



**DA PROPOSALS AND OBSERVATIONS:  
FIGHTING COVID-19 IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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## Agriculture

### Executive summary

*Food security must be a priority area in the agricultural sector, we cannot afford any disruptions in production, processing and transport of food. This also relates to affordability of food.*

*We need to monitor the current influx of seasonal workers to fruit farms, health and safety measures in packhouses, and possible bottlenecks of imports and exports at our harbours. We need to look at implementing health and safety measures at fresh food markets and livestock auctions, and avoid large gatherings of people – this may include extended hours, rotational buying times, online auctions and timeslots for the viewing of live animals.*

*Economic proposals to relieve small businesses should also be extended to the agricultural sector, and especially the agritourism industry.*

The Democratic Alliance (DA) supports the acknowledgement that the agricultural sector will be playing a vital role in ensuring food security during this time. It is important that the full value chain be exempt from closure in order to ensure stable and constant safe food production. Breaking any part of the food value chain could be disastrous – this includes water, nursery, and all other input suppliers.

### Food security is measured in three areas:

- Food production: Currently SA produces enough food to feed everyone and are also exporting food. The primary agricultural sector employs +/- 800 000 people and production could be severely impacted if a large number of workers are ill or under quarantine.
- Affordability of food: This could be problematic if the economic situation worsens. We are going to conduct a price watch to ensure that food remain affordable.
- Transport/processing of food from production to shops or outlets: The DA shall monitor and ensure that farmers comply with the regulation, in terms of the number of people being transported, to ensure that the disease is not being spread.

### Current situation

- Some of the fruit farmers are moving into harvesting season, e.g. citrus fruit is the largest fruit industry in South Africa and is largely focussed on the export market. South Africa is the second biggest citrus-exporting country, after Spain. There are concerns regarding big numbers of temporary workers coming to work on a daily basis. Agricultural unions are taking steps to discuss possible solutions. Packhouses are of a world standard and ISO certified. The fruit sector community has indicated its readiness to manage the challenges in the next 21 days.
- The most essential food imports are wheat, rice (100% imported), chicken and sunflower oil. South Africa imports on average about 1 million tons of wheat and 1.1 million tons of rice annually. We are mainly importing wheat from Russia and Ukraine, and rice from Thailand and India. We are also importing poultry, sunflower oil and palm oil. We need to keep track of what is happening in those countries and also look out for possible bottlenecks at the harbours.
- Planting season for winter grains starts in April, the required fertilizers and seeds are already in the country. Delivery plans for most farmers are in place. We shall monitor the bottlenecks and try assist in unblocking them.

- Harvesting of maize, our staple food, starts in April. We will monitor the situation regarding workforce and transport as described above.
- The wine industry and game farmers will be severely impacted regarding tourism and hunting. This will have a massive impact on profitability and will impact mostly on those areas where farmers have started secondary businesses to overcome the drought.
- The livestock industry is recovering from the foot and mouth outbreak. Auctions are going to take place under strict conditions, adhering to less than 100 people. Veterinary services and the availability of vaccines and medicines are going to be maintained. We are going to monitor the operation in this regard.
- Vegetable production is ongoing and employs big numbers of workers. This area would continue to be operational during this period. We would ensure and review the amount of people at these places. We would ask for their plans on how they are going to operationalise.
- Poultry and broiler businesses are always under pressure due to the economics of scale required. The operation is to continue business as usual. We shall assess their employee management plans, especially the big chicken houses employing over 100 staff.
- Farm safety has been a concern lately with elderly residents being murdered on their farms. This becomes an important area of monitoring by the police in terms of inventory of people in the farming communities.
- Food outlets – retail, wholesale, spaza shops and malls for food and essential products. They shall be catered for as they form part of essential food suppliers.

For the sector to provide the food needed, we must ensure that electricity, water and telecommunications are maintained.

Whilst the extent of support is for the small businesses that are up to date with payments, we recommend that the agricultural industry be looked at differently. Please consider that many farmers are coming from or still are locked in heavy drought.

A database of all essential imports regarding primary or secondary production needs must be drawn up to assist with import backlogs. We are going to monitor any possible shortages in affected countries of origin.

Essential agriculture input costs such as seed, chemicals and fertilizer would likely be subject to price changes. We recommend price monitoring.

We plan to monitor the full details of all role-players in the agricultural value chain, including farming, veterinary and phyto-sanitary services, pest control services, chemical and fertilizer, parts and implement providers. All these services must qualify to proceed with work and, if not, we shall escalate to the Shadow Cabinet to take up.

The agricultural industry is used to working under difficult climatic conditions, they have learnt to adjust to disasters and to adapt. The well-known phrase, “’n Boer maak ’n plan” will now be tested to the utmost. We are sure they will come up with best-practise and innovative ideas to ensure farming is not stopped during this period.

The DA will keep in contact with role-players in the industry, keep on assessing risks, and keep on communicating with individuals and commodities.

It is also important to provide a “agriculture-related” hotline in order to unbundle red-tape matters.

## Basic Education

### Executive summary

*We need to plan for a scenario where learners can't go back to school after the holidays should the situation call for a longer period of cautious measures to be implemented. We need to look at a mix of solutions, including interactive online learning, learning via WhatsApp study groups, distributing printed learning materials, using TV and radio to broadcast lessons, and calling on telecommunications companies to increase the reach of their 4G networks to improve internet access in remote or rural areas.*

*Learners who are dependent on the school nutrition programme for meals need to be identified by schools, and plans need to be put in place to make sure these learners continue to receive meals. For any measures to be implemented successfully, cooperation from every single individual is going to be crucial.*

### Introduction

Following the declaration of a national disaster by President Ramaphosa, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has a crucial role to play in slowing down the spread of coronavirus transmission and thus the President took a significant step in closing the schools earlier than expected.

Schools have provided learners with study packs to take home, this will assist parents with planning their children's schedules to allow for play time and academic time. For the academic programme to be able to continue even beyond the end of the Easter Holiday, it's important for parents to play their role in these challenging times.

### Challenges

In case we find ourselves in a situation where learners can't go back to school after this holiday break, the following steps could be taken to continue teaching and learning:

- ***Solution 1: Interactive online learning***

Telkom SA, MTN, Cell C, Vodacom and Microsoft will be zero-rating a range of educational websites that would otherwise require paid data usage. In addition, there is also online teaching, which can be done on platforms such as Google Meets, Zoom Apps or YouTube. The challenge with this, however, is that only around 40% of our learners have smart phones, leaving around 60% of learners with no connectivity. Where possible, family members may need to share their devices so learners can access these platforms. This could be done by the adult guardian or parent supervising the learner.

The advantages of this include continual interaction with learners where questions can be posed and answered to keep the teaching procedure alive. Learners can record and replay lessons.

The disadvantage, however, includes the cost associated with teaching apps, internet access, and data consumption. Because there is no in-person classroom interaction, practical components may be difficult to achieve.

Further suggestions include having teaching notes and content ready before the online teaching starts, allowing learners to access the teacher after it is completed, and formulating short questionnaires to ensure the students grasp the content taught.

- ***Solution II: Learning and teaching groups***

Discussion groups may be set up to continue the assignments and questions – it is easy to gather all the students and communication via a WhatsApp group. Learners can work remotely without being in the same space and reading materials can be made accessible.

This is, however, still a problem if the students don't have internet access, and groups lack the collaborations and discussions that happen during the planning and executing of assignments. Schools therefore need to do a needs analysis of what resources learners have in order to divide learners up when providing lesson plans according to the resources available. This will help teachers identify any learners who are left out and then allocate the necessary interventions suggested to ensure teaching and learning is available to all.

- ***Solution III: Distribution of printed learning materials***

Printed teaching materials are distributed, and homework and assignments are collected. Collection and drop-off zones need to be identified with due-dates and times communicated, again this allows for minimal face-to-face interaction.

Advantages include relatively low cost implications compared to other solutions, and all the students have the learning materials so that they can study at home.

The disadvantages are that teachers and learners do not interact, and it is also difficult to monitor the students' self-study. The students need to send the homework via email or take a picture to send to the teachers which becomes a lot of admin work for the teachers.

This is, however, the best option to make sure that all students are able to continue with their studies. At key intervals, the teachers can set mini tests to ensure that the students cover the appropriate content on schedule.

- ***Solution IV: Broadcast lessons***

The TV penetration rate in South Africa is more than 50%, radio is believed to be much higher. Therefore, any learner can at least keep up with teaching through TV and radio programmes, either at their own home or at the house of a neighbour (always keeping in mind social distancing protocols.)

In poverty-stricken or very rural areas, learners whose families have no TV set or radio could be allowed to go to local government offices or designated areas to watch the educational programmes during teaching hours. To manage the number of learners accessing these venues at any given time, teachers or officials would need to call parents to inform them of the time slots available to children, and only the learners identified by the school may enter the premises. This way, social distancing and other hygiene protocols may be managed better.

The disadvantage is that TV is less interactive than online classrooms.

The suggestion is that, with the support from the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Telecommunications, SABC Education Television and community radio broadcasts from across the country should have a range of teaching programmes conducted by experienced teachers available to every corner of South African territory.

- ***Solution V: Increase 4G broadband cellular network penetration (over the medium term)***

In remote areas, people may have smartphones, but the 4G signal may be too weak to support online learning. The three telecommunication companies may take action to solve this problem. They set up new 4G base stations to reach remote areas, benefiting a lot more learners and students who can now go online. For families that cannot afford data bundles for long-term online learning, the provincial government may offer their office Wi-Fi, inviting students to stay in the meeting room for connection to the internet during teaching hours. After office hours, learners can still stay near the government offices for Wi-Fi connection.

### **Continuing with the National School Nutrition Programme**

A lot of children rely on food nutrition and how they continue to receive these meals will pose a challenge for the Department. Teachers must provide a list of learners who are in desperate need of nutrition in order for schools and departments to make plans in this regard.

## Cooperative Governance

### **Executive summary**

*The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) has not yet issued standard directives to municipalities, despite giving assurance that it is working on protocols that will be released soon. In the interim, responses have continued to vary across local governments, with some closing municipal buildings. A standardised approach to municipal operations across the country will ensure that there is a coordinated implementation of interventions to contain the virus at community level.*

The DA commends the government for the significant step it took to immediately declare a National State of Disaster, including the contingency measures to inhibit the spread of the virus and ensure the safety of each and every South African. It is concerning, however, to note that municipalities are operating on an ad-hoc basis without any clear guidelines on how they should structure their operations to minimise the impact of COVID-19. This will make it difficult for the Department to adequately monitor and assess COVID-19 hotspots, and implement targeted interventions.

### **Shortcomings of ongoing response by municipalities to COVID-19**

While the minister of COGTA has indicated that she is working on operational protocols for municipalities that she hopes to release 'soon'. It remains unclear when these protocols will be released. The lack of a standardised framework continues to limit systematic response to the virus at local level.

Save for the provisions which come into play when a State of Disaster is declared, municipalities across the country have resorted to making ad-hoc decisions aimed at mitigating the spread of the virus. For example, some municipalities have resorted to taking the drastic step of closing council offices even as others have remained open.

The battle against the spread of COVID-19 will be won or lost at community level. It is therefore important that standardised operational procedures are put in place to ensure that only essential service delivery processes remain operational. It will not serve any purpose to have one municipality postpone its council or public participation meetings while others carry on with business as usual.

### **Possible measures for adoption by municipalities to prevent the spread of the virus**

The DA is proposing a raft of measures that will ensure municipalities have a standardised approach in place to contain the virus from spreading any further:

- Postpone in-chamber council meetings for large municipalities. Smaller municipalities can consider using interactive video technologies such as Zoom.
- In-door public facilities such as swimming pools, community halls and libraries should be closed until further notice.
- Encourage ratepayers to make use of online payment systems to pay their rates.
- Establish an emergency call centre where the public can report complaints or calls for service delivery assistance instead of traveling to council offices.
- Close all councillor offices and place signage on the doors where residents can call for assistance.
- Suspend all applications for public gatherings such as protest marches, prayer services and sporting events.

- Encourage bus and taxi drivers to wear masks to cover their mouth and nose. Hand sanitisers and educational literature should be made available at all public transport hubs.
- Redirect expenditure towards the prevention of the virus by providing water to rural communities and distribution of hand sanitisers in poor communities.
- Develop a response strategy for informal settlements to mitigate the spread of the virus.
- Suspend water disconnections with immediate effect.
- Suspend the activities of field workers such as CWP and community caregiver programmes.
- Consider the closure of all municipal courts until further notice.

The Department of COGTA needs to empower municipalities to enable them to protect residents from the extraordinary effects of COVID-19 while continuing to provide essential services to prevent its further spread.

## Defence and Military Veterans

### Executive summary

*The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) will be required to assist with logistical support such as delivery of medicines, as well as – in case of a State of Emergency – cordoning off designated areas and operating roadblocks. All three military hospitals must also be made available to treat infected patients.*

The COVID-19 outbreak will have implications for the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), firstly on the operational side, and secondly on their support to South Africa in terms of sections 27; 198(d); 200(2); 201(2) to (4); and 203 of the Constitution, and other applicable legislation.

The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in South Africa might have the following potential influence and impact on the SANDF:

- **Managerial/administration impact on internal activities**

While the SANDF must maintain its readiness to defend South Africa's integrity and citizens, every possible step must be followed to limit person-to-person contact and non-essential gatherings, and to promote high standards of personal and public hygiene. All possible steps will be taken to limit the possibility of local transmissions, including the cancellation of non-essential gathering, international interactions and exercises.

Unfortunately, the SANDF cannot be quarantined as they must defend and assist South Africa in the worst life-threatening circumstances. The Department of Defence's administration will be affected similarly to other departments, and contingency plans will have to be implemented.

- **Operational activities**

Current assigned essential activities – for example land border protection, internal deployments, and regional peacekeeping involvement like in the DRC – must proceed as normal while all possible steps will be taken to protect our deployed soldiers from infection by the COVID-19 virus.

The involvement of the SANDF is expected to entail services by the South African Military Health Service (SAMHS), and logistical support, for example the delivery of medicine to various destinations in SA and "medivacs" (medical evacuations).

Both the South African Air Force (SAAF) and the The South African Military Health Service (SAMHS) will be involved. The latter will provide continuous support services like with the Wuhan evacuation and quarantine mission.

Should a full State of Emergency, State of Defence, or curfew be declared, the SANDF will be involved in support of the South African Police Service (SAPS) to cordon off an identified area, to operate road blocks, and, when required, to avail the three Military Hospitals, for whatever

purpose might be required, for the treatment of infected patients (both civilians and SANDF staff).

- **Offer of assistance to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans**

We have offered our help and assistance to both the Minister and the Secretary of Defence, and will be ready to assist in every possible way.

