

## Incoming statement of the SATS president, 2017 to 2019

I would like to thank my predecessors, including Professor Lalloo and others, for their excellent leadership of SATS over the last few years. This has stood the Society in good stead but there are many challenges that SATS faces over the next decade.

There are several priority areas that I would like to give attention to over the next couple of years.

As outlined at the SATS 2017 conference, there is a major crisis in pulmonary medicine. This includes the collapse of academic units nationwide, the lack of training posts, and funding for teaching and training of nascent pulmonologists. SATS will have to play a greater role in engaging stakeholders to address these concerns. Another major problem is the increasing lack of access to basic and newer respiratory drugs with proven benefit. In this regard, I will, on behalf of SATS, be engaging with the relevant stakeholders.

Another major priority is to facilitate greater involvement of newly qualified pulmonologists and junior faculty who are the lifeblood of the society. An unmet need is further engagement with the pulmonologists from the private sector. We are a very small community and we have to hold hands together to confront the threats and challenges faced by pulmonologists. I will also, together with Council, take steps to address the financial position of SATS. In order to remain sustainable, we need to investigate alternative funding models other than raising funds through conferences. SATS will

be developing a policy on continuing medical education (CME) nationally, and will also adopt policies with regards to the changing landscape of education and managing conflicts of interest.

The *South African Respiratory Journal* has done well under my leadership as the Chief Editor but, together with the editorial board, we now need to take the journal to a new level, and PubMed accreditation is included in our plans for next year. The aim is also, with Council's approval and after consultation with relevant stakeholders, to launch the *African Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* so that we have a continental platform through which we can advance lung health of the country and continent as a whole.

Nevertheless, if the research presentations at the 2017 SATS congress are anything to go by, we should rightfully be reassured and enthused by the emerging cadres of extremely bright and energetic individuals who will be the future leaders of our society. I enthusiastically look forward to working with Council, and all of you, to address these challenges over the next 2 years.



**Professor Keertan Dheda**

*President: South African Thoracic Society*