It is my pleasure and privilege to report on the activities of the South African Association of Hospital and Institutional Pharmacists, the National Executive Committee (ExCo) and your elected president, for the period March 2010 to March 2011.

I would like to start off by reiterating my thank yous to members of this Association for the faith shown in me in re-electing me President of this Association for the period mentioned above.

Meetings of the National Executive Committee
The National Executive Committee met four times in 2010/11. In addition to routine ExCo business, a mini-strategic planning session was used to re-evaluate the tasks, portfolios and projects allocated to members of the national ExCo. No meetings were held between March and August due to the soccer world spectacle that took place in our country.

Resolutions from Conference 2010

Resolution 2/2010
This 53rd Annual General Meeting of SAAHIP instructs the incoming National Executive Committee to investigate the feasibility of SAAHIP joining the FIP as a full member.

Debate on this issue continues. Members were invited to make their opinions on this issue known through the Presidential column in the SAPJ. In January 2011, the issue was raised again with members on the SAAHIP-L list for further input.

The PSSA national ExCo discussed the issue a number of times. There is general agreement that as South Africa, we need to take our rightful place among the global community of the profession. The major factor preventing the PSSA from joining the FIP is the membership fee.

The fee structure for FIP membership favours countries with a large population of pharmacists. It would cost the PSSA more than R 120 000 annually to be a member, while SAAHIP would pay more than R 56 000.

Following the many discussions in the PSSA ExCo, SAAPI has decided to join the FIP and has undertaken to continually report back to the PSSA on activities of the FIP.

FIP membership is not restricted to one organisation per country. It is possible for more than one organisation to belong to the FIP at the same time. It is also not restricted to “umbrella” organisations or “mother bodies”. The joining by SAAPI therefore does not mean that SAAHIP cannot join also, or even the PSSA itself.

Transformation
Since we began with our transformation agenda a few years ago, we have seen some tremendous changes to the face of the Association, not only at national level but in the branches as well. New younger leaders for the Association have become visible. The average age at the SAAHIP ExCo meeting cannot be more than 35 years, at most. The Association has also over the few years become more colourful. We now need to carefully proceed with our agenda, mindful not to “over-transform” on some aspects and neglect others. We in particular need to be careful not to be too young. This is an Association for all members and all members need to see themselves when they look at the leadership.

There are at the moment about 10 members of SAAHIP in the 32-member PSSA ExCo. This is about 31% of the total PSSA ExCo. The next step now is to give all these members a mandate to continue the transformation agenda from within the PSSA ExCo.

This is not the same PSSA as it was 10 years ago. However it is NOT YET UHURU! More work still needs to be done. We need to support those SAAHIP members who service on the PSSA ExCo. “It gets very lonely/cold up there,” some of our members have been quoted as saying.

Membership
PSAA membership at the end of September 2010 stood at 5 803 members. SAAHIP contributes about 25% to the total membership of the PSSA, with 1 480 members.
There are about 13 000 pharmacists on the SAPC register. Of these about 12 000 are said to be actively practising in South Africa. Whenever these figures are presented, arguments always arise about their accuracy. Despite that, these figures are the only ones we have and they serve to illustrate how many more members we still need to recruit into the PSSA.

### Strategic Plan

The PSSA Strategic Plan was finalised in 2009. It has been noted that most of the action points which could be implemented within the limited financial resources, have been attended to and that actually good progress has been made in implementing the strategic plan. A report on a survey that was conducted shows that the PSSA is in reality doing well and is serving the needs of the members. The report highlighted a number of services that the PSSA provides which could be better marketed to members. This should be part of the ongoing internal marketing to members.

The implementation committee agreed that two action points should be focussed on namely new financial resources (money) and marketing in implementing the Strategic Plan.

### Involvement of branches and sectors

Branches and sectors were requested to develop their own strategic plans that are aligned to the PSSA plan.

At the November 2009 SAAHIP ExCo meeting we set aside time to develop this plan. A major project that we identified for ourselves as SAAHIP was to market the PSSA at Department of Health (DoH) functions for pharmacist interns and Community Service Pharmacists (CSPs), since this is almost our exclusive domain.

In this regard, branches have been active.

In July, a pre-registration exam intern workshop was held in the Eastern Cape, and the branch sponsored a table at the 2010 Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) Pharmacy Ball. The Eastern Cape branch was invited to attend and judge at the NMMU fourth year Project Presentation evening on 19 October 2010. The EC Hospital Complex Intern Presentation Day was held on 3 Nov 2010. SAAHIP has given the winner a delegation seat at SAAHIP Conference 2011.

