

**SOUTH AFRICA'S REPORT ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREED CONCLUSIONS ON
'WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND THE LINK
TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT''**

September 2020

A. INTRODUCTION

This report seeks to provide a response by the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations (UN) Secretary General's request to member states, dated 27 July 2020 (*UNW/2020/005*). In line with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 2015/6 on future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Secretary General is expected to submit a report to the Commission at its 65th Session in 2021 on progress made on "women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development" at national levels.

In line with ECOSOC Resolution 2015/6, the Commission annually evaluates progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions on a priority theme of a previous session, as a review theme. The agreed conclusions on "women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development" was adopted at the Commission's 60th session in March 2016. In line with ECOSOC Resolution 2020/15 on the Commission's multi-year programme of work, this theme will therefore serve as the review theme of the 65th Session of the Commission to be held in March 2021.

In order to prepare this report for the Commission in 2021, the Secretary-General has invited member states to provide succinct information on progress made in implementing the agreed conclusions at the national level covering the period from March 2019 to the present. The Commission had previously reviewed the implementation of these agreed conclusions on 'Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development' at its sixty-third session, in March 2019.

In addition, the request is also that the report elaborates in particular the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's empowerment and sustainable development and the prospects for a gender-responsive recovery.

The report therefore focuses on progress made in the following areas:

- Measures taken to strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Actions and investments made for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- Steps taken to bolster women's leadership and women's full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development;
- Macroeconomic, labour and social policies put in place to promote full and productive employment and decent work for women, in response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's employment and economic rights and independence;
- Response and Recovery measures to the COVID-19 pandemic taken to improve and expand social protection for women in healthcare coverage; unemployment benefits, paid sick leave, paid parental leave, maternity benefits, pensions, income support including cash transfers;
- Action taken to increase resources and support for women's and civil society organizations in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- Steps taken to improve gender-responsive data collection in the context of follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to track and monitor the gender-specific impacts and response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic.

B. RESPONSES BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

1. NORMATIVE, LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) provides an enabling framework that has guided the introduction of policies and laws to enforce transformation, non-discrimination; non-sexism and equality for women in the country. The legal framework includes laws that govern socio-economic development and protection and promotion of women's human rights and dignity. It also includes issues of their equal representation and full participation in national government structures, decision-making and leadership positions. Women's access to justice and safety, economic empowerment and financial inclusion; women's rights to basic conditions in employment and labour; inclusion of women in sustainable development, climate change and in the environmental sector are contained within different laws governing the various sectors.

Some of the more recent normative and policy frameworks and further amendments to existing laws and proposed Bills that seek to advance women's empowerment include amendments governing employment equity and equal pay; targets for women in the petroleum and energy sector; targets for women in the mining sector codes; addressing the issue of tightening laws around gender based violence and femicide, including amendments to the Domestic Violence Act; Sexual Offences Act and laws governing the access to justice for women.

There are proposed changes to the Marriage Act to ensure legislation governing the age of marriage and prevention of early marriages; prevention of forced marriages and harmful cultural practices in this regard; as well as re-introducing the bill on hate crimes. Other bills also being considered by the National Legislature include that of the Traditional Courts Bill, and the issue of Land Redistribution – both of which has huge impact on the lives of women in the country.

The country is also embarking on adopting amendments on the issue of preferential procurement. The draft Bill on Public Procurement is currently being consulted on and will seek to rescind the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act currently in existence. The proposed Bill addresses the issue of women, persons with disabilities and youth as beneficiaries of public procurement processes.

The National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP) is the blueprint for tackling South Africa's challenges and serves as a long-term vision for the country. The NDP is South Africa's lodestar for inclusive growth, prosperity and development for all citizens in the country. The NDP is aligned to Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The core priorities of the NDP are to eliminate poverty; reduce inequality and unemployment through inclusive economic growth; building human capabilities so that people can lead lives they value; enhancing the capacity of the state; and promoting leadership and active citizenship throughout society. While not conceived with an explicit gender perspective, the NDP includes many aspects and proposals that promote the transformation of the socio-economic lives of women.