## Finance

### **Executive summary**

*South Africa is currently in a technical recession and the impact of COVID-19 is only set to worsen the country's economic outlook. It is therefore important that the government announces a decisive economic response that matches its comprehensive virus containment plan. Much of this support should be directed towards supporting small businesses to ensure that they remain operational and jobs in the sector are protected.*

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, it has become clear that this health disaster will have devastating consequences for thousands of businesses and millions of employees. A terrible economic cost is already being paid in our national effort to contain and beat COVID-19. That cost is disproportionately affecting small businesses and their employees across the country, in every sector and industry. But these small businesses cannot and will not survive if they have to bear the full brunt of this cost on their own. They need support from the government, and it cannot wait.

As such, the DA is proposing an economic support package that will help small and medium businesses ride out this storm without laying off staff or closing down. These proposals include:

- **Free up funds for disaster management**

Freeing up funds for disaster management and economic support, by cancelling the planned bailout of SAA of R16,4 billion immediately. It is unthinkable at a time like this to be bailing out failed SOEs while thousands of successful small businesses face ruin.

- **Loan forbearance**

The announcement by Standard Bank of a three-month payment holiday on all up-to-date business loans is very welcome. The DA calls on all other banks to match this relief intervention as soon as possible. A nation-wide loan forbearance programme, giving a four-month payment holiday on loans for small and medium businesses – in particular property loans, business loans and vehicle loans – is needed. By extending the term of loans by four months and allowing borrowers to pause their payments for those months, businesses and the families they support will receive immediate and very significant financial relief. This will help small businesses maintain the cash flow necessary to stay open and keep paying their employees. It will act as a form of 'bridging finance' for these businesses, without each business needing to negotiate terms with their banks individually. Businesses are already flooding banks with requests for payment holidays. Instead of waiting for the flood of requests in the coming weeks, the government, along with the Reserve Bank and the Banking Association should act proactively and announce these relaxed payment terms now. This is fast becoming the preferred intervention of governments across the globe. China, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, several Gulf countries, Canada and others have all enacted programmes similar to this.

- **Rental forbearance**

If a loan payment holiday programme is enacted, then rental payments can also be paused for four months to help businesses survive. There are of course some property owners who rely on the income from their properties, even if they are not bonded. In these cases, a pause in

rental payments, or a reduction in rental payments, would need to be negotiated on a case by case basis. Even so, it would still help for the government to make a statement calling on owners to demonstrate forbearance wherever possible.

- **Raise in VAT threshold, and pause in UIF and Worker's Compensation Fund payments:**
  - The Department of Labour could pause payments to the Worker's Compensation Fund by small businesses for four months, without affecting workers' cover under the fund. Payments could be recouped when the economy rebounds.
  - Now is also the time to raise the VAT threshold for small businesses, from R1 million to R2 million. This would give immediate relief to small businesses.

The DA welcomes the government's positive response to one of our proposals, allowing businesses to skip Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) payments for the coming months, and expanding UIF coverage to better protect affected workers. Small and medium enterprises pay tens of thousands of Rands to the UIF and this reprieve will be valuable cash flow support for these businesses during this crisis.

Even so, South Africa still needs a comprehensive economic support package that will lessen the economic devastation that this virus will inflict on businesses. The economy's ability to recover post the COVID-19 epidemic will depend exclusively on the actions that the government will take now to provide businesses with the breathing space needed to survive the next few months.

## Health

### **Executive summary**

*The private sector should pledge further resources to fight COVID-19.*

*The Department of Health (DoH), through additional funds that must be made available, should source additional COVID-19 screening and testing. We are calling on the extension of screening and testing capacity through the coordination of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, the National Health Laboratory Service and private laboratory services.*

*Public hotspots should be implemented as a matter of urgency. This would include transport hubs, workplaces (such as mining companies) and communities. The DoH should urge retired healthcare professionals to come out of retirement on a voluntary basis to be deployed to screening hotspots and managing public queries on the public hotline. The DoH should also be reaching out to medical students who can provide the service over and above their training.*

*The coronavirus public hotline should be expanded and capacitated. This can be in collaboration with private partners who are already running call-centre companies.*

*Health and safety officials who fall within the local government structures should be deployed to shopping centres and places of high frequency to ensure that businesses are complying with the basic requirements of protecting their staff members and the public.*

*The borders of provinces should be shut so as to contain the virus. Some provinces like the Eastern Cape have significantly less cases and we need to act fast to protect our people.*

### **Introduction**

The announcements which have been made thus far are key interventions. However, we have now moved to a different phase of the process of dealing with this issue. We have moved from the containment phase to the mitigation phase. We know that there are more than 400 confirmed cases thus far, with the number rising as more tests are being conducted. It is now clear that local transmissions have begun which means that the strategies in place need to be completely augmented, changed and new ones need to be urgently implemented.

There are various elements of this strategy that the DA will be monitoring and offering workable solutions to the Department of Health.

### **Health sector capacity**

Minister Mkhize confirmed yesterday that there are over 800 beds in the system designated for the purposes of isolation and treatment of patients, including over 160 beds that have been earmarked for intensive care. While only 15% of patients will need hospitalisation due to the severity of the illness, these resources need to be augmented. South Africa, unlike other countries across the globe is deeply unequal with many of our citizens living in informal settlements where there is no adequate sanitation. We also have millions of South Africans who use the public transport system. Therefore, our preparedness needs to far exceed even some of the best international models because we have a unique set of circumstances. Many people may not be able to self-quarantine should they become ill and therefore state facilities are key.

That is why the private sector should pledge resources in this fight. This is not a public health crisis. It is a South African crisis. Where we govern, we are engaging with the private sector, however, this needs to be rolled out on a national scale with private partners pledging their support to government.

It is important that between the military hospitals, the public health sector and various private facilities, more beds be made available for this purpose considering the rate that local transmissions often follow.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has, recently, during a press conference simplified the process that needs to be followed as numbers continue to climb. They have stated that testing, isolating and treatment need to be aggressively applied.

This is why reports of inadequate testing kits are of deep concern to the DA. It is important that the DoH, through additional funds that must be made available, source additional kits as a matter of urgency. Because of the global pandemic, medical supplies such as these are difficult to find, it then must mean that we need an effective triage system while a global shortage exists.

The DA is also calling on the extension of screening and testing capacity. Through the coordination of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), the National Health Laboratory Service and other private laboratory services there should be testing platforms across the country for speedy turn-around times. However, screening in public hotspots should be implemented as a matter of urgency. This would include transport hubs, workplaces (such as mining companies) and communities. Screening people for the symptoms is a key preventative measure, while it may not be fool proof for those who are asymptomatic.

As the country gears into the disaster management phase, we will be suggesting that retired healthcare professionals be called out of retirement on a voluntary basis to be deployed to screening hotspots and managing public queries on the public hotline. The DoH should also be reaching out to medical students who can provide the service over and above their training.

The DA has also received numerous complaints from members of the public regarding the public hotline. Since the declaration of the national disaster by the President, the public hotline has no doubt been overwhelmed. That is why we are calling for an expansion of this service and capacity. This can be in collaboration with private partners who are already running call-centre companies.

In addition, greater coordination is needed with local municipalities and metros. To that end, we are recommending that health and safety officials who fall within the local government structures should be deployed to shopping centres and places of high frequency to ensure that businesses are complying with the basic requirements of protecting their staff members and the public. Businesses have an obligation to both those employed and those who use their service to comply with basic hygiene practices.

The Taiwanese model is an important internal benchmark. While they utilised cutting-edge technology which we may not have, they also did launch a massive public awareness campaign and fought valiantly against fake news. These are some of the key lessons that we should incorporate in our national strategy too.

If South Africa is to beat this, then we need to ensure that we support the efforts of government, we offer innovative thinking and strategies, we hold the executive to account in implementing these interventions and we plead with all players of society to do their bit. This includes all spheres of government, communities and the private sector.

## Higher Education

### **Executive summary**

*Universities must make arrangements to continue learning on online platforms, and partner with telecommunications companies to make access to the internet easier and zero-rate online learning platforms.*

*While students are on a break, universities must disinfect and deep-clean facilities and residences. Urgent arrangements need to be made for students that can't go home to self-isolate in residences.*

### **Introduction**

The Higher Education sector has closed for an early recess in an aim to combat the spread of the coronavirus. When the situation requires a longer stay-away beyond what was planned, measures need to be implemented to minimize the disruption to the academic programme. A careful balance needs to be struck as the country tries to avoid having essential activities being brought to a complete halt. Below are some measures the DA proposes needing to be considered and implemented to help strike this balance.

### **How COVID-19 has affected and will affect Higher Education and the readiness of the department to deal with the crisis**

With the early shutdown of institutions of higher learning, contact lectures and graduations will not be taking place. Institutions have opted to courier the certificates of the students that completed their studies. Online learning courses are busy being developed to accommodate a protracted shutdown of campuses.

Students that live in campus residences were requested to go home in the best interest of their health. There have been a few students who have tested positive for COVID-19, students who were in contact with the positive students cannot only be required to self-isolate but must be tested. Monitoring of this virus is so important as there is a high risk on these students since they have been sent back into their communities. Self-isolation is not guaranteed as not all students have homes or the means to simply cut themselves off from their families for two weeks or more. With government reportedly having shortages of testing kits, it will become increasingly difficult to monitor all students' health statuses, especially given that government relies heavily on individuals' willingness to be open and transparent.

The Department of Higher Education seems unprepared for this pandemic. A lack of swift and decisive action on their part has left institutions to fend for themselves, because no visible support from government has been provided. Universities need to ensure they manage students who truly have no financial means to go home. Currently, the University of the Western Cape has allowed students to stay on campus under strict conditions. Where staff are required to continue working, stringent measures need to be implemented such as social distancing in open plan offices. The DA will be keeping a very close eye on this to ensure that the health of workers is not being compromised.

#### **1. What has been missed?**

The Democratic Alliance shares the sentiment of government: we need to contain and slow the spread of COVID-19 as far as possible, but we also caution government not to be short-sighted in its approach of simply closing institutions. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has missed an

opportunity by not giving directions and guidelines to students and staff following the closure of the institutions. At the time of the announcement, no clear plan was provided to students except to simply go on holiday.

There have been no official updates from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to students who have been waiting for their allowances. NSFAS must still disburse these outstanding allowances in a way in which prevents students squandering the funds during recess. Consideration also needs to be given to how NSFAS can assist with the remote teaching and learning that may be utilised soon.

The DA has come up with the following measures that need to be implemented to effectively help curb the spread of the coronavirus:

1. Following the announcement of the recess period being brought forward, a plan needs to be compiled speedily on how teaching and learning will continue should the situation continue to require social distancing. Institutions have already lost learning time from protests which erupted at the beginning of the academic year. This, coupled with an early recess, means the academic programme is already under time constraints. Lectures and any additional learning material should be made available online (including tests) in order for students to catch up with the year's academic programme.
2. Students who have remained in the residences need to be given consideration to ensure their relevant NSFAS allowance is disbursed to help them under these circumstances. Measures need to be in place to cater to students in residence, there needs to be enough resources to be able to meet their basic daily needs.
3. On-campus clinics, residences, lecture halls, dining halls and labs that stay open need to be equipped with sanitising equipment during this period and post recess.
4. With lectures being cancelled and online learning encouraged, e-learning and distant learning needs to be undertaken where possible, without prejudicing students who have no access to Wi-Fi or the internet, by doing the following:
  - 4.1. Provide intensive hygiene and testing at entry points for labs and practical workshops when the need to use these facilities arises. Lab work and other practicals need to be made accessible via Moodle too. This is to accommodate the practicals required for each course but under a regulated environment that involves controlling the number of students allowed in these facilities. This needs to apply to both universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges (TVETs). Priority should be given to students without electronic devices.
  - 4.2. Internet service providers need to partner with TVETs, provincial and local government to identify and prepare ICT-friendly spaces that will provide Wi-Fi access to students who have no access at home. Students would then be able to go to these facilities for their studies, again stressing the control of how many people can access these facilities at a time, always. Where possible, the use of Libraries can be limited to students only via a booking system with scheduled time slots.
  - 4.3. Engage cell phone companies to zero-rate university and TVET sites and Moodle sites. Telkom has already done this. This increases access to learning material without the challenges of

affordability of data. Some institutions are already in talks trying to secure such agreements. This should be enforced across all universities and TVET colleges.

5. It is very important to disinfect the buildings while students are away. Should institutions agree to house students who are unable to go home, continuous monitoring and stringent measures need to be implemented to encourage social distancing.
6. The public spaces that are made available to students especially for practicals need to have a schedule of when a list of learners can attend the practical centres at certain times to manage the numbers and minimize close contact.
7. At this time, communication is key to the students and the education officials so as to ensure that no one is falling behind in the academic programme. Students should also have a platform to voice their issues and concerns. This will help improve the experience of online learning and enable the reporting of health statuses while at home.
8. Staff working at the institutions should be allowed to work from home where possible. Those who need to be on campus should practice hygienic behaviour to minimize the spread of the virus.
9. For effective communication, it's important to ensure the student databases are correct and up to date. All these extra efforts will need some financial assistance which hopefully can be kept to a minimum. Additional supplies of hygiene resources and communication channels may cost the university extra money. Government needs to assess each institution's need for assistance in this regard and plan accordingly for emergency funding.
10. Now more than ever, the Minister and his Department must ensure that higher education is effectively digitised. This requires that the rollout of the e-learning system is accompanied by a rollout of proper access to Wi-Fi and broadband. The 4IR means covering all aspects which will ensure success and not simply chanting slogans.
11. The Minister should facilitate a partnership between Science, Innovation and the Higher Education Research Team to work with the Health Department to conduct research on how to contain COVID-19.

During Fees Must Fall, when campuses were shut down, some of these solutions were put into place, therefore, collaboration is not impossible. The inclusion of the often forgotten TVETs is equally important to ensure that no student is left behind during this pandemic.

## **2. If the DA was in national government**

It is well known that where the DA governs, we do it well. During a pandemic it is important to act in order to safeguard the lives of people. It is also equally important to plan and implement well thought out measures.

The DA would ensure that a study plan is established while lectures are suspended, and a recess period is brought forward. Institutions of higher learning are prone to protests. Therefore, it should be mandatory for institutions to have pre-existing plans in place to prevent, contain and mitigate any form of disruption to the academic programme.

COVID-19-related plans must ensure that teaching and learning is made accessible to as many students as possible, to ensure their success. Measures to promote as high a pass rate as possible in

2020 for the current cohort of students will enable a higher throughput rate and minimise the long-term disruption to the university system.

When faced with a challenge such as the coronavirus pandemic, our country should be propelled into shifting our thinking so that we can overcome long-term challenges such as this. With the #FeesMustFall challenges and the lack of accommodation that Higher Education faces, now is the time to formalise online learning as a desirable way to obtain your qualification. Distance learning has had many challenges in the past, we now have an opportunity to improve that experience and make it more attractive for prospective students. Online learning can be made cheaper thus incentivise the demand for constant internet and minimal contact lecturing.

