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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
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**FLIP THE
SCRIPT**

Date: Cape Town, 23 September 2022

iThemba Walkway Partnership,

African Monitor

South Africa CSOs Working

Group on SDGs

**Subject: Time is Now: Act for Peace, Climate & Justice---
Memorandum to the National Assembly of South Africa**

Dear Madame Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula

Speaker of the South African Parliament

In 2015 world leaders signed historic agreements - the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and the broader 2030 Agenda to push for a more just and sustainable world by 2030. These inter-linked agendas promised to transform the world, end poverty, reduce inequality, ensure peace and combat climate change; to set us on a path towards a just transition for our economy, society, and environment. So far, the delivery has failed to live up to this bold ambition.

Progress on the 2030 agenda is under threat. In 2022, the world is not working for most people and our planet. Human rights are being ignored and millions of people are being left behind, while a few become ever richer and more powerful.

The war in Ukraine, together with other ongoing conflicts, has led to a massive increase in the number of people facing acute food insecurity, with rising food prices making life even harder for billions of people.

At the same time, climate change presents a long-term threat to our shared home on this earth, with temperatures continuing to rise and extreme weather events devastating communities at the frontlines as we recently witnessed in April Durban floods which took more than 400 lives .

The Covid-19 pandemic pushed humanity's resilience to the limit and continues to have vast impacts on the lives of people and the wider social, economic and environmental fabric of



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ACTION
CAMPAIGN

FLIP THE
SCRIPT

our world. Hundreds of millions of people lost their jobs and income and were pushed into poverty.

These events have shone a glaring light on the persistent and underlying injustices and inequalities of our societies.

We need to transform a system that is no longer fit for purpose, flip the script and re-imagine our planet as our shared home, respecting the rights of all people and the natural world.

The recovery must leave no one behind... there is still time to deliver sustainable development within the Decade of Action... if leaders in each country act for Peace, Climate & Justice.

Will you take action?

1. Safety & Peace

Now is the time to step back from armed conflicts, militarism must be reduced around the world:

The war in Ukraine comes in a human context where armed conflict, violence in all its forms, authoritarianism, corruption and indiscriminate repression affects the lives of millions of people around the globe and violates the human rights of people - young and old - in countries around the world. All lives affected by conflict are of equal value. Wars and conflicts are one of the major factors leading to increasing poverty in the world.

Here home in South Africa, Protection fees in Townships have become serious. This started slowly with migrants being asked monthly money in order to be protected and has now become common in the rest of South Africa. The current situation has extended to neighbouring farm areas such as Grabouw in the Western Cape Province etc. The gangs' business is booming; and we are

very concerned that these gangs are now recruiting more young people to sustain their businesses. In areas such as Philippi East, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu in the Western Cape, the gangs are forcing people to go to bed by 6 pm as it will be their time to start operating. Currently, the situation is more than critical as everyone in the Cape Flats and the rest of the country is living in fear.

2.

South Africa has not made much progress with regards to SDG13 on climate action and the reduction of carbon emissions. South Africa's reliance on fossil fuels will continue for the foreseeable future. The country is not on track in terms of its National Determined Contribution and is planning to build new coal plants. Furthermore, the government continues to issue licenses for oil and gas exploration. Both in policy and practice, the country is not moving in the direction of delivering on Climate Action by 2030.

Deliver on your Paris Agreement goal to limit mean global temperature rise to 1.5C.

- Protect the ecosystems on which all life depends by strengthening your commitment to international environmental law and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030.
- South Africa needs to urgently shift away from its reliance on fossil fuels and its economic dependency on extractive industries such as mining. Moving towards renewable energy will help the country to meet our NDC targets.
- Review the Integrated Resource Plan 2019, stop the planned building of new coal-fired power plants and reconsider gas as a transition source of primary energy.
- Review the "Operation Phakisa" Oceans Economy initiative, and particularly oil
- and gas exploration licenses, and ensure community engagement.
- Ensure better coordination between national, provincial and local government levels on climate action and the production of renewable energy

3. Social Justice

Are you ready to build a more equitable future? Poverty and inequality are once again on the rise in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. In many countries same as in South Africa, people are being pushed back into increasingly fragile situations, with the critical gaps in healthcare and loss of livelihoods being compounded by the lack of sufficient support from governments and international partners.

- We further call on you to ensure universal social protection for all including provision of free universal healthcare to ensure everyone in South Africa has access to free, public, high quality health care across their life course.
- South Africa is still the most unequal country in the world with race playing a determining factor in a society where 10% of the population owns more than 80% of the wealth.



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**ACTION
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**FLIP THE
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- Recovery must take place at micro and local levels. People should be supported to build back their lives and livelihoods. Solutions should tackle inequalities and focus on opening up economic opportunities, factors beyond the market that focus on social reproduction, mostly being the burden of women in communities.

4. Gender Based Violence (GBV)

We call for a gender-responsive approach to post-Covid-19 reconstruction and recovery.