In May 2019, South Africa held its national elections and the incoming 6th administration identified 7 national priorities for the country for the period 2019-2024. These are: (i) Building a capable, ethical and developmental state; (ii) Economic transformation and Job Creation; (iii) Education, skills and health; (iv) Consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality basic services; (v) Spatial integration, human settlements and local government; (vi) social cohesion and safe communities; and (vii) a better Africa and world.

The gender priorities that country is focusing on for the next five years are built into the national priorities. These are: (i) addressing gender inequality and the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming across all sectors of society through the effective implementation of gender-responsive planning, policy, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation, research and auditing; (ii) full and effective implementation of laws, policy and strategies; (iii) greater emphasis on women's economic emancipation through economic empowerment, financial inclusion and economic justice and rights; (iv) transforming unequal gender relations; (v) confronting the issue of patriarchy, toxic masculinities; misogyny; stereotypes; hierarchies, language and practices that perpetuate the demons of patriarchal norms in society, including in the workplace.

The gender responsive implementation approach has been demonstrated in the current Medium-Term Strategic Framework - 2019-2024 which prioritises gender as a cross-cutting focus area that need to be mainstreamed into all elements of South Africa's developmental future and all programmes and interventions of government. The South African government has put measures in place to ensure that the Medium-Term Strategic Framework includes targets, indicators, and intervention measures that are gender responsive, and which must be achieved within the period 2019-2024.

The South African Cabinet adopted a Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing framework in 2019. The framework seeks to ensure that planning instruments at a national, sub-national, sectoral, institutional and programme level are gender-responsive and that sufficient resources are allocated to interventions which contribute to women's empowerment and gender equality.

There have been a number of other normative frameworks also adopted by Cabinet that seeks to achieve a gender-responsive implementation towards sustainable development, including that on Sanitary Dignity.

2. FINANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Government of South Africa has introduced programmes which specifically target women to facilitate their participation in the mainstream economy. Various initiatives targeted at women have been introduced with the goal of developing sustainable enterprises that contribute to the country's gross domestic product, employment equity and economic transformation to enable women to have equal access to and control over economic resources. The aim is to reverse the imbalances created by previous policies and programmes, which impacted negatively on women-owned enterprises and hindered their participation in the economy; to transform economic conditions; as well as create an enabling environment for women enterprises.

Among these are the Women's Empowerment Fund (WEF) as part of the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) which has been established in 2014 to affirmatively drive the value and volume of approvals for and disbursement to businesses that are owned and managed by black women. The National Empowerment Fund is a government agency that is set up to provide capital for black economic empowerment transactions. Although this isn't specifically a female-focused entrepreneurial fund, it does cater for black women and aims to empower them to become part of the entrepreneur society. The NEF is a driver and a thought-leader when it comes to promoting and facilitating black economic participation through the provision of financial and non-financial support to black empowered businesses, as well as by promoting a culture of savings and investment among black people.

The funding starts from R250 000 to R75 million across a range of sectors, for start-ups, expansions and equity acquisition purposes. The NEF has approved over R10.613 billion to support over 1 000 black-owned businesses countrywide for start-up, expansion and equity transformation. Of the total approved funding, over R7 billion has been disbursed into the economy. Over the past 10 years more than 40% of funding has accrued to black women

entrepreneurs as part of the determination to grow its funded portfolio of businesses that are owned and managed by black women.

The table below provides the different programmes supported and the extent of women as beneficiaries.

Government Focus	Sector	Examples of NEF Investment Breakthrough
Township & Rural Economy		A dedicated fund that supports businesses in rural areas and townships. The businesses are in various sectors including property (shopping malls), petroleum sector (petrol stations) and tourism. To date the NEF disbursed over R2.1 billion in support of entities in rural and township economies. More than 50% of support has gone to women-owned businesses
Support SMEs		A dedicated fund that has supported entrepreneurship, procurement & franchise funding, as well as business planning, incubation, training and mentorship support. To date the NEF disbursed over R1.6 billion towards 454 small and medium enterprises. 45% of this support has accrued to black women-owned businesses.
Energy		Invested over R885 million in more than 100 service stations countrywide, supporting in excess of 2 937 jobs. 44% of the service stations are owned and managed by black women entrepreneurs.
Black Industrialists		Create new manufacturing and industrial capacity alongside local and international partners. To date the NEF has invested circa R900 million in developing projects with a total of 24 projects currently under development, 5 of which are operational businesses and have created over 3600 jobs and leveraged more than R4 billions of third-party funding.
Source: Growing Gender Dividend, National Empowerment Fund – Growing Black Economic Participation, August 2020		

