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**TO: THE EDITOR**  
**DATE: 17 JUNE 2009**

Allow me to respond to the letter which appeared in your paper of 16 June 2009 under the title; "Good start by the premier". I firstly need to agree with the writer in his/her belief that our new administration brings a message of renewed hope and the premier is an epitome of such hope.

On the other hand I must swiftly correct the "hopeful public servant" in his/her misinformed belief that the International Council of Nurses 24<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Congress is "yet another government sponsored useless and expensive talk shop". This is a fallacy and misguided assertion about the Congress and its outcome before it is held. The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is an independent federation of national nurse's organizations from 128 countries. The Democratic Nurses Organization of South Africa (DENOSA) is a member and it was DENOSA who lobbied and was granted permission to host the 24<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Congress this year; the first to be held in Africa in the 110 years of ICN existence.

The Department of Health, being the largest employer of nurses in the country and believing that this Congress means a lot to nurses in Africa and South Africa in particular, shares the belief that the Congress marks the turning point in the nursing profession. The present generation of nurses may not see another such Congress in Africa while still practising it is a similar to the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

We regularly sponsor doctors to attend Conferences and stay in hotels. In this instance we have pleaded with nurses to stay at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) residences in order to cut costs. We also supported DENOSA in securing permission to host this Congress, and are supporting nurses to be able to participate at the Congress where registration fee is around R7000 per delegate excluding meals and accomodation.

It is our belief that this Congress has a significant bearing in improving health care delivery. The medical profession as a whole is fast changing and those in the profession need to, from time to time share ideas and knowledge in dealing with the diseases of the time. Just like doctors, who frequently hold conferences, nurses too must sharpen their skills and knowledge in order to provide quality health care.

No "newly deployed cadre" will or has benefited from the Congress expect the nurses of the country (and continent) and most importantly the poor people who depend on the public health system. It is also our hope that the congress will come out with practical solutions to the challenges of our time and help our nurses to be able to meet the demand for and deliver quality health care.

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