## Home Affairs

### **Executive summary**

*Home Affairs offices must introduce a system whereby people are assisted by appointment, in order to avoid queueing, allowing Home Affairs offices to control the number of people in their buildings and ensure that social distances can be kept. Operating hours will have to be extended and weekend operating hours introduced.*

*Ports of entry that have been closed need to be carefully policed to ensure that illegal crossings into South Africa do not occur here.*

### **Delay in resolving matters, we currently handle cases that date as far back as 2015**

There's a lot of budget constraints according to their submissions, it seems there is going to be a further reduction of staff, informed by the cut of 5% of the budget as announced by the minister of Finance. Less staff means more delays for customers and overworked staff.

#### *Proposed solution:*

- The Department of Home Affairs should consider buying its own property instead of renting, this will enable the Department to build/renovate the structures to its desired specifications, with the intention of creating enough capacity in the waiting area. The new properties should be designed to ensure that social distancing is practical and must also be accessible to the blind.
- While we create awareness on COVID-19 and comply with measures to curb the spread, greater space is going to make it easier for clients to be at least 2m away from each other (to avoid human contact).
- Motivate for/request an increased budget from the National Treasury to employ more personnel and be able to pay for overtime for officials who will be working on weekends.
- Introduce an appointment system, which will ensure clients do not lose more than one day at work because they were not assisted on the first one.
- Staff trained on customer care/Batho Pele principle to ensure clients get the service they deserve, and officials should get work done right the first time.

### **Inability to finalize the refurbishment of mobile units**

In the presentation conducted by the Department of Home Affairs in October 2019, the Department committed to finalising the refurbishment of mobile units by February 2020, so they can be stationed at schools.

#### *Proposed solution:*

- The Department MUST fast track the refurbishment of mobile units and ensure they are placed outside offices with the highest traffic or in high-demand townships as well as in rural areas. This must be done with a timetable to help reduce queues, crowding and public transport trips.

## **Lack of SANDF and all security clusters at the borders to man fences and Home Affairs offices**

### *Proposed solution:*

- All our borders must be secured and monitored – South African National Defence Force (SANDF), South African Police Service (SAPS) and all security clusters to monitor all possible illegal points of entry (fences, rivers etc.).

## **Current status on dealing with COVID-19**

A travel ban on high-risk countries has been put in place from Wednesday 18 March 2020. This means that people that are coming from affected countries including the United States, Italy, South Korea and Iran, would face intense screening and possible quarantine as government tightened its measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Furthermore, travellers who are traveling from high-risk countries would have to produce proof that they were COVID-19-free.

They would have to provide proof that they've undergone a test and found to be coronavirus-free in those tests. If that certificate was part of the visa application, they would be allowed entry into the country.

The high-risk countries are:

- \* China
- \* France
- \* Germany
- \* Italy
- \* Iran
- \* South Korea
- \* Spain
- \* The United Kingdom
- \* The United States of America

## **Tourist visas**

Travellers who have a tourist visa, who wish to extend their stay in the country, will be granted an extension period of 90 days. Should a need arise for a further extension while the country deals with the pandemic of coronavirus such extension will be considered at such a time. Automatic extension for 90 days must apply, to avoid clients going to stand in the long queues at Home Affairs offices. This will also assist in improving the economy during these hard times.

## **Ports of entry**

35 of 72 ports of entry will be closed. Ports of entry which will be closed are non-commercial and never had officials from the Department of Health, they only had SAPS.

Ports of entry to be closed are: 12 border posts with Botswana, 9 border posts with Lesotho, 3 border posts with Mozambique, 5 border posts with Namibia and 6 border posts with Eswatini.

### *Proposed solution:*

The Minister must come up with concrete measures and give surety to South Africans that in the midst of those borders being closed they will be manned to ensure people do not come into the country illegally, potentially carrying the virus. No forced quarantine can be imposed which is a huge risk.

The Minister has indicated that all officials who were deployed at the ports of entry that are now closed, will be stationed at other ports of entry that remain open.

The SANDF and all security clusters need to patrol all ports of entry to ensure no one enters the country illegally and without being screened.

## Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation

### **Executive summary**

*There is currently no evidence that the persistence of the virus is probable in our water sources, or that drinking-water supplies are at high risk of being contaminated and spreading infection.*

*That being said, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and water authorities must ensure that water resources are protected, managed and maintained, and produce clean and safe drinking water for all communities. Poor hygienic practices due to the unavailability of water, or due to poor waste-treatment, impacts on community health and community hygiene practices and may help the spread of the virus through human to human transmissions.*

*The government needs to ensure the proper treatment of water at the source, and safe storage of treated water. Communities without access to piped water should be receiving daily water deliveries and stocks of emergency supplies to improve sanitation practices – this includes hand sanitisers, toilet-sanitising spray, gloves and (where possible), masks.*

*The Department must also step up its communication and information campaigns in order to ensure that communities are informed about best health, safety and hygiene practices.*

### **COVID-19 and how it will affect South Africans without safe drinking water and sanitation**

#### **1. COVID-19 in water and sanitation**

The World Health Organization Technical brief – 3 March 2020 on COVID-19

- While persistence of the virus in drinking-water is possible, there is no current evidence from surrogate human coronaviruses that they are present in surface or groundwater sources or transmitted through contaminated drinking-water. The COVID-19 virus is an enveloped virus, with a fragile outer membrane. Generally, enveloped viruses are less stable in the environment and are more susceptible to oxidants, such as chlorine. While there is no evidence to date about the survival of the COVID-19 virus in water or sewerage, the virus is likely to become inactivated significantly faster than non-enveloped human enteric viruses with known waterborne transmission (such as adenoviruses, norovirus, rotavirus and hepatitis).
- The COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking-water supplies, and based on current evidence, the risk to water supplies is low. Laboratory studies of surrogate coronaviruses that took place in well-controlled environments indicated that the virus could remain infectious in water contaminated with faeces for days to weeks.
- There is no evidence to date that the COVID-19 virus has been transmitted via sewerage systems with or without wastewater treatment. Furthermore, there is no evidence that sewerage or wastewater treatment workers contracted severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)1a.

#### **2. COVID-19 risks**

In the current situation where COVID-19 is rapidly spreading worldwide and the number of cases in South Africa is rising with increasing pace in several affected areas, there is a need for immediate targeted action.

- An estimated 46,3% of households had access to piped water in their dwellings in 2018. A further 28,5% accessed water on site while 12,3% relied on communal taps and 1,9% relied on neighbours' taps. Although generally households' access to water improved, 2,7% of households still had to fetch water from rivers, streams, stagnant water pools, dams, wells and springs in 2018.<sup>1</sup>
- 97,7% of households in metros had access to tap water in their dwellings, off-site or on-site. This type of access to water was most common in Nelson Mandela Bay (99,9%), the City of Cape Town (99,5%), Buffalo City and the City of Johannesburg (both 98,8%). Mangaung (90,1%) and the City of Tshwane (93,3%) recorded the lowest access amongst metros.<sup>2</sup>
- Households in Limpopo (48,0%) and Mpumalanga (47,7%) reported the most interruptions, while the Western Cape (1,4%) and Gauteng (5,4%) experienced the least interruptions. Approximately one-fifth (20,3%) of South African households reported some dysfunctional water supply service.<sup>3</sup>
- The majority of households in the Western Cape (93,8%) and Gauteng (91,8%) had access to adequate sanitation, access was most limited in Limpopo (58,9%) and Mpumalanga (68,1%). In the Eastern Cape, households' access to improved sanitation is 88,0%. These facilities are defined as flush toilets connected to a public sewerage system or a septic tank, or a pit toilet with a ventilation pipe.<sup>4</sup>

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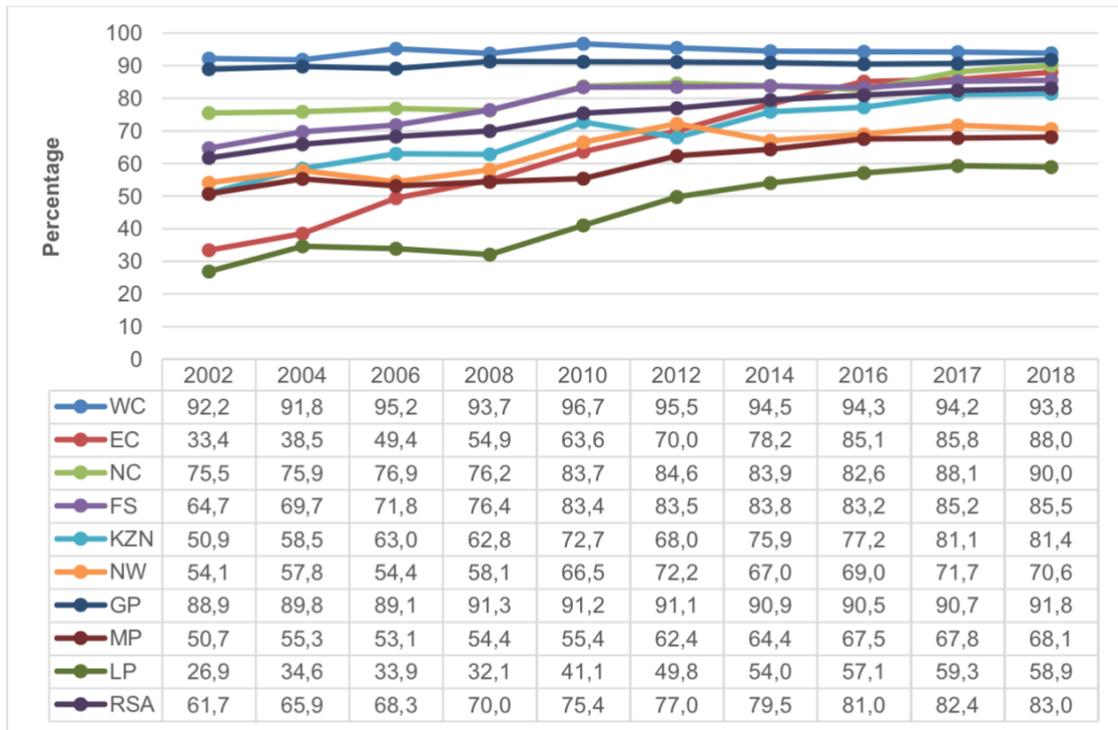
<sup>1</sup> StatSA General Household Survey 2018 <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> StatSA General Household Survey 2018 <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182018.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> StatSA General Household Survey 2018 <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182018.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> StatSA General Household Survey 2018 <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182018.pdf>

Figure 11.1: Percentage of households that have access to improved sanitation per province, 2002–2018



- Flush toilets that were connected to public sewerage systems were most common in the most urbanised provinces, namely the Western Cape (89,1%) and Gauteng (88,6%). Only 26,5% of households in Limpopo had access to any type of flush toilet, the lowest of any province. In the absence of flush toilets, 70,2% of households in Limpopo used pit latrines, most (37,6%) without ventilation pipes. In the Eastern Cape, 40,3% of households used pit toilets with ventilation pipes.<sup>5</sup>

Table 11.1: Percentage of households by type of toilet facility and province, 2018

	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA	Total (Thousands)
	Percentage										
Flush toilet connected to a public sewerage system	89,1	44,9	69,9	74,1	43,6	41,4	88,6	39,1	20,2	61,5	10 225
Flush toilet connected to a septic or conservancy tank	4,0	2,3	6,7	2,5	6,3	7,2	1,2	6,0	5,8	3,9	655
Pour flush toilet connected to septic tank or pit	0,0	0,6	0,5	0,0	0,6	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,3	51
Chemical toilet	0,1	0,4	0,0	0,1	0,6	0,3	0,4	0,3	0,2	0,3	57
Pit latrine/toilet with ventilation pipe	0,7	40,3	12,9	9,0	30,9	21,8	1,8	22,8	32,6	17,2	2 867
Pit latrine/toilet without ventilation pipe	0,4	7,5	6,1	11,0	15,0	25,2	5,7	28,4	37,6	13,4	2 225
Bucket toilet, collected by municipality	4,1	0,6	0,1	1,0	0,4	0,2	1,5	0,0	0,2	1,1	188
Bucket toilet, emptied by household	0,8	0,3	0,9	0,9	0,1	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,2	38
Ecological Sanitation Systems (urine diversion / separation)	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,4	0,3	0,0	1,5	0,6	0,3	48
None	0,6	2,8	2,7	0,7	2,0	3,1	0,2	1,7	2,0	1,4	232
Other	0,1	0,3	0,2	0,8	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,1	0,4	0,3	46
<b>Total Percentage</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>16 631</b>									
<b>Total (Thousands)</b>	<b>1 875</b>	<b>1 680</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>2 894</b>	<b>1 208</b>	<b>4 870</b>	<b>1 286</b>	<b>1 576</b>	<b>16 631</b>	

- The non-provision of safe water, sanitation and hygienic conditions is a risk to human health during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Communities not receiving piped water are at greater risk of promoting the spread of the COVID-19 virus, with unhygienic conditions and the lack of safe water.

<sup>5</sup> StatSA General Household Survey 2018 <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182018.pdf>

- Bad waste management practices in municipalities, communities, homes, schools, marketplaces and health care facilities are not preventing human-to-human transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

The speed with which COVID-19 can cause nationally incapacitating epidemics once transmission within the community is established, indicates that in a few weeks or even days, it is likely that similar situations to those seen in China and Italy may be seen in South Africa.

There are no vaccines available and there is little evidence of the effectiveness of potential therapeutic agents. In addition, there is presumably no pre-existing immunity in the population against the new coronavirus and everyone in the population is assumed to be susceptible.

Clinical presentations of COVID-19 range from no symptoms (asymptomatic) to severe pneumonia, and severe cases of the disease can lead to death. While the majority of cases (80%) entail milder respiratory infections and pneumonias, severe illness and death is more common among the elderly with other chronic underlying conditions, with these risk groups accounting for the majority of severe disease and fatalities to date.

### **3. Minimise or eliminate COVID-19 risks**

To minimise or eliminate COVID-19 risks we need to keep water supplies safe and available to all South Africans. The following measures must be taken:

- Improve water safety at the source by ensuring effective water treatment.
- Treat tank or containerised water at the point of distribution, collection or consumption.
- Ensure that treated water is safely stored in line with SANS safety standards.
- Ensure constant availability of piped water in residential and rural areas via water tankers and JoJo tanks.
- Areas with no piped water must receive safe water on a daily basis to increase hygienic conditions and minimise the risk of the COVID-19 virus spreading between humans.
- Minimise and eliminate sanitation risk in areas with inadequate sanitation or bucket toilets through the provision of emergency stocks for vulnerable households.

### **4. The role of Water and Sanitation**

To prevent a COVID-19 disaster, the Department of Water and Sanitation must set up a clear direction of what must be done, who has to do what and how they will implement their disaster plan. The Department and municipalities must take full responsibility for protecting water resources and the constant delivery of safe water to the people of South Africa.

### **5. Contingency plan by the DA**

The DA proposes the following contingency plan for the Department of Water and Sanitation, municipalities and other state departments.

#### **5.1 Water**

- Ensure the safety of municipal and health services officials delivering adequate water and sanitation services to vulnerable communities on the front line.
- Provision of gloves, masks and alcohol-based cleaners to all municipal and health service officials.
- The DWS and water authorities must ensure that water resources are protected, managed and maintained, and produce clean, safe drinking water.