Other targeted initiatives includes Bavumile Skills Development Programme, the Isivande Women’s Fund, the South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN), Women Entrepreneurial Fund (WEF), among others. The Bavumile Skills Development Programme targets women who want to pursue their own business by offering them 20 days of training on sewing, knitting, weaving and craft (DTI, 2011). The main objective of this programme is to advance women’s skills and expertise in arts and craft in order to produce better products (DTI, 2011). The substantial expansion in the budget between 2015/16 and 2016/17 - effectively a quadrupling of the budget - was accompanied by a more than doubling from 300 to 700 in the number of female entrepreneurs trained.

The Isivande Women’s Fund aims to enhance socio-economic development in rural, peri-urban and township areas by empowering South African women (especially black women) through financial assistance of between R30 000 and R2 million and non-financial support (DTI, 2011; n.d). The fund is involved with enterprises that seek finance for start-up, for expanding existing enterprises, for franchising, for business rehabilitation and for gap finance (DTI, n.d). The Fund supports SMMEs with women ownership of more than 50% of the ordinary share capital and more than 30% in management positions (DBSD, 2015).

The South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN) is a Section 21 registered company with the main objective to facilitate access to business resources, information and opportunities for South African women entrepreneurs. This programme targets women specifically, who engage in informal income-generating activities and/or operate an SMME; or women who aspire to open businesses, particularly rural-based women-owned SMMEs (SAWEN, 2012).

3. WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING IN

To achieve gender-parity within the political sphere, the public and private sectors, clear targets have been put in place in key areas of political and governance levels to promote the

advancement, representation and full participation of women in power structures and key decision-making levels.

Schedule 2: Electoral Code of Conduct of the South African Electoral Act (Act 73 of 1998) states that every registered party and every candidate must- (a) respect the right of women to communicate freely with parties and candidates; (b) facilitate the full and equal participation of women in political activities; (c) ensure the free access of women to all public political meetings, marches, demonstrations, rallies and other public political events; and (d) take all reasonable steps to ensure that women are free to engage in any political activities.

South Africa signed and ratified the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development which requires States Parties to endeavor ensure that by 2015, at least fifty percent of decision-making positions in the public and private sectors are held by women including the use of affirmative action measures.

South Africa has made considerable success in advancing women's representation and gender equality across the state machinery. There has been a steady increase in the number of women elected as Speakers, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Premiers, Members of Parliament, Mayors, Councillors, and Chairpersons of Portfolio Committees in the National Legislature.

There is tremendous progress in the representation of women ministers in cabinet reaching 50% in June 2019. Following the 6th democratic elections, President Ramaphosa has appointed 14 female and 14 male ministers – resulting in a 50/50 gender parity among ministers in Cabinet for the very first time. The trend is similar for the representation of women as deputy ministers, increasing to 42.85% in April 2019.

South Africa has 46.1% of seats in parliament taken up by women following the 2019 elections. Women representation at local government increased from 19% in 1995 to 41% women overall following the 2016 local government elections. Following the 2016 Local Government Elections, overall in the country there is a 39% representation of women as municipal mayors.

There has been a substantial increase in the percentage of women judges to 38.5% in 2019. There are approximately 44% women magistrates in South Africa, with most of them located as Regional Court Presidents (i.e. over 50%).

Important strides have been made in increasing the number of women in senior management positions in the public service, including as Directors-General and Heads of Departments in national and provincial departments. There is about 42% women in the Senior Management Position in the Public Service. Women have broken down the barriers of entry in sectors such as the military, police force, navy and air force.