Both Southern Gauteng and Northern Gauteng participated in intern information sessions for community service 2011, in conjunction with the PSSA branches and the DoH.

SAAHIP members attended and addressed the Provincial Pharmacy Conference in Gauteng in September. The Society gained six members at this meeting.

The Northern Gauteng branch had a very successful Pharmacist Assistant’s CPD function in September.

A Community Service Pharmacist Placement information evening was held for interns in the Western Cape in May 2010. Claire Frieslaar, our Young Pharmacist co-ordinator for 2010, created a Facebook page for pharmacists. The aim of this is to allow a means of communication with, especially, the young pharmacists. Events and issues that may interest young pharmacists are discussed, e.g. calculations that may appear in the pre-registration exams.
The Chairperson of the Western Cape Branch was invited to attend the Pharm IV Research Day at the University of Western Cape in October 2010. A group of students presented on their projects involving pharmacy students’ perceptions of the PSSA. UWC also provided a slot for Hoornaar Moolla, the SAAHIP podium winner for 2010, to present the paper that she presented at SAAHIP. This was well received and a boost for SAAHIP.

The Western Cape provincial pharmacist intern research day was held on 4 November 2010. 16 presentations were made. SAAHIP sponsors the SAAHIP/PGWC Award and prizes to the best presenter and runners up, respectively.

CPD events were held and used as an opportunity to promote SAAHIP in Mpumalanga. After the presentations, the PSSA had a short meeting with the pharmacists during which the SAAHIP representative had a chance to encourage the public and private hospital pharmacists to join the PSSA.

The UKZN Pharmacy School had their annual Research Day for the final year students. There were two categories: Lab based and Community based. SAAHIP sponsored one ticket to Conference 2011 which was awarded to each winning group and their abstracts have been submitted. In addition, KZN Coastal has created a Facebook profile called SaahipKznc using the SAAHIP KZNCOSTAL logo. It was initially envisioned that it would be used just for keeping in touch with the branch committee, however, many invitations were received and information regarding CPDs, Exec meetings, ideas on CPDs, locums needed, vacancies available and other useful information has been coming through. Almost 10 pharmacists have been recruited in this way!

The Free State Department of Health held its annual pharmacy week conference at Universitas Hospital. All pharmacists and pharmacist’s assistants were invited to be part of the event. SAAHIP Free State/Northern Cape branch sponsored the fridge magnets as part of the ‘goodie bag’ for the occasion.

These are but some of the activities that the branches have been involved in. There are many other activities undertaken by branches and individual members. Our request at this stage is that members keep ExCo informed of all activities.

**Occupation Specific Dispensation**

The Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) continued to occupy a lot of time in the ExCo meetings, and outside, during this term of office.

Needless to say that the work of the Technical Task Team set up at the 2010 AGM does not end with the signing of the latest agreements. The work of this committee needs to continue long into the future to ensure that all outstanding issues are addressed. Primarily among these are the vast disparities among provinces and within some provinces themselves.

**National Health Insurance**

National Health Insurance (NHI) is another issue that is due to occupy a large part of our agendas for a couple of months to come. No formal government policy or discussion document exists at the time of writing this report. However there are discussion documents that are in circulation, particularly from the ruling party that begin to give some insights into this idea.

There are some areas in this discussion document where the word ‘pharmacist’ should appear but it does not. There are also a few other places where the word ‘pharmacy/pharmacists’ does not appear as strong as it should.

An NHI Task Group has been set up within PSSA, consisting of pharmacists from Industry, Hospital and Institutional and Community Sectors. An Academic was also to be approached to be a part of this Task Group.

**National Drug Policy**

The review of the National Drug Policy (NDP) is long overdue. SAAHIP has raised the issue of the review of the NDP with the PSSA ExCo a few times. It would seem that there is some work being done in reviewing aspects of the NDP.

The National ExCo will continue to follow up on this issue.

**Presidential Tour**

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.

I also want to thank the members who took time out, at no financial benefit to them, to chaperone me around your provinces and cities. This is really appreciated. I especially enjoyed visiting the branches where I was not able to go to last year, the newly formed branches as well as all the branches where I could not spend enough time last year interacting with members and pharmacists, in general.

Thank you very much; please let this not stop with me but ensure that it continues with other Presidents as well. The kind treatment that one receives during this tour is the one aspect that every President takes with him/her right till the end. Please keep it up.

**Thank you**

As I will not be available for re-election this year, I would like to make use of this opportunity to thank the National ExCo and each and every member of the branch committees for the wonderful work done over the past year!

I had a wonderful time working with you all.

To all SAAHIP members, thanks again for the confidence you have shown in me, as well as all the support. I trust that you will support the incoming President and National ExCo the same as you did me.