

# Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce the 14th edition of the South African Health Review (SAHR). Published since 1995, the SAHR seeks to provide a South African perspective on prevailing international public health issues, to stimulate debate and critical discourse and to provide a platform for assessing progress and areas for further attention. It is in keeping with these objectives that we have chosen to focus on the topical issues of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and perspectives on a National Health Insurance (NHI) for this year's Review.

The MDGs are acknowledged as being largely aspirational in nature and there is consensus that much has changed in the global economic climate since these goals were formulated 10 years ago. Nonetheless, the indicators contained in the Millennium Declaration define a set of goals and targets to which all countries must strive, either in terms of reaching these goals for their own populations or assisting poorer countries to achieve them. The 2010 edition of the SAHR provides us with an opportunity to reflect on our challenges and successes in achieving the MDGs and to chart our way forward to the 2015 countdown and beyond. It provides a useful yardstick by which to measure our progress and define our future actions.

The move to introduce a NHI system for South Africa is a subject which has elicited much debate in our country and we are pleased to have put together a compendium of arguments and counter-arguments on the NHI. We trust that these will contribute to informed and constructive dialogue on this important development in the health sector. We are aware of the contentious nature of this section of the Review and have chosen to provide as much of the available discourse around this issue in the public domain as possible. For, to listen to only the voices that affirm one viewpoint, is to deny the fundamental contradictions that exist in our society and indeed in our health system.

On behalf of the Board of Health Systems Trust, I wish to extend our sincere thanks to the authors, contributors and peer reviewers who have given of their time and expertise to assist in producing this Review. I also wish to acknowledge the editorial team and the many HST staff who often worked long hours to make this Review possible. We are also indebted to the National Department of Health who provided information for this year's Review.

We trust that you will find this Review a worthy contribution to building health systems in South and southern Africa.



Welile Shasha

Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