We have made inroads in increasing the number of women in management and decision-making positions in the private sector and state-owned enterprises, especially with respect to professional women, women CEOs, women on boards, women directors and women managers. In 2018, women comprised 21.2% of the top management level increasing from approximately 3% before 2010. However the gap between women and men in managerial levels is still wide. Unfortunately a 2017 Business Women's Leadership Census shows that only 20.7% of directors and 29.4% of executive managers are women in the country. At the top leadership level of organizations, women account for only 11.8% of CEOs or chairpersons.

Women leaders' roles in South Africa's response to COVID-19

On 15 March 2020, the President declared a National State of Disaster and later a countrywide lockdown (Level 5), which came into effect on 27 March 2020. The national state of disaster is governed under the Disaster Management Act, 57 of 2002 and Regulations Issued in terms of Section 27(2) of the Act. To date there are several regulations gazetted to manage all restrictions, protocols and decisions adopted to fight this pandemic in the country.

Women ministers have been leading in these processes, with Minister Nkosaza Dlamini Zuma, Minister for Local Government and Traditional Affairs leading the Disaster Management Process as the custodian of the act.

Other critical women leaders in the response include the Ministers of Tourism; Environmental Affairs; Small Business Development; Social Development, etc.

Government put in place institutional arrangements at different levels in order to execute the directives emanating from the National Coronavirus Command Centre (NCCC) established by the President on 27 March 2020 at the Executive level to provide leadership, governance and coordinate the response to the pandemic in the country. A National Joint Director-Generals Cluster (NatsJoint) was established to implement the decisions of the NCCC. There are several women DG's involved in this process.

The technical work is done through the creation of various work-streams (social, economic, health, legal etc.) aligned to the Director-Generals cluster system comprising officials within the key national departments to undertake the technical work associated with the response measures to the pandemic. Many of the officials involved are female Senior Managers (Deputy Director-Generals and Chief Directors).

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has been participating in the various structures at the different levels, particularly in the different work-streams that were undertaking the technical work of government's response to COVID-19. This has been championed by a woman Minister, and led by women senior managers in the Department - advocating for gender mainstreaming within the different work-streams and consistently promoting a gender-responsive and gender-targeted approach across all policies, sectors, programmes and interventions in government's response and intervention measures to the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The overarching objective was to mitigate negative impacts of the pandemic on women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable, including the elderly, women with disabilities, domestic workers, and those from poor households, including in informal settlements and rural areas.

4. ECONOMIC, LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICIES TO PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK IN RESPONSE TO THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND INDEPENDENCE

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) is the supreme law of the country which guarantees everyone in the country the right to fair labour practices and provides for the rights of every worker including women. The constitution also affords everyone the rights to social security. Different legislations and policies are based on the principle of equality as enshrined in the constitution of the republic. The Constitution is expressed in South Africa's employment law framework, in particular the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (as amended), which provides for expression of Section 10 (the right to dignity) and Section 9 (the right to equality) of the Constitution.

In the context of the aims of the Constitution, the Employment Equity Act (EEA) seeks to achieve equity in the workplace through the promotion of equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment, the elimination of unfair discrimination, and affirmative action measures to redress disadvantages experienced by designated groups (black people, women, and people with disabilities). The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000 (Act No. 4 of 2000): (a) Section 6: Prohibits unfair discrimination (b) Section 8(e): Prohibits systems that prevent women from inheriting family property, and which unfairly limit access of women to land rights, finance, and other resources.

