



British  
High Commission  
Pretoria



## **UK Government donates R50m to South Africa's Solidarity Fund for projects supporting and promoting women**

**Johannesburg, 14 September 2020:** The Solidarity Fund today announced the receipt of a R50m grant from the government of the United Kingdom. The grant is aimed at extending the Solidarity Fund's ongoing efforts to counter the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa – focusing specifically on projects supporting and promoting women.

This contribution forms part of the UK's international COVID19 response and recovery efforts, and signals their support for the Solidarity Fund as an independent, South African run initiative. The sum earmarked for the Fund amounts to a £2.15m (R50m) donation that will be used to bolster high priority initiatives currently supported by the Fund. To date, the UK has committed £6.5m in support of South Africa's response to the pandemic.

Interim CEO of The Solidarity Fund, Nomkhita Nqweni said: "As South Africa enters the sixth month of lockdown, one thing has become clear – we are not in this alone. As the world struggles in unison with the global COVID-19 pandemic, many governments have looked beyond their borders to see how they can help others fight the battle. It's the South African concept of Ubuntu on a worldwide scale."

With Women's Month in SA having just passed, the British High Commission specifically expressed interest in using these funds to support the Fund's efforts in responding to Gender-Based Violence and women's economic empowerment and SMEs. As such, the funding will be deployed to support two existing Humanitarian Pillar projects, namely the second intervention in Gender-Based Violence support and Farming Input Vouchers, with each project receiving R25m.

Nigel Casey, British High Commissioner to South Africa said: "We're delighted to be able to contribute to the Solidarity Fund, a new and innovative initiative which combines public, private and individual commitment in tackling the impacts of this global crisis. We're particularly pleased to support the Fund's work to help women affected by persistently high rates of gender-based violence and to promote women's economic inclusion and empowerment along the long road to recovery."

- **Gender-Based Violence support**

One of the many, tragic consequences of the COVID-19 lockdown has been a reported upsurge in cases of gender-based violence. Lockdown restrictions have increased the already high demand for GBV-related services and have also made it more difficult for women and children to access critical information and support.

The Solidarity Fund can make a meaningful contribution to ensure approximately 360 existing local and community organisations that provide critical services in the GBV eco-system can continue to do

so for the thousands of women and children affected by GBV. With this grant, funding for the second intervention in Gender-Based Violence support will now increase from R50m to R75m.

- **Farming Input vouchers**

Subsistence and household farmers have been impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions, compromising their ability to continue their ongoing farming activities or preparing for the next farming cycle. These farmers, who are predominantly women, play a critical role in household food security. By supporting their ongoing ability to produce food, it would prevent these households from being pushed into a deeper poverty trap and provide direct access to food.

A farming input voucher for subsistence/household farmers has been deemed to be an appropriate short-term response to supporting these farmers. The total number of beneficiaries is estimated to be 47 000, across all 9 provinces. The UK government's donation will increase funding for the farming input voucher project to R100m, targeted at 66% women subsistence/household farmers in rural areas.

“Even though South Africa has come so far, the journey is far from over.” says Nomkhita Nqweni. “Donations such as these, and all the generous contributions from governments, business and individuals, enable us to keep the fight going and provide much needed assistance to those who need it most.”

To find out detailed information and reporting around donations received, projects and approvals, as well as the impact the Fund is having, visit [www.solidarityfund.co.za](http://www.solidarityfund.co.za) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

For more information on the UK in SouthAfrica please visit <https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-pretoria> and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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