

Statement of the Steering Committee of the CEO Initiative

COVID-19

14 April 2020

We live in a country with appalling levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment and are deeply concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic will exacerbate these challenges. We believe that the Solidarity Fund established by the President can do vital work in easing the burdens created by the pandemic.

We are grateful to the President for this very important and timely intervention.

We recognise that many South Africans are already making huge sacrifices and responding with great humanity and generosity to this crisis under the leadership of the President and his Cabinet. For instance, we recognise and salute the excellent work that the united, nimble, responsive and excellent Business for South Africa (BSA) is doing, working in close partnership with government, organised labour, civil society and the international community. We equally salute the many NGOs that have already moved quickly to meet the immediate needs of less fortunate South Africans and to distribute hygiene equipment and other necessary supplies in needy areas.

The Steering Committee of the CEO Initiative calls on all members of the Initiative to respond positively to President Ramaphosa's call to donate one-third of their salaries to the Solidarity Fund over the next three months. The Solidarity Fund has made a good start, and we expect that it will be well run as it is led by high-calibre people with the right credentials.

"The Chief Executives who are members of the Steering Committee of CEO Initiative have unanimously agreed to follow the President and Cabinet's generous example. Each of us will donate one-third of our salaries for April, May and June 2020 to the Solidarity Fund in order to support the Fund's work to prevent and detect COVID-19 and to care for and support those affected by the pandemic." says Jabu Mabuza, co-convenor of the CEO Initiative.

"We strongly encourage executives in CEO Initiative companies and throughout the economy to make equivalent donations to the Solidarity Fund or to other reputable institutions and NGOs fighting the crisis." Mabuza said.

We are very much aware that the course of the pandemic in South Africa, and our capacity to respond to it, will be shaped and limited by our country's long history of inequality and by our more recent experience of declining state capacity and reducing fiscal space.

Our sincere hope and expectation is that the Solidarity Fund will go a long way towards mitigating these weaknesses and towards alleviating the suffering that the pandemic will cause.

"The pandemic will pass. But South Africa's structural weaknesses will remain, and may be worsened by the effects of the pandemic. The CEO Initiative therefore remains committed to the cause of building a dynamic, entrepreneurial, inclusive and just economy in South Africa, in partnership with a transparent and capable state, a strong and independent labour movement, and a diverse civil society, all united by the Constitution and the rule of law." Mabuza concluded.

Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika.

About the CEO Initiative:

The CEO Initiative is formed of leaders from various sectors, with the main work streams being led by Jabu Mabuza as the Co-Convenor of the Initiative; Sim Tshabalala, Group CEO of the Standard Bank Group; Mike Brown, CEO of Nedbank; Mike Teke, CEO of Seriti Resources; Nku Nyembezi-Heita, Chairperson of the JSE, Colin Coleman, former CEO, Sub-Saharan Africa of Goldman Sachs; Stephen Koseff, former CEO of Investec Group; and Adrian Gore, CEO of Discovery.