The Labour Relations Act as amended and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act as amended govern the issues of parental leave, maternity leave and benefits, night shifts, and

conditions of service. These are all gender-responsive. The BCEA has been amended to introduce provisions relating to employees legally accessing parental leave, adoption leave and commissioning parental leave, effective 1 January 2020. This follows a proclamation issued by the President (on 23 December 2019) in terms of section 17 of the Labour Laws Amendment Act of 2018. This means that an employee who is a parent of a child will be entitled to 10 consecutive days' parental leave. This applies irrespective of the gender, which means it would include parents in same sex relationships. It applies to mothers who give birth (maternity leave), a person who adopts a child (adoption leave) or a commissioning parent in a surrogate motherhood agreement (commissioning parental leave). The current provisions of the BCEA regarding four months' maternity leave remain unchanged (but with increased financial benefit). The introduction of parental leave effectively replaces the three days' paid paternity leave previously provided for in the BCEA. The family responsibility benefits associated with the illness of a child or the death of a close family member remain unchanged. All three of the new categories of leave above are unpaid, as is the case with maternity leave. However, employees that take this leave may claim benefits from the Unemployment Insurance Fund and payment of such benefits do not reduce an employee's claim to the payments of other unemployment benefits. So - for example - if a mother loses her job, she will still have access to all the other unemployment benefits that she has accrued.

The principal piece of legislation that regulates public procurement is the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Constitution). Section 217 of the Constitution requires that when an organ of state contracts for goods and services, it must do so in accordance with principles of fairness, equitability, transparency, competitiveness and cost-effectiveness. Section 51(1) (a) of the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 (PFMA), posits that an accounting authority for, among others, a national or provincial department or public entity must ensure that the particular department or entity has and maintains an appropriate procurement and provisioning system which is fair; equitable; transparent; competitive and cost-effective.

The Constitution permits organs of state (such as departments of government and public entities) to implement a preferential procurement policy that advances persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination. Section 217(3) provides for legislation that will prescribe a framework within which the policy must be implemented to be enacted. Thus, the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000 (PPPFA) and the regulations published under it prescribe requirements regarding black economic empowerment (BEE) considerations for state tenders.

The Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act, [No. 53 of 2003] advances economic transformation and enhance the economic participation of black people in the South African economy. The Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, with its corresponding Codes of Good Practice (2007), stipulate a preferential point system that encourages the use of women-owned enterprises to benefit from preferential procurement of all state organs.

Furthermore, the following legislation was passed by Parliament to ensure greater economic empowerment of women and to address inequalities between men and women in South Africa: The National Education Act, No. 27 of 1996; Extension of Security of Tenure Act, No. 62 of 1997; Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No. 75 of 1997; Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998; Further Education and Training Act, No. 98 of 1998; Labour Relations Amendment Act, No. 127 of 1998; Land Restitution and Reform Law Amendment Act, No. 63 of 1997 & 18 of 1999 amongst others.

The declaration of a national state of disaster by the President on 15th March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 outbreak in the country, and the concomitant lockdown imposed from 26th March 2020 was governed by the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act no 57 of 2002). Regulations Issued in terms of Section 27(2) of the Act provided detailed regulations in response to COVID -19 pandemic in the country, including the authority to relevant Ministers to issue directions in terms of combatting the spread of COVID-19 such as the Ministers of

Health, Justice and Correctional Services, Basic Education, Higher Education, Police, Social Development, Trade and Industry, Transport, Tourism, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Environmental Affairs and others as related to their mandates.

As a result of the lockdown all forms of employment were stopped with the exception of essential services and goods. Many women lost their jobs, sources of income, and experienced increased levels of poverty, food security and hunger. With the closure of schools, the unpaid care work and family household responsibilities increased dramatically for women and girls. The most vulnerable sectors of workers greatly impacted by the lockdown were mainly women in informal sectors, small and medium business owners and workers and cooperatives. The majority of women-run enterprises are in the informal sector and the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown have seriously impacted on women in this sector. These businesses constitute a full-time job for entrepreneurs and provide the only means of livelihood for most families. Given the low or no savings and the abrupt nature of the lockdown, the entrepreneurs could not generate the limited cash flow that ordinarily comes from daily operations. For example, women informal traders were initially shut down, and their customers were no longer accessible.

