

HEALTH

'A journey of love': Leading expert Abdool Karim launches book on Covid-19 pandemic

KAREN SINGH

karen.singh@inl.co.za

ONE OF South Africa's chief Covid-19 advisers, Professor Salim Abdool Karim, launched a book yesterday titled *Standing Up For Science: A Voice of Reason*, which documents the first three years of the pandemic in a bid to help future generations tackle the next pandemic.

The infectious diseases epidemiologist is the director of the Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in South Africa (Caprisa).

He also serves as a special adviser on pandemics to the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Abdool Karim stepped down as co-chair of the Covid-19 ministerial advisory committee in 2021 after being part of 119 advisories on the pandemic.

Speaking at the launch, held at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre in Durban yesterday, Abdool Karim said the book, which he started writing in 2020, was "a journey of love".

"It's been a challenge to write this book and to capture the facts as best

I could and to document this history for all of our benefit and for generations to come, so that they can draw on this experience and benefit from everything we've been through with Covid-19 as they tackle the next pandemic," he said.

The book, which Abdool Karim has dedicated to health-care workers, scientists and essential workers for their personal sacrifice and commitment during the Covid-19 pandemic, is a personal behind-the-scenes account of the first three years of the pandemic. He said that in the very early stages of this pandemic there was very little science to follow.

"We have to take the lessons that we have learned from the measles epidemics, from the HIV pandemic, from TB and from the Covid-19 pandemic. We need to know and be prepared to tackle the next set of pandemics," he said.

The panel of speakers included Professor Peter Piot, special adviser on Covid-19 to the president of the European Commission, Professor Jeremy Farrar, chief scientist of the WHO and ambassador John Nken-gasong, who is the US global Aids co-ordinator. | **SEE PAGE 6**