It is my pleasure and privilege to report on the activities of the Association, the National Executive Committee (EXCO) and your elected president, for the period April 2009 to March 2010.

Thank you once again to members of this Association for the faith shown in me in electing me President of this Association for the period mentioned above.

Meetings of the National Executive Committee
The National Executive Committee had five meetings in 2009/10 as follows:
- A very successful meeting by e-mail from 06 April to 15 April 2009.
- A shortened meeting on 04 June 2009 at Spier Wine Estates during the PSSA conference.
- A full meeting on 15 and 16 August 2009.
- A full meeting on 07 and 08 November 2009.
- The first meeting for 2010 was held on the 13th and 14th of February. (This very unromantic trend of meetings on Valentine’s Day is an inheritance from the previous EXCO!)

Overview of issues discussed at the National Executive Committee meetings
Most issues discussed at the National Executive Meetings and projects undertaken will be reported upon in the individual Portfolio and Branch reports.

- **Matters arising from Conference 2009**
  Two new SAAHIP branches were formed in 2009. It was my privilege and honour to address the first SAAHIP Limpopo Branch meeting and then to conduct the election of the Branch Committee for this new Branch on 19 September 2009.

  I also had the privilege of attending and addressing members at the Mpumalanga Branch AGM of this new branch on 6 February 2010. This Branch had already been in existence for a few months prior to this.

  At the 2009 AGM, it was recommended that SAAHIP should engage with the National Department of Health (NDoH) and should obtain the MSH report on shortcomings in the state hospital sector. We wrote to the NDoH and EXCO is still following up on this matter.

- **Transformation**
  **Sustainable remedies for a changing world**
  Our 23rd Conference and 52nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held under this theme. Coming out of this conference we were able to announce a committee that truly reflects all the demographics, not just of the SAAHIP or the PSSA or the Profession of Pharmacy, but of South African Society in general.

  In this way, we set the pace and the tone for the rest of the PSSA. Having successfully done this at SAAHIP, it was not surprising that the PSSA soon began to take its first baby steps in a similar direction.

  Out of the 2009 PSSA conference, and for the first time ever in the PSSA, we have a female President. In addition we have a black President. But most importantly we have, for the first time, a SAAHIP member as President of the PSSA.

- **Strategic Working Group (SWG)**
  The PSSA Strategic plan was finalised in 2009. Subsequent to this, Branches and Sectors were requested to develop their own Strategic Plans that are aligned to the PSSA plan.

  At the November 2009 EXCO meeting we set aside time to develop this plan. A major project that we identified for ourselves as SAAHIP is to:
  - Market PSSA at DoH functions for Pharmacist Interns and Community Service Pharmacists (CSPs), since this is almost our exclusive domain.

  Other projects include:
  - Need to do more for pharmacists in private sector in terms of labour relations, amongst others
  - Revamping of the SAAHIP website. Current website is not very interesting. It needs to be made more attractive and “funky”, and be made a central repository of Information/knowledge.
  - Strengthen PSSA brand -- We need to do away with the remnants of the “us and them” mentality (promote PSSA first, then sector of choice e.g. SAAHIP)
  - Publicise more DOH/PSSA bursary opportunities to schools
  - Establish a network amongst large private hospital pharmacy groups for them to recognize SAAHIP
  - Review the membership fee for Post Basic Pharmacist’s Assistants (PA) as it is perceived as an obstacle for joining the PSSA
  - Identify what additional “product/services” the PSSA offers a PBPA e.g. insurance indemnity
  - Promote Academia as a career option across all sectors
  - Make more use of open days at Pharmacy Schools / Universities to present different aspects of pharmacy as a career.

  As a means to ensure the implementation and realisation of the PSSA SWG process, the EXCO took a decision to support this process with more than just words and deeds. The SWG process also needs money if it is to be realised. In this regard EXCO pledged a sum of R 200 000.00 to this process. As one of the larger sectors of the PSSA, SAAHIP needs to start to take its rightful place in PSSA politics and make its presence felt.
• **OSD**

The Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) occupied a lot of our time in the EXCO during this term of office and it does seem as if it will continue to do so in 2010.

