**COVID – 19 FRONT LAUNCH BRIEFING DOCUMENT**

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| COVID – 19 FRONT LAUNCH PROGRAMME  Thursday, 08 April 2020  SANAC Office (Facebook Live) | | |
| TIME | ITEM | FACILITATOR |
| Facilitator: | | |
| 12h00 – 12h05 | Welcome and introductions |  |
| 12h05 – 12h15 | Covid-19 Front Campaign background and role of civil society in response to pandemic: community based measures and support for civil society | Mr Thulane Tshefuta |
| 12h15 – 12h25 | Advocacy messages and civil society call to action  Highlight key mobilisation areas   * Messages: Tracking and tracing * Messages: Water & Sanitisation * Messages: Relief Fund | **Chairperson:** Ms Steve Letsike |
| 12h25 – 12h45 | Q&A |  |
|  | **Closure and checkout** |  |

# Community Constituency Covid – 19 Front

The Community Constituency Covid-19 Front was established as a formal advisory body to facilitate the participation of civil society sectors and networks, including those represented in the national response and implementations of Community-Based Measures in response to the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19). The Community Constituency Covid-19 Front promotes an inclusive, competent and responsive civil society that effectively serves the needs of communities by linking and diversifying civil society actors, expanding the sector's response and ensuring better coordination, thus improving operations, and enhancing connections between civil society organisations with government, business labour, their stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The South African plan to manage Covid-19 focuses on emergency adjustment measures for areas where the epidemic is currently located by providing a single line of march by different actors to contain the spread of the virus. The plan is premised on the ability to respond rapidly to these resource constraints measures and will determine success thereof.

To ensure that South African plans are massified through the contribution of civil society actors, the Community Constituency Covid-19 Front has developed a Strategy to Mitigate Covid-19 through Coordinated Advocacy, Communication & Social Mobilisation. The Community Constituency Covid-19 Front strategy directly contributes to the Presidential led National Command Centre (NCC) and is linked to a coalition of civil society responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. These strategic linkages ensure that the Community Constituency Covid-19 Front contributes to the national response led by the NCC. Considerations for resource limited settings, including remote, isolated and vulnerable communities must acknowledge the multitude of factors that influence the health status of an individual and a population. As such, it is important to prepare for the potential importations into and rapid spread within the remote, poor and vulnerable communities. These communities are further affected by social, environmental and economic factors, including housing, water quality and food security, pre-existing health conditions, limited access to health care, education, information and income.

The Community Constituency Covid-19 Front will implement strategies to protect groups and communities whereby public health measures are taken by individuals designed to protect themselves and others including community-based approaches. The aim is ‘flattening the curve’ to reduce the overall Covid-19 cases and health effects. Through Community-Based Measures, by mitigating the adverse effect of socioeconomic impact and reducing the peak and spreading the infections over a longer period of time, we avoid overburdening the health care system and can drastically improve quality and reduce the mortality rate.

# Covid-19 in South Africa

The Covid-19 outbreak began in early December 2019 and on 30th January 2020, the WHO declared the Covid-19 outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. On the same day, the South African Government activated the Emergency Operations Centre, located at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD). On 5 March the Minister of Health, Dr. Zweli Mkhize, announced the first confirmed case, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the National State of Disaster on 15th March 2020 that concerns all government departments and their responsibilities to curb the spread of Covid-19. The South African government has developed a plan to manage the Covid-19 with an operational plan.

**Our advocacy issues:**

1. Access to Health Care & Facilities
2. Income Security for All
3. Access to Basic Services
4. Access to Food
5. Access to Data
6. Security of Tenure
7. Protection of Workers in Formal & Informal Economies
8. Voice, Organisation & Representation
9. Gender Based Violence & Other Violence
10. Economic Stimulus
11. Mental Health of the Population
12. The Role of Informal Food Retail Outlets
13. Human Rights-Based Approach

**Vulnerable Communities**

Considerations for resource limited settings, including remote, isolated and vulnerable communities must acknowledge the multitude of factors that influence the health status of an individual and a population. As such, it is important to prepare for the potential importations into and rapid spread within the remote, poor and vulnerable communities.

For many rural communities, culture and tradition are integral components of a holistic approach to health and wellbeing and it is critical to recognize the unique strengths which contribute to their resiliency.

Communities in limited resource settings can be affected by social, environmental and economic factors, including housing, water quality and access, food security, pre-existing health conditions, limited access to health care, education and income. These factors are important to consider in the context of mitigating the spread and impact of Covid-19.

