

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

It has been many years of environmental development in South Africa for the past thirteen years of existence of the SAIEH. In this past thirteen years, we have seen the name change of Environmental Health Officer's change to Environmental Health Practitioner. This has been through the efforts of SAIEH. Environmental Health Officer, to us, meant a professional who would just be looking at enforcement. An Environmental Health Practitioner is a person who should scientifically make a proper assessment of environmental health conditions and institute appropriate mitigating measures that would sustainably address environmental conditions. This is a true description of what we are trained to do, as professionals practising within the field of environmental health.

New emerging and re-emerging environmental health conditions were also dealt with by the SAIEH during the past thirteen years. The SAIEH was firmly entrenched into global environmental health agendas, leading the African environmental health fraternity into the global environmental health arena. We continued to participate at the International federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) forums around the world, being in attendance and contributing positively to all IFEH World congresses since the Fourth(4th) World congress in 1996 at Aberdeen, Scotland, up to the recent 11th World Congress in Vancouver, Canada , on 5-10th September 2010. We are also amongst the nine (9) nations of the World that hosted the IFEH World Environmental Health Congresses in 2004 in Durban. We continue to contribute to environmental health developments in South Africa.

Our major contribution has been the development of the scope of practise of environmental health which was signed into legislation by the Minister of Health of Health in 2010. This piece of legislation prohibits non environmental health professionals to practise in the field of environmental health. Cases of those illegal practises can be reported to the Health Professions Council and legal action can be instituted against such individuals.

The ushering of the new National Health Act,2003(Act 61 of 2003) also brought in the new definition of municipal health services being mainly a list of environmental health services to be implemented by both District and metropolitan municipalities in South Africa. This does not, however, excludes environmental health services from a full basket of health services as many would think. It only give emphasise to health services that are the responsibility of the local sphere of government in the country.

The SAIEH is also pushing for the establishment of a National Environmental Health Forum as well as an environmental health policy for the country. These will be realised in the foreseeable future as there is agreement between the Department of Health and the SAIEH for the establishment of these forums.

In the past years, The SAIEH, through its National Conferences, have passed a number of conference resolutions for implementation within the country. The responsibility for implementation of these resolutions would lie with government departments and the SAIEH. It is important that all resolutions be implemented as these are also critical for the development of environmental health in the country.

The SAIEH also lead the 2nd All Africa Congress on environmental Health in Malawi in May 2010. A report and Resolutions of this important African Environmental Congress is available on our website. The SAIEH won the bid to host the 3rd All Africa congress on Environmental Health in 2012.

The SAIEH can only continue to be strong if it has a strong and vibrant membership, members are the key backbone for the development of their own profession. To this effect, a membership chart web page will be made available on our website. This will be mainly for suggestions and advises on how to advance the science and practise of environmental health in South Africa. Environmental Health professionals are encouraged to drop their views and advise to SAIEH on this page.

Let us all make a small contributions for the development of this noble profession.

Thanks for reading.

Jerry Chaka