Regulations under the Disaster Management Act included among others:

- Competition Act, 1998 (No 89): Consumer and Customer Protection and National Disaster Management Regulations and Directions: To protect consumers and customers from unconscionable, unfair, unreasonable, unjust or improper commercial practices during the national disaster. Relates to goods and services – such as basic food items and consumer items; emergency products and services; medical and hygiene supplies and emergency clean-up products and services. Goods included among others baby formula and disposable nappies.
- Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 (No 130): for occupationally-acquired COVID-19
- COVID-19 Block Exemption for the Banking Sector, 2020: enable the banking sector to minimise the negative impact on the ability of customers, including both businesses and private individuals, to manage their finances during the national disaster
- COVID-19 Temporary Employee / Employer Relief Scheme, 2020: To make provision for the payment of benefits to the contributors who have lost income due to COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) To minimise economic impact of loss of employment because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The benefit is de-linked from the UIF's normal benefits.
- Directions on Measures to Prevent and Combat the Spread of COVID-19: Provision of Essential Goods and Services: To assist SMMEs operating grocery stores including the corner shops, spaza shops, fruit and vegetable stores to comply with lockdown regulations
- Directions to assist Micro and Small Businesses Trading in Permitted Services:
- Directions regarding e-Commerce sales during Alert level 4: To provide direction on goods that may be transacted through e-Commerce platforms and protocols related thereto.
- Expansion of the Employment Tax Incentive Age and Eligibility Criteria and Amount Claimable: Explanatory Notes on COVID-19 Tax Measures
- Deferral of Payment of Employee's Tax Liability for Tax Compliant Small to Medium Sized Business

The gradual reopening of the economy and economic activities, governed by regulations has enabled women to return to employment and entrepreneurial activities.

In response to Covid-19 pandemic, the President of the Republic, Hon. Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa announced in his speech on National Women's Day, 09 August 2020 that government is setting aside 40% of public procurement for women-owned businesses to broaden women's economic participation The President instructed national departments to

monitor and report on the number of women who have participated in each public procurement process.

5. RESPONSE AND RECOVERY MEASURES TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC TAKEN TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR WOMEN (E.G., HEALTHCARE COVERAGE, UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, PAID SICK LEAVE, PAID PARENTAL LEAVE, MATERNITY BENEFITS, PENSIONS, INCOME SUPPORT SUCH AS CASH TRANSFERS)

The Government of South Africa introduced a range of measures to mitigate the worst effects of the pandemic on businesses, on communities, and on individuals. On the 21st of April 2020, the President announced various socio-economic relief measures amounting to a R500 billion package as a response to mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives and livelihoods of people in the country.

Notwithstanding the lack of disaggregated data from across all sectors of government implementing response measures, overall, 11 968 759 women (48%) have to date benefitted from variety socio-economic measures, with the total cumulative amount of approximately R 19 686 729 492.41 (i.e. total amount across all sectors). Furthermore, women-owned business (fully owned as well as portion owned), also benefitted from the COVID-19 allocated funds.

Key socio-economic measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and to address the increased vulnerability to poverty and hunger that would affect poor households as a result of the COVID-19 disaster and subsequent lock-down included the following:

- a) The child support grant increased by a once-off R300 per child cash pay-out in May 2020;
- b) A COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant to care givers of a R500 cash pay-out per caregiver from June to October 2020. By June 2020, government had paid the special COVID-19 care-givers grant to 7.1 million Child Support Grant recipient care-givers to the amount of R3.5 billion. Women constituted for 97.7% of the beneficiaries.
- c) All other grants (older persons grant, foster care grant, disability grant and care dependency grant) are increased by R250 per month from May to October 2020;
- d) A new COVID-19 Social Relief Distress grant of R350 for unemployed citizens was introduced for a period of six months. A total of R 729 948 800.00 was paid to 2 085 568 individuals by 23 June 2020. The majority of those that benefitted from this grant were men who accounted for 61.5% of those who received the social relief of distress cash pay-out, while 33% recipients were women, this is explained that most women in need of social relief were already benefiting from the relief in the social grant system as care-givers.
- e) Support for informal and formal businesses such as spaza shops: A total of 5042 applications were received as at July 2020, with 3272 applications approved. Of those approved, male owned Spaza shops accounted for 48.74%; female owned accounted for 51.25% and youth owned spaza shops accounted for 23.99%.
- f) Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) debt relief facility: Implementation report on the SMME Debt Relief Facility shows that the facility had a total of 1497 approved funding as at July 2020. Women accounted for 32.8% of the total SMME approved, youth 20.8% while male owned SMMEs accounted for 66, 9% and Black owned SMMEs accounted for 66.9% of the total approved SMMEs.
- g) Tourism relief fund for (SMMEs) and Freelance guides. The Tourism Relief Fund helped 4000 beneficiaries with R50 000 each towards operational costs. The Fund has benefitted 3 861 women SMMEs. However, the total amount was not available.