- Secure safe piped water to residents receiving piped water.
- Daily delivery of clean and safe drinking water to communities not receiving piped water.
- Install JoJo tanks in communities without functioning and effective reticulation networks in order to allow them to maintain safe hygienic conditions.
- Install standpipes in rural areas, clinics, taxi and bus pick up and dropping points in all urban areas.
- If water is not readily available, the community must be supplied with hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Rollout of boreholes in rural communities without functioning reticulation networks.

## **5.2 Sanitation**

- Distribution of portable potty toilets for all vulnerable shack dwellers e.g. the elderly.
- Immediate eradication of bucket toilets from areas with high rates of such types of toilets.
- Distribution of government-funded toilet-sanitising sprays.
- Distribution of government funded gloves.
- Rollout of necessary products and materials by utilising Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) contract and seasonal workers.

## **6. Communication**

It is important to ensuring that all people within South Africa are made aware of the strategies that have been put in place to either mitigate or recover from a disaster situation. Once decisions are made, procedural statements must be created, and South Africans must be informed. During day-to-day operations, risks can pop up. In preventing the COVID-19 virus from spreading, it is important to know how to identify potential risks before they escalate. This will help with developing realistic and effective strategies for dealing with the risks and ways to communicate them with communities.

### **It is important to communicate the following to South Africans:**

- Frequent and proper hand hygiene is one of the most important measures that can be used to prevent infection with the COVID-19 virus.
- Safe management of drinking water and sanitation services will prevent the COVID-19 virus from spreading.
- Currently, there is no evidence about the survival of the COVID-19 virus in drinking-water or sewerage.

Pamphlets and posters to be plastered to walls of open public spaces with relevant contact and awareness information.

Plans to be updated daily.

Communications to be updated weekly.

## International Relations and Cooperation

### Executive summary

*The DA supports closing borders; providing automatic visa extensions for non-nationals that find themselves within our borders; a website and app that updates details of border posts that are closed; mandatory testing and/or self-isolation of travellers from high and medium-risk countries; restricting non-essential travel, also for government and government officials; allowing for the issuing of e-visas; improving intra-departmental communication.*

### Introduction

President Ramaphosa announced on 15 March 2020 that South Africa was in a state of disaster due to the COVID-19 virus that entered the country, with several confirmed cases having been reported. This required that many unprecedented measures would immediately be put into place and further measures could still be enforced whilst existing measures may become more austere in the future.

Some of these measures have a direct influence on the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and would therefore have a direct impact on the resources of DIRCO.

It must be noted that, currently, DIRCO is subject to a power struggle between its CFO and DG from which material governance and management risks have emerged. The portfolio committee has even gone as far as to suggest that they are concerned about the consequences at DIRCO should they push too hard, to the extent that it may collapse the Department because of weakness in the internal structure and internal controls. This raises the question: how prepared is the Department for this potential crisis in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak?

It is also important to note that China and South Africa have enjoyed a close relationship and that since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, a lot of discussion has taken place. The ambassador of China in South Africa has built a high profile with the media and made frequent briefings to the public. South Africa was able to undertake two evacuations. This has been helpful to South Africa and no doubt there has probably been some benefit to China too. Surprisingly, the Chinese ambassador to South Africa, following a sharp spike in his public profile, has recently had his diplomatic assignment as ambassador recalled by the Chinese Government.

### Points pertaining to DIRCO from the President's briefing (15<sup>th</sup> March 2020)

#### Definitions:

- **High-risk areas:** EU; US; UK; China; Iran and South Korea
- **Medium risk:** Hong Kong and Singapore
- **Foreign nationals:** a person who is not a naturalised citizen of the country in which they live
- **Nationals requiring visas:** the definition for the purposes of this report refers to tourists or people from other countries that require visas to visit or work in SA. In instances where they are from a high-risk area and do not require a visa, it is assumed that they will not be allowed on the aeroplane in the country from which the flight originates.

1. As of 18/3/2020 all nationals requiring visas from high-risk areas will be banned from entering South Africa. All visas that have been issued for entering SA will be revoked. It is understood that people that have entered South Africa already within the last few weeks (since mid-February) need to report for COVID-19 nasal swab testing. If they cannot show any attempt to cooperate, their visa can be revoked.

2. Travellers from medium-risk Countries will have to undergo high-intensity screening upon arrival in South Africa. The President, in a recent address to the nation, said that as of Friday (27 March 2020) at 00:01, any non-South African citizen would be turned back from entering South Africa and all South African citizens and/or residents returning from high-risk countries would be placed in 14-day quarantine.
3. People leaving South Africa are discouraged from traveling to any high-risk areas and are warned that upon return they will be subjected to self-quarantine measures as well as voluntary testing and will equally be subjected to high-intensity screening. SA can also not be held responsible for a stranded citizen who wishes to return to a country where borders have been closed. The consequences of a reality as described above, will be borne by the citizen. The risks and responsibility rests with the citizen.
4. South African citizens are warned that with the global trend of this virus being unpredictable, borders and ports may be closed at any time. The extent of influence that DIRCO wields is limited in view of the magnitude of such scenarios which may unfold and is requested that proactive preparations are made whilst the communication channels with the global community are still open. In high-risk countries, there have been incidents of internal relationships showing signs of instability and unpredictability.
5. Non-essential government travel for all spheres of government outside of the Republic has been prohibited.
6. All non-essential domestic travel particularly by air, rail, train and bus has also been prohibited.
7. Government will issue travel alerts referring to specific cities, countries and regions as and when such verified information becomes available.
8. Any foreign national that has visited a high-risk area in the last 20 days will be denied a visa.
9. Missions abroad will remain open until further notice.

### **Nationals visas being revoked**

This is a fair step. At this stage, we need to ensure that we do not exacerbate the problem. The safest way to do this, is to stop non-citizens from entering the country. The only other way we could have done this was through forward planning in which case we could have used the surrounding airport hotel facilities as quarantine holding facilities. However, this puts our own citizens at risk and the cost/benefit ratio might not translate to envisioned rewards but rather result in a punitive social setting. The country has therefore acted in a prudent manner here.

The President has stated that people whom have landed in mid-February will have to present themselves for voluntary testing. South Africa is weak on enforcement and it is unclear how this intervention is going to be monitored with a view to determining the efficacy and manage the performance of implementation. It is critical that we have a penalty system for people that do not abide by this request.

The President needs to make it clear:

1. The minimum date of entry in which testing is required.
2. Give a timeframe to be tested (our suggestion is within 72 hours, in the event where individuals are asymptomatic).
3. Prescribe a reasonable penalty for not being or not attempting to be tested which is commensurate with the intensity of the risks associated non-compliance.

The DA also believes that to counterbalance the revoking of visas, the President should ensure an automatic extension of visas for 120 days for anyone that has had their visa issued this year or within the last six months.

### **Travellers from medium-risk countries will undergo high intensity testing**

The DA is in support of these actions and would also add that any passenger showing any signs of symptoms would be subjected to that same queue. Where a positive test is found, the traveller could be liable for the costs of those tests. From time to time the list of countries would change according to the travel advisory of the DIRCO list.

The DA shares the view that a mandatory 14-day quarantine period is a necessary intervention to mitigate against factors which threaten to rapidly accelerate the infection rate beyond capability of the health system and infrastructure specifications. Although the President has mentioned that travellers that have been here since the 9th of March will be confined to their hotels for a 14-day hotel quarantine period, we remain concerned on the enforcement capacity of this. We would like to extend a clarion call to the tourism, military, health and police sectors to co-ordinate all resources to ensure the peaceful co-existence of all South Africans in these volatile and uncertain times.

### **Travel abroad**

Travelling abroad has been discouraged by the President to high-risk areas. At this stage missions abroad remain open. This cannot be guaranteed. The host country can also change their mind on banning flights out or closing their borders. SA citizens therefore carry the burden for travelling to high-risk areas during this time and on return are subjected to high-intensity testing and self-quarantine. The DA believes that the testing should be undertaken by an independent institution at unannounced times over the 14 days. A quarantine cell phone application should be developed and downloaded as a check box for quarantine principles to tick off every day to determine whether they are complying with the rules and regulations.

We would issue a TV and radio alert every morning as to which country's ports domestically and internationally are closed and which have re-opened, as well as which are safe, and which are at risk of closing soon. We would have an information management system which would be maintained with an integrated dedicated website with a mechanism that ensures real-time updates 24/7 for this purpose.

### **Non-essential travel (government and citizens)**

It is agreed that at this time non-essential travelling by government and citizens internationally and nationally is cancelled and discouraged. This includes the chartering of buses. The DA supports this call. The DA will further suggest that the Gautrain should close the airport stop for now.

Any foreign nationals that have visited a high-risk area in the last 20 days will have their visa revoked.

The DA agrees with this provided that the person will have a fair opportunity to apply after the state of disaster is lifted and not be penalised in any way. We must ensure that this is only used as a tool to protect citizens from COVID-19 and not for any other motive.

### **Missions of DIRCO in all countries will remain open**

At this stage all missions will remain open. However, at the height of the quarantine in China, DIRCO closed its missions in China. This therefore means that these decisions could still be taken. From previous experience in China we know that this is probably when citizens need DIRCO the most. The DA urges the minister to ensure that in the event of this occurrence, there is certainty of an eService that could either whatsapp an eVisa and have an emergency centre at DIRCO that can handle crisis calls for advice and consular services from all over the world 24/7.

We need to ensure the safety of our staff abroad. We need to make sure that we are as concerned about our staff as we are about our citizens. If our staff are not protected, we cannot protect our citizens. Simple basic hygiene safety such as masks, gloves and sanitiser must be procured for the next two months and sent to missions based on a priority basis according to the trends.

### **DIRCO video Joint Operations Centre (JOC)**

A morning briefing between the branches and the ambassadors of the countries could be a strategic idea for strengthening information management and diplomatic ties with the global community. The safest way would be over video conference call. Sharing of drugs that have been working, daily figures, innovations etc. If the DA were in charge the DA minister would give a briefing to the committee for the benefit of the other parties to share through WhatsApp on a consistent basis.

### **DIRCO Management Committee**

The DA would assemble a DIRCO management team to meet daily in the morning to brief the DA minister on the branches to help them understand what is happening on the outside. What are the gains, where are the drains? Are we fulfilling our constitutional mandate of consular services across the globe? Is there a need to close a mission? Do we need to brief the President on anything? Does the information from the JOC assist the team?

### **Safety net**

The DA portfolio committee of DIRCO will be briefed on advising citizens abroad as to what they can do and what the current situation is. We will be able to offer support services where available. To date, we have already handled many queries both through DA Abroad and our own portfolio and continue to do so. As the situation progresses it will be important that we become more organised to ensure that we are not duplicating efforts and that we are being productive and supportive in assisting those that approach us. This team would also be the team that would be approaching DIRCO and missions abroad or embassies locally to try and assist individuals with specific issues that may arise.

### **Conclusion**

Routine is one of the best forms of control. If a person of power sticks to a routine it shows that they are in control and keeps people around them calm too. It is important for a minister to have a series of meetings that are productive but that also create the routine. The above suggested meetings do just this. By not only being productive in receiving and giving information, but by also filling almost an

entire morning with routine, the DA has suggested a control measure that creates the impression that DIRCO is sailing a stable ship.

As stated before, DIRCO is not in its best condition and the DA has had it on the ropes in the past. However, we must act responsibly now, and we must act in the best interest of the Country. The political climate between the officials, the ANC committee and the ministry is probably the weakest it has been since the inception of democracy in 1994. The DIRCO budget hardly funds the broad, bulging and unmanageable footprint of our international footprint currently. In fact, it is fair to say that COVID-19 could not have come at a more trying time in terms of our economy, exacerbated by SAA and load-shedding.

The above proposals work on the assumption that we have no further budget and that we are merely trying to just keep the lights on and see ourselves through this emergency. All we can do is join hands together and work together for the common good of the people of South Africa.

In a time like this, citizens need to know that their government cares and that they are in control. Through constant communication and having this plan, we can show our citizens that we are with them and that we care. Even if the plan changes on a consistent basis as we tread the unknown, we need to work towards a common purpose. That purpose is to limit the amount of injury, death and disruption to the Country, at the least amount of cost, so that when this catastrophe is finally over, we still remain.

## Justice and Correctional Services

### **Executive summary**

*It is not a simple matter to postpone or suspend court appearances and close our courts, as certain rights remain in effect even under a State of Emergency (should such be declared). At the same time, our courts are highly unsanitary spaces and court staff, magistrates, prosecutors, witnesses, accused and others are also at high risk of infection – this will necessitate strict precautionary measures that are detailed below but include frequent sanitising, setting up video links to postpone cases where possible, conducting court cases in which children or elderly persons are involved in isolated court rooms, and conducting thorough screening at all points of entry.*

*Remand detainees are also at risk of becoming infected whilst being transported in over-crowded prison transport to court, and then while at court waiting to appear, carrying the infection back to the closed prison environment where prisoners are at high risk for infection. Urgent measures have to be put in place to screen remand detainees returning from court and isolate those who are symptomatic general prison population. Prisons should urgently implement strict hygiene practices and equip inmates with the means to wash and sanitise their hands and surroundings.*

### **The courts**

While courts are particularly vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19, and the conditions in courts are not ideal for containing the spread of the virus, it is a difficult situation to deal with, since certain rights are entrenched in the Constitution, and would appear to be non-derogable, also in terms of the Constitution.

While the President has proclaimed a State of Disaster, which is akin to, but less serious and far-reaching than, a State of Emergency, parallels can be drawn from a State of Emergency and procedures and processes legislated for in such instances.

Section 37 of the Constitution deals with a State of Emergency and comes into play when “the life of the nation is threatened by war, invasion, general insurrection, disorder, natural disaster or other public emergency; and the declaration is necessary to restore peace and order.”

There are, however, other sections of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights that have application in the Criminal Justice system, whether in the courts, or Correctional Services, that also come into play, and must be considered. For ease of reference, these are reproduced here.

