



11 April 2020

Attn: His Excellency President MC Ramaphosa

President of the Republic of South Africa

Dear Mr President

RE: Letter of support from the Solidarity Movement

The Solidarity Movement would like to wish you strength and wisdom amidst the crisis posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is undoubtedly the most formidable challenge we as a nation have faced, especially the light of the dire health, economic and social consequences. That is why we support your repeated call for a social compact to address this serious challenge together as a nation.

Due to timely and drastic intervention by our government, South-Africa has been given a chance to emerge stronger – rather than falling by the wayside of history. Now we need to ensure that we, as a country, stay on the right track.

Solidarity understands the need for drastic intervention in the fight against COVID-19. South Africa is at unique risk due to the large number of our population who are immunocompromised – and drastic intervention measures to protect the lives of our vulnerable people are justified and necessary.

We fully agree with your view that the battle against the pandemic and its ghastly consequences will be long and hard. That is why we want to propose a comprehensive set of measures to you to ensure that the lockdown can be sustainable in order for us as South-African's to be victorious in this must-win battle.





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The point of departure of our proposed measures is that a sustainable economy is a crucial part of the campaign against the pandemic. We firmly believe that the only choice should not be *between* health and work; the choice should be *for* healthy work wherever possible.

That is why Solidarity wants to propose a comprehensive package of occupational health measures to enable and empower as many workers as possible to return to work, healthily and safely. The fight for all our people's livelihoods is just as important as the fight for their health and lives.

As a country we now need to take the right course to give reality to your vision of pursuing "a path that both saves lives and protects livelihoods".

Our priority should be to ensure that healthcare is available to the vulnerable members of our society. Ultimately, the fight against COVID-19 will be fought by our healthcare workers, and we need to ensure they have all the resources they need to win this fight. These resources can only be sustained by getting our economy back to life, without compromising on the health and safety of our populace.

South Africa is a country of workers – and the unfortunate reality of the economy grinding to a halt is that workers will bear the brunt. It is in this spirit that Solidarity proposes stringent conditions under which we can get most of South Africa back to work during the lockdown period. We need to do everything we can to enable as many as possible South African workers to once again earn his or her living – and to enable the workers to protect themselves, the vulnerable, the destitute and the alone in our society.

In these times, let us remember the words of Martin Luther King Jr:

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."





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We realise that the battle will not be over by the end of April, therefore our proposed occupational measures have been designed for the “new normal” after the lockdown.

If we are able to overcome this trying time together, we will be able to overcome all the other challenges facing our country together. We at Solidarity pledge our support to work together with the government to secure a bright future for everyone in this beautiful country.

Yours sincerely

Flip Buys

Chairperson: Solidarity Movement

We include the following package of documents:

- A) Memorandum to the President: The road to a new normal – saving lives and livelihoods
- B) Solidarity: Proposed code of good practice – measures to ensure healthy decent work during and after the Covid-19 lock down and pandemic.



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