

Dr. Nono Simelela



After qualifying as the first black Obstetrician at the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA, now Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University), Dr Simelela worked as a senior lecturer at the University and clinician at the George Mukhari Hospital for a number of years. Her interest in women's health and passion to fight against HIV and TB led her to accepting a position in the Department of Health in South Africa where she headed the National HIV/AIDS/TB Programme.

As Head of the HIV Unit, she played a critical role in the introduction of programmes for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV including the adoption of post-exposure prophylaxis for survivors of sexual assault.

Under the leadership of a colleague and friend, Dr Ntsaluba, she worked with a team of experts from within South Africa and the Clinton Foundation to develop the Comprehensive Plan for Treatment, Care and Prevention of HIV for South Africa which was adopted by Cabinet in 2003. This ground breaking milestone set the country on a path towards the reduction of HIV mortality and morbidity which has sustained to date.

Subsequent to the introduction of the treatment programme, Dr Simelela joined the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) in London as Director of Technical Knowledge and Support starting in July 2004. In that capacity, she played a key role in developing and implementing the Federation's 10-year Strategic Framework. She also represented IPPF at technical meetings of the World Health Organization, and headed IPPF's International Medical Advisory Panel (IMAP).

In 2009, Dr Simelela became the inaugural Chief Executive Officer of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC). Following her stint at SANAC, Dr Nono Simelela was appointed as Special Advisor to the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Kgalema Motlanthe, in May 2011. In this role, she supported and advised on a wide range of health related policies and programmes. She currently serves as the Advisor on Social Policy to the Deputy President, HE Cyril Ramaphosa.

Dr. Simelela's publication topics include those relating to HIV, TB, anti-retroviral treatment and access to sexual and reproductive health services for women in developing countries.

Over the years, Dr. Simelela held memberships and continues to do so on a variety of professional bodies, boards and committees at local, regional and international levels. She remains passionate about women's health and access to quality health services for all.