### **32. Access to information**

1. *Everyone has the right of access to:*
  - a. *any information held by the state; and*
  - b. *any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights.*
2. *National legislation must be enacted to give effect to this right, and may provide for reasonable measures to alleviate the administrative and financial burden on the state.*

### **33. Just administrative action**

1. *Everyone has the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.*

2. *Everyone whose rights have been adversely affected by administrative action has the right to be given written reasons.*
3. *National legislation must be enacted to give effect to these rights, and must:*
  - a. *provide for the review of administrative action by a court or, where appropriate, an independent and impartial tribunal;*
  - b. *impose a duty on the state to give effect to the rights in subsections (1) and (2); and*
  - c. *promote an efficient administration.*

#### **34. Access to courts**

*Everyone has the right to have any dispute that can be resolved by the application of law decided in a fair public hearing before a court or, where appropriate, another independent and impartial tribunal or forum.*

#### **35. Arrested, detained and accused persons**

1. *Everyone who is arrested for allegedly committing an offence has the right:*
  - a. *to remain silent;*
  - b. *to be informed promptly:*
    - i. *of the right to remain silent; and*
    - ii. *of the consequences of not remaining silent;*
  - c. *not to be compelled to make any confession or admission that could be used in evidence against that person;*
  - d. *to be brought before a court as soon as reasonably possible, but not later than:*
    - i. *48 hours after the arrest; or*
    - ii. *the end of the first court day after the expiry of the 48 hours, if the 48 hours expire outside ordinary court hours or on a day which is not an ordinary court day;*
  - e. *at the first court appearance after being arrested, to be charged or to be informed of the reason for the detention to continue, or to be released; and*
  - f. *to be released from detention if the interests of justice permit, subject to reasonable conditions.*
2. *Everyone who is detained, including every sentenced prisoner, has the right:*
  - a. *to be informed promptly of the reason for being detained;*
  - b. *to choose, and to consult with, a legal practitioner, and to be informed of this right promptly;*
  - c. *to have a legal practitioner assigned to the detained person by the state and at state expense, if substantial injustice would otherwise result, and to be informed of this right promptly;*
  - d. *to challenge the lawfulness of the detention in person before a court and, if the detention is unlawful, to be released;*
  - e. *to conditions of detention that are consistent with human dignity, including at least exercise and the provision, at state expense, of adequate accommodation, nutrition, reading material and medical treatment; and*
  - f. *to communicate with, and be visited by, that person's:*
    - i. *spouse or partner;*
    - ii. *next of kin;*
    - iii. *chosen religious counsellor; and*
    - iv. *chosen medical practitioner.*
3. *Every accused person has a right to a fair trial, which includes the right:*

- a. to be informed of the charge with sufficient detail to answer it;
  - b. to have adequate time and facilities to prepare a defence;
  - c. to a public trial before an ordinary court;
  - d. to have their trial begin and conclude without unreasonable delay;
  - e. to be present when being tried;
  - f. to choose, and be represented by, a legal practitioner, and to be informed of this right promptly;
  - g. to have a legal practitioner assigned to the accused person by the state and at state expense, if substantial injustice would otherwise result, and to be informed of this right promptly;
  - h. to be presumed innocent, to remain silent, and not to testify during the proceedings;
  - i. to adduce and challenge evidence;
  - j. not to be compelled to give self-incriminating evidence;
  - k. to be tried in a language that the accused person understands or, if that is not practicable, to have the proceedings interpreted in that language;
  - l. not to be convicted for an act or omission that was not an offence under either national or international law at the time it was committed or omitted;
  - m. not to be tried for an offence in respect of an act or omission for which that person has previously been either acquitted or convicted;
  - n. to the benefit of the least severe of the prescribed punishments if the prescribed punishment for the offence has been changed between the time that the offence was committed and the time of sentencing; and
  - o. of appeal to, or review by, a higher court.
4. Whenever this section requires information to be given to a person, that information must be given in a language that the person understands.
5. Evidence obtained in a manner that violates any right in the Bill of Rights must be excluded if the admission of that evidence would render the trial unfair or otherwise be detrimental to the administration of justice.

### **36. Limitation of rights**

1. The rights in the Bill of Rights may be limited only in terms of law of general application to the extent that the limitation is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom, taking into account all relevant factors, including:
- a. the nature of the right;
  - b. the importance of the purpose of the limitation;
  - c. the nature and extent of the limitation;
  - d. the relation between the limitation and its purpose; and
  - e. less restrictive means to achieve the purpose.
2. Except as provided in subsection (1) or in any other provision of the Constitution, no law may limit any right entrenched in the Bill of Rights.

### **37. States of emergency**

1. A state of emergency may be declared only in terms of an Act of Parliament, and only when:
- a. the life of the nation is threatened by war, invasion, general insurrection, disorder, natural disaster or other public emergency; and
  - b. the declaration is necessary to restore peace and order.

2. A declaration of a state of emergency, and any legislation enacted or other action taken in consequence of that declaration, may be effective only:
- a. prospectively; and
  - b. for no more than 21 days from the date of the declaration, unless the National Assembly resolves to extend the declaration. The Assembly may extend a declaration of a state of emergency for no more than three months at a time. The first extension of the state of emergency must be by a resolution adopted with a supporting vote of a majority of the members of the Assembly. Any subsequent extension must be by a resolution adopted with a supporting vote of at least 60 per cent of the members of the Assembly. A resolution in terms of this paragraph may be adopted only following a public debate in the Assembly.
3. Any competent court may decide on the validity of:
- a. a declaration of a state of emergency;
  - b. any extension of a declaration of a state of emergency; or
  - c. any legislation enacted, or other action taken, in consequence of a declaration of a state of emergency.
4. Any legislation enacted in consequence of a declaration of a state of emergency may derogate from the Bill of Rights only to the extent that:
- a. the derogation is strictly required by the emergency; and
  - b. the legislation:
    - i. is consistent with the Republic's obligations under international law applicable to states of emergency;
    - ii. conforms to subsection (5); and
    - iii. is published in the national Government Gazette as soon as reasonably possible after being enacted.
5. No Act of Parliament that authorises a declaration of a state of emergency, and no legislation enacted or other action taken in consequence of a declaration, may permit or authorise:
- a. indemnifying the state, or any person, in respect of any unlawful act;
  - b. any derogation from this section; or
  - c. any derogation from a section mentioned in column 1 of the Table of Non-Derogable Rights, to the extent indicated opposite that section in column 3 of the Table.

*Table of Non-Derogable Rights*

<b>1</b> <b>Section</b> <b>Number</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Section</b> <b>Title</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Extent to which the</b> <b>right is protected</b>
9	Equality	With respect to unfair discrimination solely on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or social origin, sex religion or language
10	Human Dignity	Entirely

11	<i>Life</i>	<i>Entirely</i>
12	<i>Freedom and Security of the person</i>	<i>With respect to subsections (1)(d) and (e) and (2)(c).</i>
13	<i>Slavery, servitude and forced labour</i>	<i>With respect to slavery and servitude</i>
28	<i>Children</i>	<i>With respect to: - subsection (1)(d) and (e); - the rights in subparagraphs (i) and (ii) of subsection (1)(g); and - subsection 1(i) in respect of children of 15 years and younger</i>
35	<i>Arrested, detained and accused persons</i>	<i>With respect to: - subsections (1)(a), (b) and (c) and (2)(d); - the rights in paragraphs (a) to (o) of subsection (3), excluding paragraph (d) - subsection (4); and - subsection (5) with respect to the exclusion of evidence if the admission of that evidence would render the trial unfair.</i>

6. Whenever anyone is detained without trial in consequence of a derogation of rights resulting from a declaration of a state of emergency, the following conditions must be observed:

a. An adult family member or friend of the detainee must be contacted as soon as reasonably possible, and informed that the person has been detained.

- b. A notice must be published in the national Government Gazette within five days of the person being detained, stating the detainee's name and place of detention and referring to the emergency measure in terms of which that person has been detained.*
- c. The detainee must be allowed to choose, and be visited at any reasonable time by, a medical practitioner.*
- d. The detainee must be allowed to choose, and be visited at any reasonable time by, a legal representative.*
- e. A court must review the detention as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than 10 days after the date the person was detained, and the court must release the detainee unless it is necessary to continue the detention to restore peace and order.*
- f. A detainee who is not released in terms of a review under paragraph (e), or who is not released in terms of a review under this paragraph, may apply to a court for a further review of the detention at any time after 10 days have passed since the previous review, and the court must release the detainee unless it is still necessary to continue the detention to restore peace and order.*
- g. The detainee must be allowed to appear in person before any court considering the detention, to be represented by a legal practitioner at those hearings, and to make representations against continued detention.*
- h. The state must present written reasons to the court to justify the continued detention of the detainee, and must give a copy of those reasons to the detainee at least two days before the court reviews the detention.*
- 7. If a court releases a detainee, that person may not be detained again on the same grounds unless the state first shows a court good cause for re-detaining that person.*
- 8. Subsections (6) and (7) do not apply to persons who are not South African citizens and who are detained in consequence of an international armed conflict. Instead, the state must comply with the standards binding on the Republic under international humanitarian law in respect of the detention of such persons.*

As can be seen from the above, it is not a simple matter to interfere with, nor suspend the workings of the courts.

Simultaneously, courts are not hygienic, the public ablution facilities are in a disastrous state, and the courts themselves are closed environments, where all players are necessarily in close proximity to one another for long periods of time. The potential for infecting others, or being infected by others, is huge.

There are many players in the court environment, ranging from prosecutors, magistrates, court orderlies, interpreters, court administrative staff to accused persons, and the personnel of Correctional Services as well as members of the public who come to court to support accused persons, or to give evidence in trials.

While courts are required, constitutionally, to perform their functions in public, and not bar the public unless under strictly prescribed circumstances, it might be wise to try to limit the number of people who are in court or who need to be there.

Accused persons and remand detainees will be at the highest end of the risk scale, being incarcerated in overcrowded, closed spaces with no opportunity to self-isolate, and being transported in overcrowded trucks in very close proximity to other detainees, with poor air circulation and upon arrival be crowded into holding cells, where the potential for infecting or becoming infected is enormous.

While a video link up for postponement of cases has been piloted, it is certainly not up and running to the point where it can replace court appearances. This system should be used as far as is possible, but the suspension of court cases is not a viable option, and would be a self-defeating exercise, since each detainee or accused person would have to be brought before a competent court in order to effect the required postponement, an exercise that would simply replicate that which is trying to be avoided.

It will be therefore be essential to require all of the categories of persons mentioned to sanitise their hands as often as is possible and the means to do so must be provided as a matter of urgency, at least at all entrances to courts, on each floor and in all toilets.

Screening of the type being undertaken at entry points to South Africa should be considered for Correctional Centres as a matter of urgency, and also at the entrances to court buildings, or at the very least those with the highest volume of traffic, with those people demonstrating possible infections being denied entry.

Cases enrolled for further investigation or for provisional dates should be postponed for longer periods at a time to reduce the need to transport detainees and inmates and reduce the exposure time in courts. The court time not utilized for these purposes should be used to optimize trials, so that trials run from start to finish as far as possible, limiting the number of court appearances necessary.

The same precautions should be put in place for circuit courts, where the travelling involved presents an increased risk factor.

Cases involving children or the elderly should, where possible, be conducted in as isolated a courtroom as possible, in order to minimize their exposure to members of the public. The rotation of all court personnel should be minimized as far as is possible.

### **The Department of Correctional Services (DCS)**

Correctional Centres – while noting the announcement of the President that all visits to Correctional Centres are suspended for 30 days, additional steps to prevent transfer to the prison population should be considered.

Screening and testing of DCS on-site officials should be put in place on a regular basis, daily if possible. The danger of the transfer of the virus to the inmate population via the exposure of remand detainees when appearing in court will also be significant. Therefore, special measures should be put in place to minimise this risk by ensuring that appearances be limited to those remand detainees of whom the trial will commence/continue on appearance and by ensuring that proper disinfection of court rooms and holding cells at courts be undertaken regularly. Where possible, remand detainees should be housed in facilities that are totally separate from sentenced inmates.

Daily screening of inmates and remand detainees returning from courts should be undertaken, with those exhibiting any symptoms of infection being isolated immediately and as far as possible.

Sentenced inmates should be moved, to be housed, on a temporary basis, in facilities that are less crowded, even if not in close proximity to their families.

Maximum security facilities that are not fully utilised should be considered for use for isolation of infected inmates, in order that they may be held in single cell isolation for the requisite 14-day period.

Large-scale use of temporary personnel for administration and medical purposes should be considered, and the budget of DCS should be prioritised in order to facilitate for such emergencies. All leave of a non-essential nature of DCS officials should be cancelled forthwith, and every possible official should be on duty. Inmates who are capable could also be used to implement the screening process.

Inmates and remand detainees must be supplied with the necessary material to properly wash their hands frequently and should all be required to sanitise their hands when returning from physical exercise, work and the dining and other communal areas. The materials to do so will have to be supplied, and as a matter of urgency. Many inmates and remand detainees do not have access to hot water. Physical contact should be discouraged at all times.

Those remand detainees who have been granted bail but are unable to pay it should be returned to a competent court for bail to be reconsidered as a matter of urgency, in order that the number of detainees who qualify for bail but are being detained due to a lack of funds can possibly be reduced.

Remand detainees and inmates who are already ill or suffer from compromised immune systems should, where possible, be segregated from the general prison population in order to minimise the risks.

DCS officials should be screened when reporting for duty. They work in an enclosed space, with high risks of infection. They then leave the facility and could potentially pose a high risk of infecting communities where they live. They should be encouraged to sanitise their hands at regular intervals, and to avoid close contact with inmates as far as is possible.

DCS facilities should be disinfected regularly, as should the court holding cells, police holding cells and the vehicles used to transport remand detainees to and from courts.

Communication of the unusually high risk of cross infection between remand detainees, inmates and DCS officials and the public should be undertaken relentlessly, so that each person is made acutely aware of the risks for themselves as well as the communities they live in, or from which their visitors emanate.

All of the above will have budgetary implications, and budgets of the Department of Justice as well as Correctional Services should be reprioritised on an urgent basis to make the required funds available to meet the most basic requirements to try and limit infections.

## Labour

### **Executive summary**

*The impact of COVID-19 on employment statistics in South Africa is likely to be devastating. The DA proposes that measures must be put in place to assist small and medium enterprises to stay afloat and avoid job shedding or bankruptcy. Measures include a temporary reprieve for companies not to contribute to the UIF and the Workmen's Compensation Fund. What must also be considered is for the UIF to utilise its reserves to offer relief, over the course of the next fourteen months, to workers who lose their jobs.*

### **MEMORANDUM: COVID-19 AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR**

#### **Introduction**

The spread of COVID-19 will have a devastating impact on employment in South Africa.

The latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) data (for the 4th quarter of 2019) revealed an official unemployment rate of 29.1% and an expanded unemployment rate of 36.9%.

Some 10.3 million South Africans of working age do not have a job. Even before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, largescale retrenchments were on the cards and economists had warned that there were going to be significant job losses in 2020 due – inter alia – to weak economic growth, a likely ratings downgrade by Moody's and the effect of loadshedding. Economist Chris Harmse predicted that 200 000 jobs would be lost in the formal sector and that the unemployment rate would increase by almost 2percentage points by the end of 2020 to an overall official unemployment rate of 31%. Furthermore, Massmart, Educor, ArcelorMittal, Telkom, SA Breweries, Tongaat and Samancor had all announced plans to retrench workers, affecting nearly 10 000 employees and their families, before President Cyril Ramaphosa announced sweeping state measures to address the spread the coronavirus on 15 March.

The upshot of all this is that thousands *more* jobs will be shed due to COVID-19, especially in the small, medium and micro-enterprise sector.

