

NPOs urged to work with govt to realise 30-year plan

By [Gabi Khumalo](#)

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Special advisor to the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), Nono Simelela, has called on non-profit organisations (NPOs) to work with government in order to realise the 30-year vision of zero new HIV infections.

"If we put our energies together, we will be able to achieve the vision of the National Strategic Plan to have zero new HIV-infected people. We need every pair of hands to realise the 30-year vision of no new HIV infections and discrimination and transmission of mother to child," said Simelela.

In her presentation on South Africa's response to the HIV and TB epidemic at the NPO Summit being held in Johannesburg on Thursday, Simelela acknowledged that South Africa was unlikely to meet the Millennium Development Goal to combat the virus. However, she noted that life expectancy was starting to increase and this was also due to the work done by the NPOs.

She urged the sector to be on a look out while providing care to the communities and inform the Department of Social Development if they came across people taking their medication without food and AIDS orphans. She added that NPOs were at the centre of the lives of people.

Simelela said NPOs, as those doing the work on the ground, needed to be provided with resources so that they could reach as many people as possible.

Sterling work, sub-standard buildings

During the NPO Summit, the organisations were able to raise their concerns with government. These included that they were operating from decaying buildings and did not receive enough assistance when it came to managing their taxes.

Maria Madiphatswa, who runs an NPO in Roodepoort, urged the South African Revenue Service to send officials to these centres to give them information on tax - as some of the organisations were in trouble due to a lack of knowledge about taxes.

"Please help ... because we are really lost," said Madiphatswa.

A representative from SARS said that they were looking for an opportunity to assist NPOs to get funding, but that they wanted to provide services only to legitimate NPOs and not those who were misusing their budgets.

"It is important to make a success of [this sector] to help make government meet its mandate. We need to start not only seeing SARS as a tax collector, but what we provide beyond that like giving to the NPO sector."

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