

*President's plan for fixing health delayed again Business Day, 13 February 2019*

PRESIDENT Cyril Ramaphosa's ambitions of devising a plan for fixing the health system have once again been delayed, as participants from last year's health summit say they need more time to do a proper job. Ramaphosa convened the two-day summit in October, where delegates discussed ways to tackle the crisis in SA's health system. The high-level gathering drew 600 delegates from the public and private sectors and ended with a promise to craft a blueprint for tackling the problems in the healthcare sector, which has seen services virtually collapse in many parts of the country. The summit ended with a promise to craft a health compact by December 10, but late last year that deadline was pushed out to the end of January 2019 after some stakeholders, including healthcare professionals, said the time-frame was too short. It has now emerged that work on the compact, which is expected to contain concrete steps for improving SA's health system, is still under way. Business Unity SA (Busa) CEO Tanya Cohen said more time is needed to do this properly, because it is important to find solutions that all stakeholders support and that can put into action. Busa is one of the key constituents represented on the steering committee driving the process to craft the compact. Cohen made her remarks at a press briefing called by the Presidency to report back on the work of the health summit. In a speech delivered on his behalf by Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi, Ramaphosa said improving the health system and introducing NHI went hand-in hand, describing them as "two sides of the same coin". He said repairing our national health system is an endeavour that requires the input, involvement and innovation of all role-players who understand that good health makes for a good life and a good economy. Motsoaledi would not be drawn into a discussion on the NHI Bill, which was discussed at the Cabinet's most recent meeting on January 30. It requires Cabinet approval before it can be submitted to Parliament and processed by SA's law makers. Motsoaledi said that when everything is done and dusted, and the bill is going to parliament there will be an announcement.