#### **Department of Employment and Labour (DEL): readiness**

The Department of Employment and Labour has developed a COVID-19 guideline. It was developed based on traditional infection prevention and occupational hygiene practices. It focuses on the need for employers to implement the following:

- Engineering controls – isolating employees from work-related hazards, installing high-efficiency air filters, increasing ventilation rates in the work environment and installing physical barriers such as face shields to provide ventilation.
- Administrative controls – these controls require action by the employee and employer. Examples of administrative controls include: encouraging sick workers to stay at home; minimizing contact among workers, clients and customers by replacing face-to-face meetings with virtual communications e.g. conference calls, Skype, etc.; minimising the number of workers on site at any given time e.g. rotation or shift work; discontinuing nonessential local and international travel; regularly check travel advice from the Department of Health at: [www.health.gov.za](http://www.health.gov.za); developing emergency communications plans, including a task team for

answering workers' concerns and internet-based communications, if feasible, providing workers with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviours (e.g. cough etiquette and care of PPE); training workers who need to use protective clothing and equipment on how to put it on, use/wear it and take it off correctly, including in the context of their current and potential duties.

- Safe Work Practices – these include procedures for safe and proper work used to reduce the duration, frequency, or intensity of exposure to a hazard. Employers must provide resources and a work environment that promotes personal hygiene. For example, no-touch refuse bins, hand soap, alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 70 percent alcohol, disinfectants, and disposable towels for workers to clean their hands and their work surfaces, regular hand washing or using of alcohol-based hand rubs, and display handwashing signs in restrooms.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – while engineering and administrative controls are considered more effective in minimizing exposure to SARS-CoV-2, PPE may also be needed to prevent certain exposures. Examples of PPE include gloves, goggles, face shields, face masks, gowns, aprons, coats, overalls, hair and shoe covers and respiratory protection, when appropriate. Employers should check the NICD website regularly for updates about recommended PPE. Employers and workers have been enjoined to use this planning guidance to help identify risk levels in workplace settings and to determine any appropriate control measures to implement. The Department of Employment and Labour has for now kept its labour centres opened. The Department has put in place a Crisis Management Team which will be guided by the Department's business continuity plan. The Crisis Management Team meets every day at 09h00 to assess the situation and put measures in place to promote health and safety of staff and its clients. The queues at labour centres and services provided will be managed to ensure that 100 people do not gather in one place at the same time. Furthermore, at a meeting of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) held on 17 March, the Minister of Employment and Labour Minister Thulas Nxesi announced the following readiness measures and plans to assist employers and employees.
- A period of reprieve for companies not to contribute to the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). The UIF's Temporary Employer/ Employee Relief Scheme will be used to ensure that workers are not laid off.
- In instances where companies decide to close for a short period as a precautionary measure, the short-term UIF benefit will kick in.
- If a company contemplates a short-term shutdown, they are required to inform the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). Officials from DEL will visit these companies to provide assistance with the processing of the claims.
- In instances where an employee has to be self-quarantined for 14 days, such a leave will be recognized as a special leave which will be fully paid on condition that the reason for the quarantine meets the requirements and that the employee can apply for UIF benefits
- In the event that an employee is required to be quarantined for longer than 14 days as a result of having travelled or been in contact with an infected person, such a leave will be recognized as special leave and that employee will be eligible to apply for unemployment insurance benefits. Furthermore, the Minister urged employers to conduct a health and safety risk assessment in consultation with workers, whilst ensuring that measures were put in place to

ensure a healthy workplace for the workers as required by law. Yesterday, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, which falls under DEL, issued a directive to the following effect:

- All contact processes involving face-to-face interaction with users are hereby postponed.
- All matters set down between 18 March 2020 up to and including 14 April 2020 are hereby postponed.
- No persons will be allowed to walk into any of the CCMA offices for the purposes of enquiries and serving/delivering any processes or documents. The CCMA will only accept referrals received through other non-contact methods such as email or fax, as contained in rule 7 of the CCMA Rules. Users are encouraged to use these alternative methods of serving.
- All discretionary functions as provided in section 115 of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA) such as conferences, training etc. are postponed, unless otherwise advised.

### **Gaps and issues for attention**

The Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) does not have the capacity to monitor or enforce workplace compliance with its COVID-19 guideline.

The undertaking to draw on UIF funds will have to be monitored closely. Furthermore, separate from the UIF, there exists under the auspices of DEL an institution called the Compensation Fund. The Compensation Fund provides compensation to employees who are injured or contract diseases through the course of their employment. The Fund is governed by the Compensation for Occupation Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) which determines how (and by whom) the fund is administered and the conditions for eligibility for compensation. Presumably workers who contract COVID-19 on duty will have some claim to monies from the Compensation Fund. The problem is that the Compensation Fund is an absolute basket case and is currently mired in difficulties. One of the reasons for this (apart from years and years of chronic mismanagement) is that the Fund introduced a new online claims system in October last year that does not work. As a result, there is a huge backlog of submissions and payments of claims. It is unlikely that either the UIF or the Compensation Fund would be able to cope with even a slight rise in the number of claims. Already there is huge pressure on both Funds and many of the claims are taking months to be paid out. People can't wait months to receive their salaries and the employers can't afford it. Many companies cannot afford to pay their staff anything beyond their sick leave. It is likely that there will be many more liquidations and retrenchments over the next few months. This crisis will bring the Department of Employment and Labour to its knees.

### **Proposal**

The DA has already proposed that the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) should pause payments for UIF and Worker's Compensation Fund by small businesses for four months, without affecting workers' cover under these funds.

An additional proposal is worth considering. The UIF currently has about R160 billion in reserves. This could be used as part of a stimulus package to provide emergency relief to those workers who lose their jobs because of COVID-19. Economist Mike Schussler has suggested drawing on these funds to pay workers who lose their jobs 50% of their salary for 14 months, which would give them stability. He rightly points out that the UIF has a mandate to assist South African workers when they are unable

to work and these funds should not be used to bail out businesses that have fallen on hard times, especially if their challenges have little to do with the coronavirus.

## Mineral Resources and Energy

### Executive summary

*While the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy has taken every possible precaution by providing guidelines for health and safety practices in the mining sector, very little plans have been put in place to mitigate the economic impact the virus will have on the sector, and this needs to be dealt with urgently.*

*To ensure a stable energy supply, government must put in place emergency procurement orders of diesel for peaking plants. Schedule 2 of the Electricity Regulation Act must be rescinded and restored to the version approved by Parliament when the act was first passed (i.e. permitting exemptions for generation for own use). Eskom and the minister of Energy should be instructed to enter into short term (six-month?) Power Purchase Agreements with those Independent Power Producers who can supply more than the Maximum Export Capacity limitation in their existing PPAs.*

### Coronavirus in the mining sector

#### Background

Mining contributes approximately 7% to South Africa's GDP (down from 21% in 1980). Around 18.5% of South African exports go to China, with mining commodities making up the majority – at around 86% – of total trade with the Asian country. Iron ore, manganese and chrome account for two thirds of South Africa's total exports to China by value. With China's growth expected to slow as a result of COVID-19, the demand for minerals is also expected to take a knock, potentially affecting commodity prices and costing the industry millions. South Africa is the world's top producer of platinum and a leading supplier of gold, diamonds and other minerals. However, mining has shed about 300,000 jobs in recent years. Currently, South African mining operations employ approximately 425 000 in formal employment, with thousand more involved in informal/illegal mining. This excludes the upstream and downstream "secondary" employment by the sector.

A report by Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies, a Pretoria-based independent economic research institution, predicts that "if the downturn in China persists or deepens, South Africa's mining industry in particular will suffer significant losses". This will be exacerbated if the mining sector suffers large numbers of infections and is required to shutdown/slow production.

#### Planning for and mitigating the impact on the mining sector

In early February 2020 the Minerals Council of South Africa provided members with material on mitigation measures against the virus. The materials were based on communication from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), materials provided by the WHO, and were targeted at employees and translated into Afrikaans, isiZulu and Sesotho.

The Council acknowledged that the mining sector has special circumstances that could make it vulnerable to transmission of infectious diseases such as COVID-19:

- Employees congregate in areas of work, and travel in close proximity.
- As mining often involves physical activity, there could be a high degree of exposure to the virus simply through contact with people, machinery and equipment.
- Mining executives and officials who visit offshore operations are at risk of contracting the virus in other countries and bringing the infection into South African mines.

- On the other hand, the mining industry has extensive and existing systems in place to deal with communicable diseases, the monitoring of health and provision of healthcare.
- The Minerals Council adopted a nine-point action plan that involves the following.
- Employee education and health promotion.
- Health worker readiness.
- Ensuring access to consumables (masks, sanitisers, testing kits) and hardware such as temperature monitors.
- Proactive influenza vaccination, which the industry undertakes and promotes every year.
- Understanding the potential impact on employees who may be immunocompromised.
- Case definition and management.
- Isolation of employees should the need arise.
- Travel advice.
- Reporting and communication.

On 17 March, the Department of Mineral Resources released its 10-point plan for addressing the coronavirus. This is essentially an updated version of the Minerals Council plan:

- Educate employees on the virus, symptoms and prevention.
- Follow guidelines from the NICD, educate health workers on how to manage COVID-19. Consider alternate arrangements for supply of chronic medication to reduce crowds.
- Ensure that all health workers have access to protective clothing, gloves, masks, cleaning materials and pharmaceutical agents.
- Vaccinate employees for seasonal influenza.
- All employees are encouraged to know their status, get onto ARVs if positive for HIV and keep a high viral load.
- Manage suspected cases or contacts of cases using guidelines from the NICD.
- Liaise with the NICD on procedure to be followed for suspected and confirmed cases.
- Only essential travel to areas with COVID-19 should be undertaken.
- All suspected and confirmed cases in the mining industry should be reported to the NICD.
- Monitor and stay aware of the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak.

### **Gap analysis and DA call for action**

While the Department and the Minerals Council (and, it is to be hoped, the mines themselves) have put in place adequate and appropriate preventative measures for the formal mining sector, we believe that more could be done to identify and manage infected or potentially infected individuals.

This should involve:

- A questionnaire to identify those who have been in contact with someone who could have COVID-19 or who have attended an event where the virus could have circulated, and a centralised database of “at-risk” personnel (both through immune-compromisation and travel/exposure to infected persons).
- Rapid identification of potentially infected personnel, through a screening process as they arrive at work, using temperature scanning and visual monitoring.
- Immediate isolation and rapid medical care on site for identified individuals.

- Medical evacuation if necessary.

Of concern is the fact that COVID-19 test kits are, at present, available in limited quantities at certain public sector healthcare facilities. A rapid deployment of such test kits to mine healthcare practitioners would go a long way to early detection and containment.

There is no real way of managing the situation in the illegal mining sector. This burden would fall on public healthcare.

No real plans have been presented to mitigate the economic impact of the virus on the sector.

This is something that should be considered as a matter of urgency.

### **Concerning the provision of Energy**

Government must put in place emergency procurement orders of diesel for peaking plants.

Schedule 2 of the Electricity Regulation Act must be rescinded, and restored to the version approved by Parliament when the act was first passed (i.e. permitting exemptions for generation for own use).

Original Text of Schedule 2:

#### *SCHEDULE 2*

##### *EXEMPTION FROM OBLIGATION TO APPLY FOR AND HOLD A LICENCE*

- 1. Any generation plant constructed and operated for demonstration purposes only and not connected to an interconnected power supply*
- 2. Any generation plant constructed and operated for own use*
- 3. Non-grid connected supply of electricity except for commercial use*

Eskom and the Minister of Energy should be instructed to enter into short term (six-month?) Power Purchase Agreements with those Independent Power Producers who can supply more than the Maximum Export Capacity limitation in their existing PPAs.

## Police

### Executive summary

*The DA supports the establishment of strategically co-ordinated intelligence gathering structures; social isolation as a strategy of containment, stringently regulated enforcement of SAPS strategic deployment policy; all approved leave of SAPS officials can be rescinded retrospectively and ensure adequate presence of SAPS officials; contingency plans for protection of critical infrastructure and strengthening SAPS and community liaison.*

- National joint operations must be established to coordinate intelligence and security issues.
- Crime intelligence must work to identify opportunistic criminal elements taking advantage of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Section 13 (7) of SAPS Act – allows for cordon and containment measures in the interest of public safety (not sure whether this is feasible re: COVID-19).
- SAPS must urgently issue a directive for deployment at all SASSA grant pay stations and all social relief programmes in operation to regulate the volumes of individuals congregating.
- SAPS deployment plan must be established and serve as the blueprint for the deployment of SAPS officials to designated quarantine hospitals, the plan must allow for structured flexibility given the volatile societal context in respect of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- All leave must be revoked and suspended in line with the December period protocol and HR policies to ensure adequate numbers of boots on the ground.
- Review the human capital requirements at police stations and prioritize the deployment of reservists to police stations in order to perform administrative and logistical duties such as certifying documents. This will free up SAPS officers to be on the front lines.
- Urgent upgrading of hygiene standards and practices at all police stations where good overall hygiene is evident.
- SAPS must announce a plan for the protection of critical infrastructure in the event that social unrest escalates.
- Initiative and drive a SAPS officers awareness campaign of to inform on the services available to the public as well as ensure a heightened level of police visibility on the ground and cultivate a heightened degree of trust between community and SAPS officials.

There is a complete absence of police presence to guide and enforce the social distancing and limitation of travel that is required. I understand that even a traditionally liberal country like Italy has a strong police presence on the streets.

Some action that could be undertaken:

- All leave for SAPS members should be cancelled.
- Police to do foot patrols in informal settlements, townships and suburbs to guide children, especially once schools close, to keep off the streets and not to play together.
- Large numbers of people, especially children, congregate at shopping malls, especially during school holidays, to simply socialise. Police to be deployed to shopping malls to send children and persons not doing business home.
- Police to do foot patrols at bus/taxi ranks and other densely populated areas servicing the public transport system to ensure distribution of protective gear inclusive of masks (where available) and/or bandanas to cover one's mouth and nose in attempts to contain the spread of the virus. The SAPS need to ensure that these are worn, and that hand sanitiser is used.

## Public Enterprises

### Executive summary

*The DA proposes immediately selling off defunct State-Owned Entities (SOEs) such as SAA and SA Express to free up funds to aid disaster relief. At other SOEs, now is the ideal opportunity to break state monopoly and bring private equity partners on board – e.g. immediately opening up the energy market to full competition and allow municipalities to buy electricity from Independent Power Producers (IPPs). The Appropriations Bill needs to be amended in order to stop bailouts to bankrupt SOEs and divert funds to relief efforts. Engineers employed by SOEs such as Transnet (currently entirely under-utilised) need to be roped in to seek solutions to use rail and transport systems for conveying goods such as food and medical supplies and equipment.*

An analysis of how COVID-19 has and will affect companies under the aegis of the Portfolio Committee for Public Enterprises and their readiness to deal with the crisis, identifying where possible gaps to be addressed.

### **Preamble – at a high level**

A recent study<sup>6</sup> by McKinsey & Co. highlights the initiatives being taken by companies. These include:

- workforce protection,
- supply chain stabilization,
- customer engagement,
- financial stress testing, and
- nerve centre integration.

