



## MEDIA RELEASE

### SOLIDARITY FUND MARKS ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY AS SOUTH AFRICA PREPARES FOR THE MASS VACCINE ROLLOUT PROGRAMME | 25 MARCH 2021

**Johannesburg, 25 March 2021** – As South Africa prepares for the mass vaccine rollout programme, the Solidarity Fund marked its first anniversary of impactful interventions on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2021. The Fund was launched in 2020 at the onset of the pandemic, by President Ramaphosa, as a rapid response vehicle through which pooled contributions can be deployed to immediately fund impactful initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was given a clear mandate to be additive to the national health response, contribute to humanitarian relief efforts and mobilise South Africans to drive a united response to Covid-19.

To date, funds amounting to R3.22 billion have been pledged and received from the private sector, political parties, foundations, international partners and notably, a large number of individuals. R2.76 billion has been allocated across the Fund's three pillars of **Health**, **Humanitarian Relief** and **Behavioural Change**. R2.18 billion has been disbursed.

The Fund is launching a targeted fundraising effort in support of the national vaccine roll-out. Despite being more passive, donations continue to come in from a variety of donors, with donations received having grown by R146m in the last 6 months. This was largely attributed to the UK Donation of R81m. It is anticipated that the Fund will continue seeing approximately R1m monthly into the account, over and above the targeted fundraising drive in support of the National Vaccine Rollout Programme.

When the pandemic first began, the urgency of augmenting the National health system and getting it equipped to handle the influx of patients, required that the Fund's **Health Pillar** was a primary focus.

Over the last year, the Fund has created substantial impact in its response to the national effort.

1. **Strengthened the health system capacity to rapidly respond** to the pandemic and donated critically needed resources and equipment such as PPE, essential medical equipment, and ventilators.
2. **Strengthened testing capacity, access and coverage.**
3. **Supported local innovation and manufacturing** of CPAP ventilators through CSIR and SAVE-P

The benefits of all these actions will have a long-lasting impact in the health system. The Solidarity Fund has significantly bolstered a system that was already under pressure even before the pandemic.

As the initial phase of the crisis subsided, the Fund strengthened its Humanitarian and Behavioural Change initiatives to bolster the resources of those in need of food and Gender Based Violence relief, as well as promote long-term preventative behaviours.

The arrival of the COVID-19 vaccine on the global platform has shifted focus back to Health and the Fund has been working closely with the National Department of Health (NDoH) to ascertain where it can contribute to the programme.

The Fund's work on the Vaccination Programme began when it was approached by the NDoH to catalyse the country's entry into Covax with the upfront payment of R283m.

Following that, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, the Fund received a request from the Director General of Health to contribute **R50m** towards an implementation study on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, to be conducted by the South African Medical Research Council. In supporting this, the Fund joins other donors, including the NDoH, who have contributed to the overall budget of just over R300 million. Johnson & Johnson for their part are donating the vaccines, valued at R75m.

The Fund's contribution will not be used to fund the procurement of the vaccines or any of the research related costs of this project but, rather, to co-fund the operational requirements related to implementing and executing the vaccination of the frontline healthcare workers.

Recognising the need to mobilise support from a variety of stakeholders in order for the national vaccine roll out to be successful, the NDoH also made a request to a consortium of donors to fund technical assistance to the National and Provincial Health Departments and

related human resource capacitation for the implementation of an effective nationwide COVID-19 vaccination roll-out. The Solidarity Fund is currently in advanced discussions to contribute to this united effort.

In addition to the vaccine programme implementation, the Fund continues to prioritise Covid-19 preventative behaviour messaging and communication.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of March, the Fund launched its Easter messaging campaign focused on reminding South Africans about the preventative behaviours we should continue to follow at a time typically characterised by increased domestic travel, gatherings and spending time with family and friends. It launched using opinion editorials in national media titles and will add 60 community and commercial radio stations as of Wednesday 24th March, while social media will kick off towards the end of the launch week.

After this initial burst, and as we head into winter in early May, a broader campaign to reinforce behaviours will be in full effect across TV, radio, digital and activations and will include an even more focused door-to-door education campaign.

In addition to this campaign, and in line with the Fund's role as being additive to the National Covid Response, the Fund is providing R12m in support of the National Communication Partnership, an initiative spearheaded by GCIS and which includes representative organisations from business, civil society and social partners. The Funds will be used to augment the important work being done by community networks in the NCP and communication research to track and measure the effectiveness of communication campaigns.

The Fund will also be supporting the establishment of a citizen facing National Central Response and Call Centre to support the delivery system, public response and demand management.

"The last year has seen a lot of devastation," says Tandi Nzimande, CEO of the Solidarity Fund. "I am grateful that the Solidarity Fund has been able to be part of the solution. Every South African has a role to play to speed up the end of the pandemic so when we look back, we can be proud of the actions we took, the people we supported and the solidarity that we spread."

For detailed information and reporting about donations received, projects and approvals, as well as the impact the Fund is having, visit [www.solidarityfund.co.za](http://www.solidarityfund.co.za)

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