



News and Events

Address to the National Council of Provinces, Cape Town 28 October 1999

Chairperson of the NCOP,
Honourable Premiers,
Honourable Members of the House,
Ladies and Gentlemen;

I would like to thank you most sincerely for the opportunity you have given us to come to this important House of our National Legislature.

[...]

Similarly, we are confronted with the scourge of HIV-AIDS against which we must leave no stone unturned to save ourselves from the catastrophe which this disease poses.

[Brink's note: Within a few weeks of changing his mind about AZT, Mbeki changed his mind about 'the scourge of HIV-AIDS' too, and rued to Professor Sam Mhlongo that he'd been taken in by all the nonsense in the newspapers.]

Concerned to respond appropriately to this threat, many in our country have called on the Government to make the drug AZT available in our public health system.

Two matters in this regard have been brought to our attention. One of these is that there are legal cases pending in this country, the United Kingdom and the United States against AZT on the basis that this drug is harmful to health.

There also exists a large volume of scientific literature alleging that, among other things, the toxicity of this drug is such that it is in fact a danger to health.

These are matters of great concern to the Government as it would be irresponsible for us not to heed the dire warnings which medical researchers have been making.

I have therefore asked the Minister of Health, as a matter of urgency, to go into all these matters so that, to the extent that is possible, we ourselves, including our country's medical authorities, are certain of where the truth lies.

To understand this matter better, I would urge the Honourable Members of the National Council to access the huge volume of literature on this matter available on the Internet, so that all of us can approach this issue from the same base of information.

Chairperson;

The confidence and hope among our people that we will succeed to move further forward towards a better life for all are very high. We, as the elected representatives of these masses must ensure that we do not disappoint their expectations.

Thank you.

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