While these are necessary, they may not be sufficient. Accordingly, the study highlights the following which may be missing:

- *Having an intellectual understanding isn't the same as internalizing the reality*

Exponential case-count growth is hard to internalize unless you have experienced it before. Managers who haven't experienced this or been through a "tabletop" simulation are finding it difficult to respond correctly. In particular, escalation mechanisms may be understood in theory, but companies are finding them hard to execute in reality, as the facts on the ground don't always conform to what it says in the manual. Crisis case studies are replete with examples of managers who chose not to escalate, creating worse issues for their institutions.

- *Employee safety is paramount, but mechanisms are ineffective*

Policy making at many companies is scattershot, especially at those that haven't yet seen the coronavirus directly. Many, such as professional-services and tech companies, lean very conservative: their protection mechanisms often add to a perception of safety without actually keeping people safer. For instance, temperature checks may not be the most effective form of screening, given that the virus may transmit asymptotically. Asking employees to stay at home if they are unwell may do more to reduce transmissibility. Such policies are more effective if employees receive compensation protection – and insulation from other consequences too.

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<sup>6</sup> COVID-19 Implications for Businesses, March 2020, Executive Briefing. McKinsey & Co.

Some companies aren't thinking through the second-order effects of their policies. For example, a ban on travel without a concomitant work-from-home policy can make the office very crowded, leading to higher risk of transmission. Others are adopting company-wide policies without thinking through the needs of each location and each employee segment.

- *Optimism about the return of demand is dangerous*

Being optimistic about demand recovery is a real problem, especially for companies with working-capital or liquidity shortages and those veering toward bankruptcy. Troubled organizations are more likely to believe in a faster recovery – or a shallower downturn. Facing up to the possibility of a deeper, more protracted downturn is essential, since the options available now, before a recession sets in, may be more palatable than those available later. For example, divestments to provide needed cash can be completed at a higher price today than in a few weeks or months.

- *Assumptions across the enterprise are misaligned*

Some companies are pursuing their coronavirus responses strictly within organizational silos (for example, the procurement team is driving supply-chain efforts, sales and marketing teams are working on customer communications, and so on). But these teams have different assumptions and tend to get highly tactical, going deep in their own particular patch of weeds rather than thinking about what other parts of the company are doing – or about what might come next.

- *The near term is essential, but don't lose focus on the longer term (which might be worse)*

Immediate and effective response is, of course, vital. We think that companies are by and large pursuing the right set of responses. But on many of these work streams, the longer-term dimensions are even more critical. Recession may set in. The disruption of the current outbreak is shifting industry structures. Credit markets may seize up, in spite of stimulus. Supply-chain resilience will be at a premium. It may sound impossible for management teams that are already working 18-hour days, but too few are dedicating the needed time and effort to responses focused on the longer term.

More specifically, with regards to the entities under the aegis of the Portfolio Committee for Public Enterprises, (namely Eskom, SAA, Transnet, SA Express, Denel, Alexkor and Safcol) it is suggested that a number of *scenarios* be drawn up.

Certain decisions need to be accelerated, (for example immediately opening up the energy market to full competition and allowing municipalities to purchase energy directly from IPPs); lessons learnt from other affected countries; education and sanitization opportunities expanded beyond the workforce be effected and that identification and associated provision be made for the retention and protection of critical skills.

Across the board, *scenarios* need to be developed with particular regard to the steps/opportunities provided under each for:

- Rollout of maintenance in the event of lockdown
  - Provision made for unscheduled purchases to be made now
  - Identification of critical/less critical plants/units and planning for staff, materials and other requirements
  - Provision for example at Saldanha (Transnet) for diversion of manganese as opposed to iron ore which for logistical reasons cannot be diverted

- Identification of key strategic focus and concomitantly of entities/ business units that can be shut down/mothballed/sold off
  - SA Express
  - SAA
  - Alexkor
- The rollout of mobile medical facilities/hospitals
  - Utilization in Transnet, for example of the c5000 engineers that are currently on the books but massively under utilized
- Designated identification of rail carriages/ aircraft for logistical transportation of COVID-19 affected people to secure facilities and co-ordination with the Department of Health for this purpose
- Provision of sanitization materials and information in excess quantities to the workforce for dissemination to family members – in this was provision can reach half a million people directly and indirectly
- Provision of incentives for non-critical workers to take their leave now
- Identification/rotation and monitoring/testing of critical resources/teams
  - Pilots
  - Train drivers
  - Boiler makers
  - Key engineering skills
  - Key executive skills
  - Etc
- Integrated financial impact mitigation with credit providers etc
- Development of innovative solutions by Transnet for people mobility
  - One of the biggest effects of COVID-19 in China has been its impact on the mobility sector and no doubt much can be learnt from their experience

All the above and more will require specific elaboration, discussion and potential integration into existing plans and at this stage is merely an indicator of what could be done. The exact rollout of measures will depend critically on the scenarios for each company and the lessons learned from other countries which have traversed this road already.

Additionally, there will be opportunities for Private Equity Funds to step in. Credit investors will be even more focused on conservative business plans and resilient financials for the underlying companies. Equity sponsors may stretch a little for growth, but they will struggle to borrow against the promise of it. Creditors will likely take a binary view: acquisitions are financeable, at a price yet to be negotiated, or they are simply not financeable at all. So, private investors may have to put more equity into acquisitions, perhaps accept lower, less leveraged returns and even pay a premium to re-rated lower valuation levels for the most resilient assets. But there will be great deals to be struck.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Euromoney, 12 March 2020, Private Equity could be a big winner in a COVID-19 bear market

The DA would seek to facilitate these and other initiatives, reduce red tape in a time of considerable crisis and seek to enable the unlocking the provision of private capital to step into the areas that have hitherto been monopolized by government. Negotiating the terms of investment in a time of national crisis will be an interesting exercise, to say the least.

- We should introduce amendments to the Appropriations Bill to curtail bailouts to SOEs and to divert funds to act against the virus;

Any assistance offered to SAA and SA Express must equally be given to private airlines.

## Public Service and Administration

### Executive summary

*One of the biggest concerns in the public service sector in the next few weeks is planned protest action by the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) should the government announce a 0% wage increase on 1 April. The DA supports cutting the public sector wage bill – focussing on managers and administrators. Planned protest action by Nehawu will place thousands of civil servants at risk of contracting the coronavirus and cause instability at a time when the country can least afford it. The DA will therefore seek to approach the courts should planned protest action by Nehawu go ahead.*

### COVID-19 gap analysis for Public Service and Administration

There are two major gaps in this portfolio: planned protest action in response to efforts to reduce the bloated wage bill, and the government's ability to keep public servants safe from COVID-19.

The most urgent gap that exists in the Department of Public Service (DPSA) is the government's ongoing efforts to cut the public wage bill. This issue will come to a head within the next two to four weeks. Public servants receive their salaries on the 14<sup>th</sup> of every month. Government needs to formally announce by 1 April if they have decided to withdraw from the 2018 collective bargaining agreement. If implemented, the existing agreement will grant public servants increases of 5.4%, 4.9% and 4.4%, depending on their salary level. This follows a decade during which public service wages grew by 66% after inflation, creating 29 000 millionaire managers in the process.

At this stage, it appears as if it is still possible that the government may announce a 0% wage increase on 1 April. However, it also appears that the negotiations have been handled very poorly and incompetently thus far by the government, with very little buy-in from other stakeholders. The unilateral announcement of the wage bill cut just prior to delivery of the budget in February has generated substantial anger and signalled bad faith to unions. In response, unions like Nehawu have announced that they will go ahead with a planned protest on 30 March against the wage bill cuts. This is despite the ban on public gatherings as a result of COVID-19.

The DA supports efforts to cut the wage bill, but we want the cuts to focus on managers and administrators, not on frontline service delivery workers who fall under Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD). The threats by Nehawu to mobilize 20 000 workers for a public protest present a massive threat to public health and must be prevented at all costs. The DA has already said that we will go to court if necessary, to protect the public and workers from deranged unions.

The other major gap that exists relates to the measures taken by the DPSA to safeguard public servants, particularly medical workers and associated staff, from COVID-19. We need to keep a close eye on this, as it is very likely that the government lacks the capacity to carry out quarantine and other operations in a way that keeps public servants safe. We must be proactive in monitoring and addressing any governance failures that may expose our frontline service delivery heroes to additional risk.

## Social Development

### Executive summary

*The Department must utilise TV and radio to communicate to its client base, as many do not have access to social media. Mass communication should go out informing grant recipients of dates for collection of grants and the fact that the elderly will be assisted in the first two days to protect them from possible infection. Unemployed social work graduates should be roped in to assist with educating beneficiaries about hygiene at pay points, while the banking sector should be engaged to draw up plans to provide more social grant beneficiaries with access to banking services.*

*Civil society and the private sector should reach out where they can and ensure that vulnerable persons in poor communities have sufficient water supply to adhere to basic hygiene guidelines to avoid infection.*

*To avoid the looming foster care grants crisis, timelines must be reviewed, and unemployed social work graduates roped in to urgently check in on the home situation of the children affected.*

### How COVID-19 has affected the portfolio of Social Development

The National Disaster declared by the President of South Africa landed on the already compromised social development environment. This is due to the ever-escalating levels of poverty, given the high unemployment, recent drought, the increase in VAT and the slow economic growth. This has rendered many households including child-headed households dependent on government's social services package of grants, social relief of distress, school nutrition, and many more statutory essential services.

The escalation of substance abuse, gender-based violence and the devastating shortage of social service practitioners, such as social workers, have deepened the levels of vulnerability and as such dependence on government. It is for this reason that we believe the response to COVID-19 has to take all the above into consideration, including a whole of society approach if the fight against the virus is to be won.

The lack of official strategy by the Department, except for public undertakings delivered during press conferences does little to inspire confidence that the Department is ready and capacitated to respond effectively and appropriately. What follows is our understanding of the state of "readiness", the gaps we have identified and some proposals to plug those gaps.

#### 1. Issue – shortage of water

Adhering to basic COVID-19 protocols like washing hands is a challenge for poor communities who, for example, live in informal and rural settlements. Whilst this **water** challenge and the relevant minister has pronounced on this matter, the footprint of these services might not reach remote areas and render the elderly, the disabled and the children under the care of "gogos" at risk and vulnerable.

##### 1.1 Proposed intervention

A collaborative effort by government, private sector, civil society to donate and distribute water and sanitisers to targeted areas that were identified by Stats SA as the poorest districts/municipalities would go a long way to minimise the spread of the virus given the recently announced internal transmission.

## **2. Issue – mass communication to non-social media subscribers**

Whilst research estimates mobile phone ownership at 23 million, there are areas where people don't own a mobile phone and as such are not reachable by social media. It is this category of people that fall within the lower socio-economic level of society and fall within the Department of Social Development's client base. Attempts to get official information from the department from the Acting DG and the DDG for social services had not yielded any results at the time of compiling this document. Also, the Department's website is under construction and as such no official information can be sourced. This is a concern as the virus is spreading at an alarming rate and internal transmission has begun.

### **2.1 Proposed intervention**

The Department needs to implement a fully-fledged crisis communication, which requires community media such as:

- community radio stations, and
- community newspapers to communicate the urgent and important information about COVID-19.

This would include information about:

- what COVID-19 is,
- how to prevent COVID-19,
- what the symptoms are, and
- who to report to.

All the above information should be on all community media in all the 11 official languages. This will ensure that people keep to the social distancing and they don't converge at community centres to prevent the spread of the virus

The Department has complained in the past about beneficiaries changing mobile phone numbers (those that have mobile phones) frequently thus rendering their database ineffective.

## **3. Issue – closure of ECDs**

The DG has written a memo to all provinces, instructing them to close all Early Childhood Development facilities (ECDs) to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the ECD sector. While this is commendable, from a social development food security perspective, some children get their nutritional meals from these centres via government-subsidised meals. It is therefore a concern that no information accompanied the instruction on closure of ECDs, with regards to ensuring that children still have access to food during this extended holiday.

South Africa has a high number of unregistered ECDs not forgetting those places of care with less than six children, which is not classified as an ECD and therefore does not need to adhere to the rules and regulations.

### **3.1 Proposed intervention**

Due to tight budgets, the Department must partner with NGOs active in this sector, the private sector across the industry spectrum to provide meals. NGOs such as Meals on Wheels as well as community soup kitchens must be capacitated to deliver food to identified households.

## **4. Issue – illegal closure of SASSA offices and pay-outs**

Eleven SASSA offices in the Western Cape and one in Gauteng closed their doors on 17 March 2020 without consultation with the SASSA CEO. When the DA Member of the portfolio committee, Hon. Alexandra Abrahams, telephonically contacted the CEO of SASSA, Ms Totsie Memela, on 17 March 2020, it was discovered that the local office management took the decision to close their doors as officials were in fear for themselves and clients as they did not have protective gear such as masks, gloves, hand sanitisers. They incorrectly used standard supply chain management procurement processes instead of emergency protocol processes as deemed necessary in the current National State of Disaster. An undertaking was given by the CEO, that all SASSA offices will remain open as they deliver an essential service to vulnerable communities. SASSA staff will also be equipped with the relevant protection gear to carry out their core functions.

Our enquiry to the Department about a comprehensive emergency plan, yielded the following whatsapp from SASSA's Executive on Grant Payments, Ms Diane Dunkerley:

*"Good evening. Grant payments will take place as from 1 April. We are working with SAPO to see how we will manage the numbers at post offices. SAPO will also put on additional tellers to get people serve as quickly as possible. They will be allowed access into post offices in controlled numbers to limit the risk. We are also starting with a concerted communication programme to request beneficiaries not to converge in large numbers; to allow the elderly to access their grants in the first 2 days of the payment cycle and to remind people to take responsibility for protecting themselves. Will update as more specifics emerge. Kind regards."*

This information was sent to me because I asked for an official line on the readiness of SASSA. As the grant payment date approaches, mass communication should already be going out to prepare beneficiaries, communities, banks and merchants who pay grants.

#### **4.1 Proposed intervention**

The Department of Social Development should use the funds announced by the minister (R96 million) to contract unemployed social work graduates, screen them and deploy them to especially rural pay points where over 200 000 beneficiaries will converge to receive their grants. The Social Work graduates should be teamed with medical practitioners to screen beneficiaries and hand out sanitisers to mitigate against the spread of the virus. As the situation stands, panic is being created by the lack of information about such a massive project.

While we welcome Minister Zulu's call for a staggered payment date approach, we would recommend the following: that no grant recipient be turned away even if it is not their date to collect their money; sanitiser on entry and exit points; in bathrooms; at desk stations. That the SASSA officials are in full protective gear – masks and gloves as it is of utmost importance to protect the front-line officials as well as the clients.