**Highlight key mobilisation areas:**

**Messages: Monitoring & Contact Tracing**

* Screening must be free of charge and easily accessible across both the private and public sectors. Private health care facilities must be opened to provide assistance to the sick and vulnerable
* Secure quarantine provisioning must be provided for people unable to secure that for themselves at home
* Acute medication must be available free of charge if the patient is not a member of a medical aid
* Chronic medication for diseases must be available through pharmacies, and where possible, dispensed through smart delivery mechanisms
* Places of production must be converted to manufacturing critical medication such as chronic medication, and items of sanitation
* Cooperatives must be incorporated into the production and supply chains
* Where feasible, directions must be provided for interventions that people can manufacture for themselves
* Community health workers are critical frontline delivery workers. They must receive appropriate support and provided with information, education and protective gear as well as the necessary screening kits and dynamic links to mediation delivery supply chains
* Community Healthcare Workers too must be respected and protected as essential workers
* Right to health includes but is not limited to right of choice to Traditional, Allied, Complementary and Alternative Health Services.

**Messages: Water & Sanitation Infrastructure**

With the recent outbreak of Covid-19 around the world and it starting to spread across South Africa.

It has become important that all people observe good hygiene practices and especially the regular washing of hands. For this to happen all communities in South Africa require a regular supply of clean running water. We need to find a way to help communities across South Africa have access to working water and sanitation infrastructure.

A digital technology system is used to monitoring and reporting on faulty water and sanitation infrastructure in townships, rural areas, and informal settlements. Assist with the distribution and monitoring of water supplies.

It is imperative that in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak that we ensure water and sanitation facilities are working well in order to promote good hygiene practices that eventually help with reducing the spread of the virus.

We envision the system being used by community members (through an app, free SMS line, and a free Unstructured Supplementary Service Data [USSD] service) who will report faulty water and sanitation infrastructure in their communities using the system.

The system will also be used by public officials to track the reported problems as well as assign the relevant personnel to resolve them and track once the reported problems have been resolved. From the primary user’s perspective, i.e. a community member who wants to report faulty water and sanitation infrastructure or even request water to be supplied to their community.

They would use their mobile phone to report a problem or make a water delivery request using one of the following methods:

* Completing a form on an app that will also capture their location. There will be an option for them to opt-in to being contacted for a follow-up. With the app the users will also have the option of uploading photos with their report or request
* Texting a free SMS line in the following format (example, final format might change): township name, street, request/problem, short description
* Following the prompts on a free USSD service that will collect all the necessary information regarding their request for water or problem report.

Currently community members report problems regarding water and sanitation infrastructure through their municipalities in person or calling in. Alternatively, some have taken to social media platforms for making such reports or requests without necessarily following any process and system that can track the request or report from submission to resolution.

Messages: Income Security for All

* One in four South Africans lived in starvation before the pandemic broke. Two out of every five (40%) of South Africans were unemployed. The high rates of children who failed to learn with comprehension has been more to do with their malnutrition than poor teaching discipline
* Those children have now lost their single meal of the day and still the state stands by without committing to do all in their ability to feed the hungry?
* This relief package of government is quickly being rejected by millions as being a rescue for the rich and middle classes, with the poor being left by the side of the road
* If there is no real benefit that can be felt in the pocket and in the stomach, there is a real risk of anger and frustration boiling up, to be met with the force of the state security machinery. That will be a travesty of our democracy
* As a constituency of communities across the country we fail to understand how the government appears oblivious to this message. Our repeated cries are dismissed as irrelevant: how then do you want to hear the voices of the poor?
* Combined efforts to ensure the smooth income payments to employed workers and those in distressed companies are welcomed. We however demand income security for all. This includes, in addition to the above:
  + Smooth payments for all current South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) recipients
  + The establishment of a Basic Living Grant for all, failing which
  + A top up to all current grant beneficiaries of R1000 per beneficiary per month to be reviewed after three months, and
  + The payment of a Basic Living Grant to all informal workers, the distribution mechanisms for which are to be organised through the organisations representing the informal workers and local governments
* There are a variety of sources of funding for this, including the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), the Compensation Fund, a contribution holiday to the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) for government and the Solidarity Fund
* All members of South African society are called on to contribute to this Solidarity Fund to the greater good of meeting people’s needs and keeping our economy circulating and surviving.

**LEADERS**

* Ms Steve Letsike, Chairperson of the SANAC Civil Society Forum and Co-Convener of the NEDLAC Community Constituency Covid19
* Mr Thulane Tshefuta Co-Convener of the NEDLAC Community Constituency Covid19
* Mabalane Nfundisi, Co-Convener of Nerve Centre
* Nhlanhla Ndlovu, Co-Convener of Nerve Centre

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Hashtag: #TogetherAgainstCovid19

**END**