

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Dear colleagues, I take this opportunity to report to you on the governance of the South African Heart Association (SA Heart® NPC) in the year since our last general meeting, held on 29 October 2022, at this same venue.

I have represented this portfolio as the Board's chairperson since 27 May 2023. My appointment was enforced by the untimely passing of our previous chairperson, Professor Deon Bezuidenhout, on 16 April this year.

I'm sharing a synopsis of the main activities of the Board since the last report of October 2022. As is tradition, I focused on the milestones achieved, programmes in progress and identified future projects.

Detailed information on the achievements of the Board committees, Executive, Special interest groups (SIGs) and Branches can be found in the included reports by the President and respective chairs.

BOARD COMPOSITION

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the Board Members for their relentless application to the task at hand. The Board accepted the resignations of two non-executive directors, Drs Tom Mabin and Tawanda Butau, early in the year. The new members appointed to the Board as non-executive directors are Drs Anthony Dalby and Timothy Pennel, and Ms Mandi Fine, who are independent. The transition in the Board membership was smoothly and seamlessly managed.

Prof Eric Klug has been commendable as President and Chairperson of the Exco Committee and the Stakeholder Committee. He has continued with aplomb from where Dr Blanche Cupido, the immediate past President, left off. Prof Klug has been bold and contributed decisively to most of the governance and executive decisions.

I remained Chair of the Ethics and Social Committee, where the CVD Indaba project and engagement with the Department of Health remain the focus. Aligning with the National Department of Health (NDoH) requires intentional, selfless application and patience. The hierarchy within the NDoH

needs insightful tackles to ensure sustainable and productive assignments.

Following the resignation of Dr Tawanda Butau, Ms Robyn MacMhaoigh, our legal expert, took over as the Chair of the Nominations Committee to oversee all nominations and appointments. She also led negotiations and contracts, including those with PCOs and other vendors, and prepared and reviewed the required changes in our Memorandum of Incorporation (MOI) and Terms of Reference (TOR). Mr Francois Mintoor, head of the Board Audit and Risk Committee, admirably looked after our financial wellbeing and continued his role facilitating audits, playing a vital role in all significant financial decisions. Dr Alfonso Pecoraro continued as Deputy Chair of the SA Heart® Board and an active member of the Exco Committee.

Erika Dau, our General Manager, is relentless in pursuing the best for SA Heart®. She is most dedicated to her work, which includes the preparations and minutes for our Board meetings, AGMs and other committees.

The term of the current Board is reaching an end. I will be stepping down from the Board with Dr Alfonso Pecoraro, Mr François Mintoor (independent) and Ms Robyn MacMhaoigh (independent). The new SA Heart® Board and the SA Heart® President-elect will be announced at this year's AGM.

SA HEART® – STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

SA Heart® hosted its 2023 Strategic Planning meeting in Stellenbosch on 12 - 13 May 2023. This meeting was led by Prof Eric Klug and supported and facilitated by Erika Dau and the external consultant, Natalie Zimmelman. The session included a group of experienced elders, future leaders in SA Heart® and the SA Heart® Board members.

This time around, there were 4 Core Action Items identified and Responsible Persons were identified and assigned mandates at the end of the meeting:

- **Membership growth:** There is a need to grow numbers, targeting specific groups with room for expansion in

Allied professionals, GP and Medical officers and physicians. Remove technical, legal and operational barriers to joining.

- **Grow active membership by volunteerism:** Having active members is the most critical component for having the resources to deliver on SA Heart®'s objectives. There is a clear need to professionalise how SA Heart® engages its volunteers.
- **Enabling the member journey:** Practice Development and Public Education: The need for identification is of focus of SA Heart® and identifying projects aligned with SA Heart®'s purpose and enabling participation in existing complementary projects.
- **Grow the Voice:** This is about building the SA Heart® brand and further growing TRUST in the organisation.

CONGRESS

The 2022 Congress was successful in many respects. This was the first face-to-face meeting since COVID-19 pandemic and was only marred by the bomb scare, which caused uncertainty among many attendees. The SA Heart® Board, Dr Farouk Mamdoo and his committee, together with the PCO, boldly decided to continue with the conference, albeit in a hybrid format.

Dr Farouk Mamdoo and his committee cannot be thanked enough for organising this year's Congress - a special mention to Event Options, our PCO, for their excellent and professional service.

Dr Ahmed Vachiat is the Convenor for the 2024 SA Heart® Congress. The theme is "Cardiac Connections". This Congress will also be held in Sandton City between 8 - 10 November 2024. SA Heart® has requested tenders for the PCO for the organisation of the 2024 Congress; these will be evaluated and hopefully finalised prior to the annual congress this October.

FINANCIAL

Mr Francois Mintoor, the BARC (Board Audit and Risk Committee) Chair, presented the annual financial statements to the Board, who accepted and approved the financials. SA Heart® finances remain healthy year on year. This

is mainly due to the successes of the annual Congress. Industry support provides a lifeline which should be acknowledged. Mr Mintoor will present the detailed financial statements at the AGM.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The association remains active in this space. SA Heart® has continued and escalated its activity in this field with a Fellows Exam Preparation course, Journal clubs, Branch events, ESC conference updates and training platforms. The support of the SIGS and Branches in hosting the Journal clubs is a commendable indication of a positive alignment with the mother body. All these educational platforms provide value to our members. SA Heart® continues supporting four travel scholarships and one research scholarship per annum. Qualifying members are encouraged to apply.

JOURNAL

The Board considers the value of the South African Heart® Journal to the society, its importance to members, and its service to the community as a vehicle to publish MMed and MPhil dissertations, which is now a prerequisite for qualification. It has been difficult for Prof Ntusi to meet his editorial obligations because of his competing interests and need for adequate human and infrastructural support. The current editorial team was thus disbanded. Dr Blanche Cupido is the guest editor of the current congress issue of the Journal.

The Board requested Dr Dalby to investigate the Journal's future handling and make recommendations as to the editorial Board, publishing house, administrative support and other identified obligations. The Board further requested Dr Dalby to be the acting editor for the issue following the Congress to accommodate papers that Prof Ntusi has already prepared or have been part of the review process.

I wish SA Heart®, the new Board and all its members a successful year ahead. May the association continue to grow from strength to strength.

Best regards

Martin Mpe
SA Heart® Chair of the Board