- h) Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) (employees and employer); As at 14 May 2020, the Unemployment Insurance Fund had disbursed just under R12-billion (R11 915 612 569.90) through 167 524 employers and benefitting 2 092 774 workers. A total of R155 481 810 has been paid to 56 641 workers through bargaining councils representing 909 employers. From 26 March 2020 to 14 May 2020, the fund paid R249 743 938.38 maternity benefits for 27 631 recipients.
- i) Compensation Fund: payouts have benefitted 82% of women with an undisclosed amount, although an amount of R921 million has been paid to health practitioners;
- j) The Temporary Employee Relief Scheme (Domestic) has benefitted 44 692 women domestic workers amounting to R 155 215 988.88;
- k) The Temporary Employee Relief Scheme has benefitted 3 486 934 women amounting to R 14 175 855 577.15;
- l) The Agriculture Relief Fund has benefitted 5 097 women, which translates into 33% of women in farm industry assisted, to the amount of R 556 048 106.00 (Not disaggregated in terms of gender).
- m) The Sport, Arts and Culture Relief Fund benefitted 1 006 women with undisclosed amounts. Women constituted 36% of those assisted with Sports, Arts and Culture Relief Fund.

Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) COVID -19 Funds: in partnership with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), National Empowerment Fund (NEF) and Small Enterprise Financing Agency (SEFA) established an industrial financing facility to assist manufacturers of identified critical goods that are affected by the outbreak of COVID-19. This was done through a R700 million recapitalization industrial loan facility.

An amount of R200 million was allocated to the NEF to be utilised to support black businesses which are supporting Government's initiatives to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 28 transactions with a cumulative total capital amount of R174 260 000 have been approved under the Fund and a total of 19 transactions valued at R101 260 have been disbursed under the Fund.

The programme to provide a total of 3 126 schools with water tanks was implemented in April 2020. Schools needed hand washing stations installed outside classrooms as part of measures to minimise the infection rate at schools. Approximately 14 companies that were 100% women-owned supplied water tanks and hand washing stations to schools. It should be noted that the amounts spend were not available at the time of this report.

The government of South Africa has provided food relief to thousands of households, many of which were women-headed households during the lockdown period. This covered approximately 350 000 households. Through the Solidarity Fund that was set up 280 000 families and 23 500 households received food relief during phase 1 of operations, and the Fund will disburse approximately R175 million in food vouchers during phase 2 to urban and rural households. A once-off payment of R700 voucher to approximately 135 000 identified households to a value of R100 million (targeting 108 000 urban and 27 000 rural households) who do not fall in the country's social security net. Beneficiaries include unemployed young people, expectant mothers, women and foreign nationals. R75 million towards farming input vouchers through a once-off R2000 voucher to 35 000 beneficiaries engaged in subsistence or household farming in rural areas across the country¹.

¹ Extracted from the press releases of the Solidarity Fund, July 2020

6. WHAT ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO EXPAND THE AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF CARE SERVICES TO ADDRESS THE INCREASE IN UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (E.G., CARE SUBSIDIES, PAID LEAVE)

A COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress to care givers of R500 per caregiver from June to October 2020. By June 2020, government had paid the special COVID-19 Care givers grant to 7.1 million CSG care-givers to the tune of R3.5 billion. Women constituted 97.7% of the beneficiaries.

