metrics and posture assessments, tuberculosis (TB) screening, lipogram testing, and voluntary HIV testing and counselling.

The screenings reinforced the importance of knowing one's health status, taking preventive measures and seeking appropriate care when needed. By bringing these services directly to the workplace, SANAC encouraged employees to make their health a priority.

Recognising that financial wellbeing is equally important to overall health, the programme included a financial wellness session facilitated by Ms. Mitzie Ginsburg. During the session, titled "Money Matters: Managing Today, Planning for Tomorrow," employees received

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SANAC Staff participating in a workout session with Virgin Active instructors

Adding an energetic dimension to the programme, the Virgin Active team led a physical wellness session under the theme "Be and Stay Fit." The session encouraged employees to embrace physical activity as an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.

Beyond the formal programme, the day created opportunities for colleagues to interact, participate in a raffle and enjoy one another's company outside their usual work routines. These moments of connection reinforced the importance of positive workplace relationships and social wellbeing.

> *"Our vision was to create a day that genuinely focused on our people and brought SANAC's employee wellness vision to life."*

SANAC Senior Human Resources Manager Ms. Nokuthula Ndlela said Wellness Day was designed to bring the organisation's employee wellness vision to life by creating a dedicated space for employees to focus on themselves and connect with their colleagues.

"Our vision was to create a day that genuinely focused on our people and brought SANAC's employee wellness vision to life. We want to develop and maintain a healthy, dedicated, responsive and productive workforce. In our demanding and purpose-driven environment, it is important that we intentionally create opportunities for our people to pause, recharge and connect. The participation, energy and engagement on the day reaffirmed the importance of continuing to invest in the wellbeing of our employees," said Ms. Ndlela.

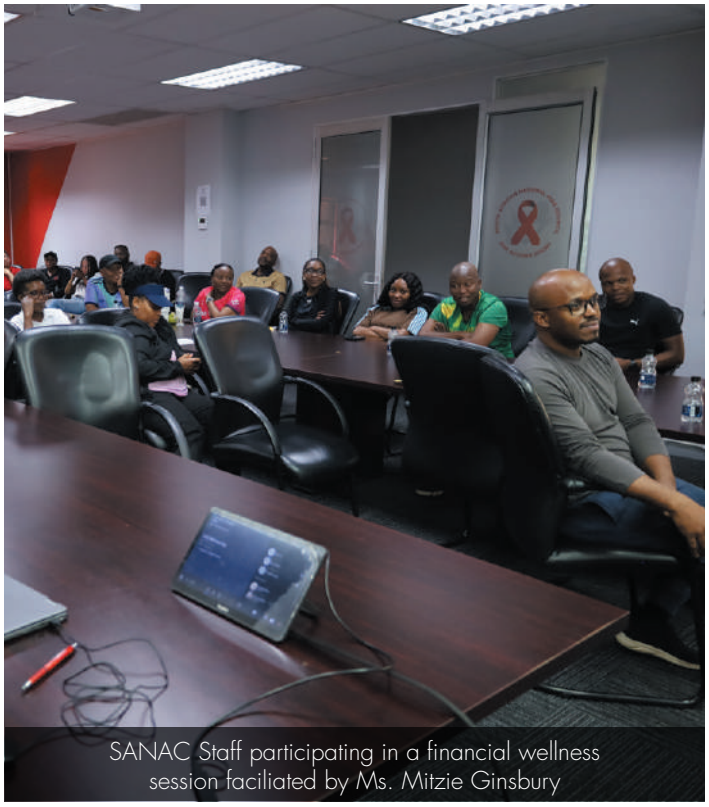
The strong participation and engagement demonstrated the value of giving employees opportunities to access wellness services, gain practical knowledge and take part in activities that support their overall wellbeing.

guidance on managing their finances and planning for the future.

The programme also addressed emotional wellbeing through an engaging session facilitated by Ms. Phyllis Qibi of Moving Forward Coaching. Titled "Pause, Recharge and Reconnect with Yourself," the session encouraged employees to reflect on their personal wellbeing, recognise the importance of self-care and make time to reconnect with themselves amid the demands of a busy work environment.

Reflecting on the importance of employee wellness, former SANAC Chief Executive Officer Dr. Thembisile Xulu emphasised that the organisation's ability to fulfil its mandate depends on the wellbeing of its people.

"SANAC's ability to deliver on its mandate ultimately depends on its people. While we work in a fast-paced and purpose-driven environment, it is equally important that we take care of the people behind the work—our employees. Wellness should not be something we focus on only once a year; it should form part of how we work, how we lead and how we support one another every day," said Dr. Xulu.


SANAC Staff participating in a financial wellness session faciliated by Ms. Mitzie Ginsbury



SANAC Wellness Day



SANAC Wellness Day

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