- We note that the Covid-19 pandemic has had an enormously disproportional impact on women, who have lost their income and livelihoods and have been subjected to increased incidences of GBV.
- The South African government should place a gender lens over its Covid-19 recovery plans, as well as be informed by gender and sex-disaggregated data when considering robust investments and social policy and safety nets.
- Gender budgeting should take into consideration the differential impact of the pandemic and the fact that black women in the informal sector are excluded from the economic stimulus.
- We must align our work with the National Development Plan (NDP) and Agenda 2030 and develop indicators on how we can measure gender-responsive mechanisms.
- There should be a multi-stakeholder approach that allows all stakeholders to contribute to gender equality and the elimination of GBV. For example, instead of hosting a women's/men's parliament, we should be advocating for a gender parliament that will engage all stakeholders.
- Cabinet must be called upon to pass and adopt the national action plan on GBV, as well as domesticate the African Charter.
- GBV responders, particularly in rural areas, should have access to adequate resources and funding so that they are able to effectively respond to victims of violence.
- We should find sustainable solutions to address GBV in communities by enacting effective policies on economic empowerment for women and vulnerable groups so that there is a long-term downstream effect. An example would be the use of urban development as a way to create cities that are safe for women and curb GBV.
- Enable collaboration amongst all citizens should be enabled in order to address the issue of GBV.



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ACTION CAMPAIGN

FLIP THE SCRIPT

- Intersectionality should be avoided by having a gender parliament that recognises all gender formulations and acts as a voice of reason to parliament. Its work should be linked to the development goals and Agenda 2063 in terms of having a people-driven Africa.
- The SDG framework indicators should be used to measure the well-being of women. Gender disaggregated data should be adopted to assess the implications of recovery policies and plans for women and address them accordingly.
- There should be gender programmes that cater to all sectors of society, including young boys.

5. Economic Justice

This is the moment to agree on a just recovery for all. We call for an end of austerity and instead a major economic stimulus package that radically reduces inequality, gender inequalities and lays the foundations for a just, equal and sustainable economy.

- Keep your promises to finance a more just and sustainable future with clear commitments to 0.7% of GDP for development cooperation including at least \$50 billion/year for health and social protection
- Deliver extensive debt cancellations and create a sovereign debt workout mechanism at the UN; increase access to capital for low and middle income countries by re-allocating new Special Drawing Rights.
- Ensure everyone contributes by taxing companies and individuals fairly with progressive tax systems and ending illicit financial flows and tax evasion.
- Intensify the demand for local products and manufacturing to create more domestic jobs and encourage local entrepreneurship.
 - Amend Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act,¹⁴ which governs the process of retrenchment due to operational requirements, to compel companies to negotiate rather than consult with unions to arrive at a collective agreement
 - Strengthen bargaining councils, even with employees that are not members of trade unions, to secure better agreements from employers and employees.
 - Target financial support to reach those who most need it, by prioritising funds for women, disadvantaged minorities, young people, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and other most affected groups.
 - Increase the cost of retrenchment by increasing severance pay to ensure that companies only retrench as a last resort and not as a first preference.



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**ACTION
CAMPAIGN**

**FLIP THE
SCRIPT**

5. SDGs Implementation

- We welcome the government's plan for institutionalising the National development stakeholder forum (NDSF) as part of the SDG coordination mechanism. The aim is to establish a body that would provide better coordination for the implementation and tracking of progress on the SDGs and overall development objectives in South Africa.
- We call on the government to fast-track the establishment of the NDSF to catalyse the delivery of the SDGs. We are with the view that the institutionalisation of the NDSF will facilitate South Africa reaping its full benefits for the achievement of the SDGs in the country. The institutionalisation is made even more urgent as we move towards the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process in 2023/2024 where the views of both state and non-state actors will have to be carefully considered.
- The NDSF should be anchored by SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals): 'Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development', which the UN sees as a crucial means to deliver all the SDGs (UN DESA 2015: 10); specifically targets 17.16 and 17.17 are aimed at improving and promoting MSPs.
- It should serve as a national platform for dialogue and collaborative action for state and non-state actors, including the private sector, civil society, and academia, on the implementation of the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and the Southern African Development Community Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (SADC-RISDP) by mobilising and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources.
- It should be guided by principles of citizen-centredness, inclusivity, reflective learning and active participation, and sustained action towards socio-economic transformation. It should empower and strengthen the agency of local communities and amplify grassroots voices.
- The government should provide an enabling environment where the advice of the NDSF is heard and equal partnerships and contributions are permitted, as well as institutionalised interactions between the government and the NDSF. The NDSF requires a strong formal institutional but independent structure, where the government is involved but not leading the structure.
- Since the SDGs reflect the needs and aspirations of the people and Parliamentarians are the ones best placed to hold the executive accountable; As efforts are being put together to put in place a coordination mechanism for the SDGs, it is important to ensure that the Parliament **play their rightful role in giving political impetus towards localising, implementing, and monitoring progress on the SDGs.** Legislatures are essential actors in the roles of parliamentarians in ensuring political buy-in, financing and accountability to the SDGs.



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ACTION
CAMPAIGN

FLIP THE
SCRIPT

It is therefore incumbent on us the Civil Society and youth organisations to raise this issue with you as a matter of great seriousness. We hope that your attention to this matter will be highly appreciated

Respectfully yours,

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