The NDS and SASSA should also view this crisis as an opportunity to engage the banking sector to drive a campaign for SASSA grant recipients to explore the option of opening a banking account. This would avoid putting themselves and family at risk by needing to wait in queues or visit supermarkets to withdraw SASSA money, as opposed to drawing it any ATM. The banking sector can also look at temporary suspending ATM charges as an incentive. This initiative would yield positive future returns for all parties concerned.

#### **5. Issue – Foster Care grant crisis**

The Department presented timelines for the programme to meet the North Gauteng High Court Judgement deadline of 26 November 2020. This presentation did not provide any indication of how

COVID-19 will (if at all) affect the deadline. An undertaking on behalf of provinces was made that the deadline will be met, with the exception of some provinces (Limpopo, Free State and Western Cape) who raised issues about lack of cooperation by the Judiciary in some of the areas in their provinces. The suspension of services due to the National State of Disaster will have a massive impact on this important and critical deadline.

### **5.1 Proposed intervention**

From previous reports, the current foster care backlog numbers were much higher than currently. The Department now faces COVID-19 which will find social workers even more overloaded and under strain. In order to ensure that thousands of FCG recipients are not left destitute, the following must take place: a review of the timelines will be critical, considering both the safety of the children and their families whilst ensuring that the court order is adhered to. The Dept. should tap into the over 5000 social work graduates who should be screened and deployed into these areas.

The non-performing magistrates and/or DOJ must become a respondent in this high court case. DOJCD is now the department hampering progress. Both DOJCD and Department of Social Development must take responsibility and be held accountable for their shortcomings with regard to the foster care crisis.

## **6. What would the DA do if we were in government?**

At the heart of any fighting chance to beat a virus as vicious as COVID-19, is a swift, real-time, clear and targeted communication strategy. As the DA National Department of Social Development, we would use the Presidential Federal Declaration of the National State of Disaster to roll out a provincial communication strategy via video conferencing, consolidating all inputs from the provinces. These inputs would be action oriented and informed by available financial and human resources. Voluntary support from councillors and activists would also be sought.

The targeted communication strategy would also include stigmatization and fear awareness as well hotline services for child protection services and youth at risk. Where necessary, mediators and psychosocial services will be deployed to restore calm.

Public-Private-Civil Society-Partnerships would play a key role in ensuring that capacity on the ground is strengthened.

Front line officials would be screened and kitted with protective gear to ensure services to the poor do not come to a halt but are careful, guided and streamlined. The constant feature of all programmes would be communication at all levels and a feedback loop to ensure the leadership is provided with facts on an ongoing basis to strengthen their public announcements.

As the country is in a National State of Disaster, the humanitarian arm of the social relief of distress will be put into action. This will ensure that all vulnerable groups: ECD and youth without food as well as seniors who can no longer receive their daily meal at senior clubs, will not go hungry. NGOs, schools, and government in possession of details of these vulnerable citizens who can no longer access essential services such as nutrition as a direct result of COVID-19, will, in a targeted approach, would not be left behind.

To combat COVID-19 and the possible aftermath and long to medium effects it will have on our most vulnerable South Africans, it will most certainly take a whole of society approach. Departmental entities such as SASSA will need to hold their ground with officials as well as ensuring their safety and protection; the National Development Agency will need to extend the scope of their mandate and offer support to all NGOs in the sector; the NDSD must work transparently with their provincial

departments counterparts who in turn must work with their municipalities. If there was ever a time to master inter-governmental relations, across portfolios and the three spheres of government, it is now!

We strongly believe that it is possible to arrest the spread of COVID-19, provided all government and its partners' hands are on deck. While government cannot do this work alone, its political and executive will, will determine how successful South Africa will be in beating the virus.

## State Security

### Executive summary

*Agents (both of the State Security Agency as well as Crime Intelligence) working nationally and internationally on the ground will have no particular protection against the virus, other than what the communities in which they are stationed have at their disposal. Gathering intelligence may become difficult as more and more citizens in countries across the world self-isolate and quarantine.*

*Care should be taken that, with the world's attentions focussed on defeating COVID-19, criminal elements at home and abroad, as well as terrorist organisations, do not make use of the opportunity to further their reach.*

### 1. Impact on the portfolio

- The job of the State Security Agency (SSA), Military Intelligence, and Crime Intelligence (CI) is to first and foremost keep South Africans safe from internal and external threats to this country's security.
- At the SSA an irregular process was undertaken to amalgamate the internal and external services into one, and urgent legislation to reverse this process and once again establish separate internal and external services based on benchmarking with other democracies and the necessary specialised focus will now be massively delayed by the COVID-19.
- Portfolio meetings are cancelled for the foreseeable future, and as no documents are ever circulated, nothing will be done or achieved until Parliament reconvenes.
- With ISIS now having moved halfway down Mozambique, this is a serious concern, as is the possibility that other terrorist organisations may make a move while the world focusses on the virus.

### 2. State of readiness

- SSA: Agents working on the ground nationally and internationally will have no particular protection against the virus and will experience the same level of illness/deaths as the rest of the country/world.
- As all other nations are focussed on the virus internally, one can only surmise that that the need for intelligence in terms of foreign or domestic interference in our country will drop.
- There has been, in any case, a lack of proper focus on foreign intelligence, but again the focus will surely be solely on the virus until SA has turned the corner – in approximately 1 ½ months.
- CI: again, the Crime intelligence agents will suffer the same levels of infection as the rest of the population but collecting intelligence may be hampered as more and more civilians self-quarantine.
- Criminals will no doubt see this as an opportunity or loot i.e. deserted malls. Their usual syndicate revenue streams – foreign tourists, cash in transit trucks, ATMs, hijackings, truck looting etc. – may well slow or dry up altogether, and the focus may turn to increased on-line scams, or as has already been done, scams to individual houses as criminals claim to be from the Government to check temperatures, recall bank notes and the like – anything to gain access in order to rob.

## Trade and Industry

### **Executive summary**

*South Africa's manufacturing sector, which has been in steady decline, could face a sustained period of disruption as the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic unravels over the next few months. As industry players take precautions to protect the health of their employees, production capacity will slow down affecting supply chains and the ability of consumers to access essential goods and services. The trade and industry sector needs continuous access to capital markets and a package of economic support mechanisms to ensure uninterrupted productivity and job retention.*

There can be no doubt that COVID-19 is going to have an incredible impact on businesses in South Africa, especially those in the retail, manufacturing, agri-processing, credit markets and tourism related industries.

This will be due to a massive downturn in local and international demand and the inability of the workforce to produce goods due to health and safety reasons.

With all of these industries requiring intense amounts of capital to be continually rotated through their business, the majority of which is borrowed (if not all, including credit for banks from the SARB), this could lead to large-scale defaults, a cash flow crisis and eventual closure.

It is therefore incredibly important that the DTI looks to use all available resources to stabilise the industrial, agricultural and banking sectors through a number of targeted means.

### **There are a number of ways that this can be done:**

1. A suspension or subsidy, where possible on all state administered prices affecting manufacturing, imports and exports for Rail, port, toll fees, water and electricity costs. This should also apply to all rents that are paid to the state where businesses find themselves on state-owned land, in state-owned property, industrial parks, SEZ's and IDZ's.
2. Development Finance Institutions like the IDC, DBSA and NEF to make available 0% bridging finance to small and medium sized enterprises.
3. An i12 tax allowance type of scheme which is a non-cash incentive on businesses to retain their workers and or invest in machinery to improve production efficiency to lower costs. There should be no investment financial amount to this as is budget neutral.
4. Regulatory entities such as the NRCS, SABS and SANAS must not in any way be a blockage to business and should do everything possible to fast track all applications especially to those items which are low risk and for import and export as well as those items critical in the fight against COVID-19.
5. The Credit Amendment Act should not be operationalised to allow for low-income South African's to access much needed credit to survive day to day. This will loosen credit providers

risk which has increased since the Act was signed and already had a major impact on credit provision to low-income people.

6. There should be no load shedding during shopping hours or the weekend to allow for consumers to shop when needed especially for food and medicines.
7. Load-shedding in industrial nodes should be suspended as far as possible to allow for those manufacturing critical equipment in the fight against COVID-19 to continue without disruption.
8. A moratorium on BEE to allow for state funding and incentives to go where needed and not only to majority black owned businesses as defined by Government. This is because the BEE Codes classify entities based on their annual turnover: Entities with a turnover of less than ZAR10 million are regarded as an exempted micro enterprise (EME). Entities whose turnover is more than R10 million, but less than R50 million are regarded as qualifying small enterprises (QSE). This means that any funding based on BEE qualifying criteria or ownership which is what all incentives are measured on, will miss over 93% of all companies which have a turnover of less than R10 million per year or not 51% black owned.
9. Zero-rated duty on alcohol for sanitiser production in SA as there is no local stock as well as zero-duty on medical devices and equipment like masks and gloves used in the fight against COVID-19. This must be done by Minister Patel through ITAC.

## Transport

### **Executive summary**

*Increased safety measures must be adopted on public transport, including controlling the number of passengers per train carriage, bus, or taxi, and mandatory covering of the mouth and nose with scarves while travelling on public transport.*

The government is already implementing these strategies, but they need to ensure they are applied nation-wide.

- Every taxi/bus/train to be sanitised with sprays at taxi rank/terminus/final station immediately once all passengers have debussed. This is not impossible and should be handled by municipalities. DA municipalities can take the lead.
- Every bus/taxi should insist passengers cover their mouths with bandanas or scarfs as face masks may be short on supply and hand sanitiser can be provided to all passengers before boarding the taxi. Each taxi can be marked daily after sanitisers have been issued to it to control multiple issues and a black-market sale of the items.
- Health officials or PRASA staff may be put on trains to ensure hand sanitiser is used by passengers.
- The number of passengers needs to be reduced in taxis and trains to allow for distance between passengers. Marshals should be monitoring this as taxis enter and leave the taxi rank.

## Women, Youth and People with Disabilities

### Executive summary

*The spread of COVID-19 will have implications on how government performs its functions. In the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, the roll-out of the Sanitary Dignity Programme to schools will be disrupted, leaving hundreds of thousands of girls without proper sanitary protection. There will be an increase in the vulnerability of gender-based violence survivors, and care must be taken to keep hotlines operational and be responsive to reports of gender-based violence. The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) board remains inquorate as board selection will be impacted by the closure of Parliament – the portfolio committee should take steps to address this in order to allow NYDA to function.*

- The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities is tasked with the role of ensuring increased economic and social participation of women, young people and persons with disabilities. In order to achieve this the Department is focused on ensuring mainstreaming of empowerment programs through government policies, programmes and processes.
- The Department is primarily focused on the development of policies and does not play an implementation role in society.
- The Department is also home to the Commission of Gender Equality (CGE) and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) which are service and implementation institutions respectively.
- The Department co-chairs the Interim Steering Committee on Gender-based Violence and Femicide.
- COVID-19 has been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation.
- Since the first case was detected in South Africa the numbers have continued to grow.
- The geographical spread of this virus has led to clear economic devastation across the world and what is clear is that South Africa will be one of many countries to be economically devastated by the spread of this virus.
- The spread of COVID-19 will have implications for how government performs its functions. Particularly the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.
- The roll-out of the Sanitary Dignity Programme to schools will be disrupted.
- Increase of vulnerability of Gender-based Violence (GBV) survivors who may not be able to seek help from the department.

If precautionary measures are not taken, the coronavirus will very likely impact the **National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)** in the following ways:

- The current programmes of the NYDA relating to skills development, training programs, Internships and Learnerships will be put to a halt.

- The delay in the planned NYDA board selection will likely impact the governance of the NYDA as they are currently inquorate and unable to take decisions.
- The National Youth Service Programme will most likely not be able to proceed as companies may not be taking new 'job-seekers'.

If precautionary measures are not taken, the coronavirus will very likely impact the **Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)** in the following ways:

- The outreach programs will be suspended due to the adoption of social distancing.
- Walk-ins at Legal Clinics, field work and consultation stakeholder engagement will be impacted.

If precautionary measures are not taken, the coronavirus will very likely affect **persons with disabilities** for the following reasons:

- Some persons with disabilities may be having other chronic conditions that make the illness more dangerous for them.
- In most cases, persons with disabilities cannot self-isolate like everyone else because they rely heavily on regular, hands-on help from other people to do every day self-care tasks. Practicing good hygiene like washing hands frequently can be very difficult due to physical impairment and environmental barriers.
- Persons with disabilities who are at nursing homes are also at high risk of contracting coronavirus since these homes have a significant number of people including caregivers. If caregivers have been exposed to someone who tested positive, they will then be asked to self-quarantine, thereby leaving the nursing homes understaffed.
- SASSA social grants pay points: people who receive a disability grant from SASSA are at high risk, given that SASSA pay-out points are normally congested.

#### **Department of Women, Youth and Person with Disabilities**

- Sanitary Dignity Programs must continue. All service providers must ensure that strict hygienic measures be put in place.
- The Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) Command Centre must put measures in place to ensure a call centre is available in emergencies. The increase of GBVF is a threat that must be measured, and mechanisms must be put in place to assist victims.
- Support to NPOs/NGOs working in the GBVF field must be actioned immediately. Resources will be a challenge especially for quick responses and interventions towards GBVF.
- Ensure various Departments remain gender sensitive while implementing interventions towards COVID-19.

#### **National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)**

- The NYDA must submit the government COVID-19 strategy by introducing public campaigns on how to keep safe during this outbreak.
- The NYDA must reach out to all small medium businesses funded by them to inform them of necessary precautions and 'the work from home policy'.
- Stipends for internships and learnerships must continue to support entry-level youth to work from home.
- The NYDA must write to Parliament to request assistance on its inquorate board so that Parliament can initiate interim decision-making structure.

- Increasing 4G broadband cellular network penetration. In remote areas, people may have smartphones, but the 4G signal was too weak to support online work.

### **Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)**

- Limit social interaction for outreach programs and stakeholder engagement. Increase using technology such as toll-free contact numbers, designing of apps.
- Coordinate education campaigns and information drives.
- Limit walk-ins at law clinics and move electronically where possible. Alternatively, ensure smaller group walk-ins.
- CGE must put together a safety plan for GBV victims.
- Focus on academic research for the next couple of weeks, stopping field research.
- Initiate research on impact COVID-19 has on GBVF and increase awareness on affects.

### **Persons with disabilities**

- The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities should roll out massive coronavirus awareness campaigns, including precautionary hygienic measures that must be taken by the caregivers at nursing homes and by other people who provide daily assistance to persons with disabilities. These campaigns must be conducted through such platforms as the media and social media.
- The Department should work closely with the departments of Social Development and Health to develop precautionary measures to prevent the transmission of coronavirus at SASSA social grants pay-out points.
- The Department should ensure that external visits to nursing homes remain prohibited in order to minimize the risk of coronavirus transmission.

### **Psycho-social care and support services**

The Department should also raise public awareness about the Department of Social Development's social service professionals who are able to give psycho-social care and support services to affected families and individuals (including persons with disabilities). According to the Department of Social Development, the services of these professionals include trauma counselling, integration and reunification of people who have been isolated or quarantined in relation to COVID-19, in order to mitigate their stigmatization.