

Script: Announcing the closure of the Fund

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NOZIPHO SANGWENI • The Solidarity Fund Closure Process (10 MINS)

- Good morning everyone and thank you Ashraf and our Chair Gloria Serobe for explaining the WHAT and WHY of the Solidarity Fund and its upcoming closure. Now, I will talk to the HOW.
- In approaching the closure of the Fund, we have established principles and set up guardrails to ensure that we achieve the desired outcome. But while there is the possibility that some minor details of it could change during this unprecedented process, we do have the fundamental principles in place, as endorsed by the Board.
- As we wrap up the current activities, we need to keep the momentum, energy and commitment that has characterised our activities this far. Delivering impact and making a difference in the lives of South Africans remains our priority, and our Pillar leads and their teams will continue to fulfil their responsibilities as they close out all our projects.
- To manage the closure, we have established a Closure Projects Office, that reports directly to the CEO. It will oversee the wrapping up process, guided by a specific timeline, while ensuring the “business as usual” activities continue.
- There are three key aspects to the wrapping up of the Fund that we will be working on in the next few months, on parallel timelines.
 - The first is **the wrapping up of existing projects**. We need to ensure that the Fund and its activities, as they currently stand, are brought to conclusion such that the Fund enters the dormant state with a clean slate.
 - The second is **recording and preserving the legacy** of the Fund through documentation.
 - The third and final aspect is **setting the Solidarity Fund up for successful remobilisation**, should the circumstances for remobilisation present themselves.

- There is an established timeline for all activities, with the aim of achieving a dormant state by the end of September 2022.
- In order to **wrap up our current Solidarity Fund activities**, the following will happen:
 - No further fundraising will take place and no new interventions or applications for funding will be considered.
 - Remaining funds will be allocated to proposals that are already in the system.
 - The discipline and rigour on maintaining high impact, low-cost implementation will remain
 - The Fund will retain a minimum balance of R15 million to enable it to hit the ground running when it is re-activated for another calamity.
 - External audits for the 2022 and 2023 financial periods, together with Solidarity Fund Impact & Close Out Reports will follow.
- It is anticipated that, by September, the Fund as it currently manifests, will no longer exist.
- At the same time as we are wrapping up the Fund, we will be **cementing our legacy**. The Fund is a unique but complicated entity. While it was established in record time, laying the groundwork for governance that is above reproach, accountability and transparency not only for ourselves but for our partners, was a complex process. As was laying down processes and procedures that would enable a rapid, effective response. That work has been done, as has the establishment of a brand that is respected and trusted both globally and here at home. This work is our legacy, it is our country's legacy, along with all the intellectual and experiential learnings that have occurred over the last 2 years. It is our responsibility to preserve all of this for the benefit of society in general.
- This preservation will include the documentation of processes, structures and standard operating procedures that have been tried and tested and can act as a springboard for any future action. The Fund will serve as a case study for its future self and for any other similar entity that may arise. We will ask and answer questions such as "If you want to act optimally, what is the operational model, how do you keep it low cost, how do you staff it, what systems must be in place for a rapid response vehicle of this nature?" and more. This will ensure that the Solidarity Fund doesn't just live on intellectually but, should it be needed, it can live on practically, performing its duties in the future.
- We don't know exactly what form another crisis may take, but we have in the Fund a blueprint for an organisation that can step in and assist on a national level to alleviate the strain on Government, business and NGO resources, and the impact on society. An organisation that is able to bring effective, impactful additionality to a national effort.

- The final phase of our closure process, is to **establish a dormant Solidarity Fund** that will operate with minimal activity to meet its legal and regulatory requirements, and ready to respond to a future disaster that requires its support.
- It will consist of a slimmed down Board with the initial members being drawn from the existing board. Their duties will be to maintain the Fund as a viable organization until such time as it is needed again. After which, its duties will include remobilizing, capacitating and forming the partnerships needed to respond to a future crisis.
- What I have outlined today is just an overview of what will happen in the next few months. There is a lot of work to do, and many details still to be ironed out. But throughout this process, the Solidarity Fund will complete and close-out the existing programmes with the same dedication and attention we have shown in the last 2 years. And we will apply that commitment to creating a legacy that aptly reflects the nature of solidarity, cooperation and the “can do” attitude that our stakeholders, partners and volunteers have shown.
- Thank you.