



Media Release

15TH May 2020

SOLIDARITY FUND

The Solidarity Fund distributes food relief to more than 300 000 families across South Africa

Johannesburg, 15th May:// The Solidarity Fund this week reported that it had delivered food support to 300 000 families across nine provinces as part of its humanitarian relief efforts, ahead of its target of reaching 250 000 vulnerable households during the lockdown period.

Having reached this first milestone, the Solidarity Fund will now be piloting a number of more sustainable methods of relief. These include food vouchers and cash systems to reach those households that fall outside of the social grant net or who are still going to be experiencing severe food insecurity as a result of the continued economic disruption.

As part of its healthcare support intervention, the Fund reported that the R905m it approved for procurement of Personal Protective Equipment has secured nearly 80% of the surgical masks and 100% of the N95 masks required to meet the weekly demand for healthcare workers until at least the end of June.

In addition, the Fund has committed R250m to the National Health Laboratory Services to double their order of test kits, enabling them to undertake the mass testing the country needs to track the pandemic.

When the Solidarity Fund was formed in late March, South Africa faced a critical shortage of Personal Protective Equipment needed to protect the country's frontline healthcare workers. Adding to the complexity was that before the lockdown, 92% of the medical equipment in South Africa, including PPE, was imported and only 8% was locally produced.

The Fund has so far received R2.7bn in commitments, with donations of R2,16bn already deposited from 175,000 South Africans in their individual capacities and more than 1 500 corporates and foundations. South Africans donating a proportion of their salaries have thus far generated R16,4m in contributions – an incredible demonstration of generosity towards their fellow compatriots.

In the six weeks since the establishment of the Fund, the Solidarity Fund has become a fully-fledged operation, with a credible board, sub-committees, fund administration, as well as external and internal auditors in place. More than 90 full-time voluntary staff across a network of 21 companies and organisations are providing support services to the Fund, all on a pro bono basis, with no one earning fees or a salary from the Fund.

Solidarity Fund CEO, Nomkhita Nqweni said: **"By setting up solid institutional and governance frameworks, we have been able to demonstrate the necessary rigour and professionalism in how contributions to the Fund are deployed."**



Nqweni said the Fund would continue to work towards responding to the different phases of this pandemic. From a health perspective, this meant more targeted interventions to build testing capacity as well as tracking and tracing infections. From a humanitarian relief point of view, the Fund will be working with various civil society groups and women's groups to respond to the emerging scourge of gender-based violence.

With the easing of the lockdown, educational messages creating awareness of the importance of wearing masks, testing and social distancing as people gradually go back to their daily activities would also require the Fund's increased attention.

Nqweni concluded: **"Each one of our donors and our stakeholders can take comfort in the fact that ultimately, their contribution to the Solidarity Fund has helped bolster the resilience of our frontline. As our country faces one of its toughest challenges yet, the Solidarity Fund has represented a beacon of hope where all of us as South Africans have come together to lend a hand."**

ENDS

FOR MEDIA QUERIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

Viwe Tlaleane

Viwe.tlaleane@solidarityfund.co.za

Media@solidarityfund.co.za

066 301 6520

Julie Cunningham

Julie.Cunningham@fticonsulting.com

083 295 0526