The Minister of Employment and Labour introduced measures to ensure that more vulnerable workers benefit from the COVID-19 TERS scheme. This has resulted in a number of domestic workers being paid directly. As of Saturday, 16 May 2020, the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) figures showed that 14113 domestic workers had benefitted from the special lockdown benefit to the tune of R55 572 870. 00. The figures further showed that 10 092 employers had lodged claims on behalf of their domestic workers. According to UIF records, a total of 91 406 domestic workers are on the database but only 2968 (3%) have their cell numbers listed and only 25 518 (28%) have emails.

7. WHAT ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO INCREASE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AS THEY COPE WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

Government of South Africa through its agency, the National Development Agency (NDA) continued to contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes in South Africa within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NDA provides grant funding to civil society organisations (CSOs) to implement development projects in poor communities and strengthen the institutional capacity of CSOs that provide services to poor communities.

The NDA's role in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic is implemented in partnership with 52 national Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) who provide poverty eradication interventions within their local communities. Through grant funding interventions, each of the 52 CSOs has enlisted ten (10) volunteers to reach almost all districts within the country, to facilitate various programmes during the lockdown period. This is a total of 520 volunteers. The NDA provided the CSOs with protective clothing and kits (including face masks, gloves and hand sanitizers) and information pamphlets in local languages. At basic level, CSOs are assisting communities with distribution of food parcels, support elderly and disabled persons and disseminate information at hot spots as well as door to door visits within communities. At an advanced level, based on their competence, others are assisting with community screening interventions, counselling for Gender Based Violence cases, and assisting people who need access to chronic medication to visit the health care facilities. In addition to that, they are assisting communities with the various registration to access government relief funds such as SASSA special relief distress funds and the Department of Agriculture Disaster Relief Fund for small scale farmers.

The National Development Agency is identifying additional volunteers to take the number to 2000 and in this way, the NDA will have created 2000 jobs at a rate of R1500 per month stipend.

The Solidarity Fund, in its phase 1, disbursed R17 million to CSOs that support victims of gender based violence. The Fund also partnered with the National Shelter Movement – an NPO that supports a network of 78 shelters across the country. In phase 2, the Fund has set aside R50 million to support GBV programmes working with civil society organizations and government.

Global Affairs, Canada awarded 40 grants valued at over R22 million through its Women Voice and Leadership Fund managed in South Africa by Genderlinks, an NGO. These multi-year grants of which 20 have been awarded, 17 are short-term rapid response grants, ten of which were specifically for urgent action to protect women's rights under COVID-19. UKAID through the British High Commission in Pretoria, South Africa provided an additional R1 million for twenty COVID-19 Rapid Response grants through the Southern Africa Trust. Grantees include women and girls heading households, living in rural areas, living with disability, young women's and gender non-binary organizations and sex-workers covering wide range of concerns from GNB, victim protection, socio-psycho support; SRHR, food security and programmes challenging social norms.

STEPS TAKEN TO IMPROVE GENDER-RESPONSIVE DATA COLLECTION IN THE CONTEXT OF FOLLOW-UP TO THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, AND TO TRACK AND MONITOR THE GENDER-SPECIFIC IMPACTS AND RESPONSE MEASURES TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

The Government of South Africa, through the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has introduced a COVID-19 Gender Tracking tool to monitor the implementation of the COVID-19 response and intervention measures by government departments as well as the economic recovery measures. The Tracker is also aimed at obtaining information on the extent to which women have benefitted from COVID-19 related public expenditure, including the procurement of personal protective equipment.

The challenge with obtaining gender and sex disaggregated data persists, however the implementation of the gender-responsive tracking system is gaining hold and beginning to deliver the data which will assist in determining how women have benefitted from the COVID-19 response measures and to also assist in gender-responsive planning and budgeting in the economic recovery process.

The National Medium-Term Strategic Framework contains specific targets and indicators that are gender-responsive. Quarterly reporting processes are also aimed at obtaining gender, age and disability disaggregated data periodically.

Further-more, through the national statistical institute in the country, Statistics South Africa, regular disaggregated data is collected and analyzed through periodic labour force, household, community surveys, census and others.

Government, through the department of Health and other partners also provide weekly and daily reports on COVID-19. Periodically the Department of Health provides a disaggregation of the data according to age and sex.