
TO: ALL MEDIA
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MEDIA STATEMENT: AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE CONFERENCE GETS UNDERWAY IN DURBAN

The 21st century has begun with a global health crisis of emerging and re-emerging diseases spiraling out of control, which coupled with escalating violence and poverty, threatens to cripple entire communities and countries.

To tackle this crisis, it is currently essential that the health care community work to access and harness as many resources and partners as possible. One of the resources often overlooked and underestimated, is the role of African Traditional Medicine, and the potential contributions they can make at many levels of health care delivery.

The African Traditional Medicine Conference, organized by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, was officially opened by the Chairperson of the Health Portfolio Committee, Ms Zanele Ludidi (MP) on behalf of the MEC for Health, who said; *"In an era of emergent and re-emergent diseases synergies between working remedies must always be harnessed and championed by all, and governments in particular.*

She further challenged the media to play a role in addressing the negativity with which the media is reporting on African Traditional Medicine. She said; *"Let me now challenge the media that is here today. We have been inundated with reports of progress being made in deracialising the editorial rooms. I always wonder to what extent this has helped to address the negativity with which our traditional practices are being reported in the media. What this has done is to relegate this important element of health care to secretive practice that is practiced by poor and illiterate people."*

The Conference is scheduled for two days and is expected to come out with resolutions on how best research and development could be harnessed for mutual benefit between the African Traditional Medicine and the "Western Medicine". Other speakers are expected to address the Conference between today and tomorrow.

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