The OSD issue, much like the dispensing fee, if not more so, go to the very core of the survival of the profession. The OSD issue should never be seen as an issue for the state hospital sub-sector of the profession. It is not just an issue for the Association (SAAHIP) or the even the Society (PSSA). It is an issue for the entire profession of pharmacy. If not handled properly, the OSD issue poses a very real and serious threat to the survival not only of this important sub-sector of our profession, but to the profession in general.

Resources, time and effort therefore need to be deliberately put into handling this issue.

As a spinoff of our many battles, the Association and the Society in general received a lot of media coverage.

• **Dispensing fee**

**Services for which a pharmacist may levy a fee and guidelines for levying such a fee**

We frequently tend to think that some of these issues do not affect us since we practise in hospital pharmacy. The reality however is that a lot of the private sector hospital pharmacies have a community (retail) component. Many professional pharmacy services rendered in the various sectors of our profession are no different from each other. When comment is called for in developing guidelines therefore, it is imperative that all pharmacists, regardless of sector, read through the draft documents and make inputs. Most importantly, if it affects one sector of pharmacy, then it affects all of pharmacy. The rest of us need to be involved.

• **FIP Conference**

I had the privilege of attending the International Pharmaceutical Federation’s (FIP) World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Conference in Istanbul, Turkey in September 2009, thanks to SAAHIP.

FIP (the International Pharmaceutical Federation) is the global federation of national organisations of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists dedicated to improving the access to and value of appropriate medicine use worldwide, and contributing to changes in science, practice and health policies worldwide. The conference was held under the theme "Responsibility For Patient Outcomes – Are You Ready?"

There was a total of no less than 12 South Africans attending this conference, including Ivan Kotzé, Bada Pharasi and Amos Masango to mention just a few. About three South African made presentations at this Conference. This was in addition to a South African chairing at least two sessions – our very own Andy Gray, in his capacity as President of the Hospital Pharmacy Section of FIP.

Nigeria is the leading African country in FIP. This country currently not only chairs the African Forum, but is the main source of African opinion as far as the FIP politics are concerned.

A lot of discussion has taken place in the past regarding either SAAHIP or the PSSA becoming a full member or not of this international federation. Recently, the PSSA made an offer to all its sectors/branches to take up membership of the FIP on behalf of the Society. The PSSA has even suggested that it (PSSA) will pay the annual membership fees of belonging to the FIP.

A motion was placed before this body a few years ago requesting that SAAHIP joins FIP. This motion was emphatically rejected by General Council. It has been more than three years since then and a lot has changed. This issue probably needs to be re-discussed.

• **Presidential Tour**

Firstly I would like to thank all Branch Chairpersons, Branch Committees and SAAHIP branch members in general for hosting me in your branches. I had the privilege of visiting nearly all provinces of our beautiful country. The most important aspect of this tour for me was not so much to be given the opportunity to stand up there and address, but rather to be able to meet and interact with members on a one to one basis.

Secondly I would like to apologise that I was not able to spend more time in the various branches. I was under tremendous time pressures. If given another chance, I promise that I will do better second time around.

The Association can only be as strong as its branches. The work I have seen being done in the various branches during my short visits is truly admirable and all that I can say is that this Association can only grow stronger.

The Executive Committee of SAAHIP

There is a lot of passion in this committee. When issues are tabled, I often have to call for calm around the table. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the EXCO and all members of the branch committees for the wonderful work done over the past year!

The Association can only be as strong as its branches. The branch also can only be as strong as the members in those branches.

When I was first approached for this position, I could not resist feeling that I was probably being deliberately set up. Over the past one year, I have come to realise that there is a water-tight team around the President. This team is not just limited to the EXCO, but goes far beyond that. And I would really like to thank each and every member of the Association for your contributions and input during this term of office. Your efforts are much appreciated! Nize ningadinwa nangomuso!

2010! Sinqamula amazwe!! Samukela izizwe!!