



Cape Town Statement on The Role of Business and Civil Society in Advancing Social Justice

Adopted at the 5th Social Justice Summit titled “The Role of Business and Civil Society in Advancing Social Justice” held at Artscape Centre, Cape Town, South Africa on 12 October 2023

We, the participants of the 5th Social Justice Summit, representatives from business, broader civil society, including academic and government representatives, gathered at the Artscape Centre in Cape Town to share research findings and deliberate on “The Role of Business and Civil Society in Advancing Social Justice”, hereby adopt this Statement as a declaration of our commitment to play a significant role to accelerate the advancement of social justice for greater progress by 2030.

Recognise and accept the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, Copenhagen Declaration of 1995, and previous Social Justice declarations, notably the Hazendal Declaration of 2019 and Boschendal Declaration of 2021.

Believe that social justice, which is essentially about equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms by all and anchored in shared humanity or ubuntu, considering human diversity, is about rights, privileges, opportunities, and responsibilities of everyone in society and between society.

Accept that business and broader civil society have a role in advancing social justice, which includes a legal duty to refrain from discrimination and other violations of the law and to comply with legally prescribed positive measures to accommodate

difference and remedy historical disparities, while pursuing equity and inclusion as a recognition of shared humanity and ecosystem investment.

Note that business has played a key role in the establishment of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which has played an essential role in defining normative standards that foster social justice in the workplace and that civil society has always played a major role in advancing social wellbeing thus contributing to social justice, including during the height of COVID-19 and other social emergencies.

Are concerned that although much has been achieved in overcoming some dimensions of poverty and inequality since the dawn of democracy, the 2022 Census statistics reveal that structural inequality persists and is even growing along contours of past unjust laws while more groups are affected by hunger, poverty, and inequality.

Are similarly concerned that limited progress has been made in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and National Development Plan (NDP) objectives and that business and broader society appear not to be fully seized with implementation of the sustainable development agenda beyond workplace and climate change initiatives.

Are perturbed that social fracture is growing despite the constitutional commitment to heal the divisions of the past and believe that injustice continuities and perceptions of such drive social fracture while creating a fertile climate for violent protest.

Are convinced that the slow progress in advancing social justice through dismantling structural inequality and ending poverty is not simply a matter of historical wrongs but also an outcome of constitutionally misaligned policy choices, governance lapses, corruption and weakening institutions, particularly at local government levels and SOEs.

Are further convinced that purpose driven, consolidated as well as scaled business and civil society action anchored in SDGs and the Social Justice Musa Plan can turn the trajectory and pace of advancing equality and ending poverty while overcoming hunger and climate change plus fostering peace.

Welcome and applaud the decision of 130 CEOs to join hands with government to help fix energy security, transport-logistic and crime and corruption believing that mindfully

executed in an equity impact conscious way, this initiative will not only solve the targeted problems but will also have multiplying effects that reduce poverty, inequality while fostering climate change reversal and social cohesion.

Further welcome and applaud workplace equity initiatives in compliance with the law and various corporate and civil society initiatives that seek to level the playing field in education, particularly ECDC support, tertiary funding, social infrastructure, disaster services, food security, voluntary land redistribution, deracialising and dismantling gendered exclusion in business ownership through intentionally supporting startups in townships, villages and similar endeavours involving historically disadvantaged groups as well as addressing period poverty.

Believe there is a need for strengthening synergies, acting with more intentionality in fidelity to the egalitarian constitutional vision of society, which entails rethinking some activities, ensuring all communities and groups are met where they are and that the impact of activities demonstrably reduces poverty and inequality.

Further believe that SDGs, Covid recovery and the Musa Plan initiative offer an opportunity for a turnaround moment.

Therefore, resolve to act collaboratively as business and civil society to accelerate social change with a view to advancing social justice while making accelerated progress on SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality Within and Among Countries), 1 (No Poverty), 1 (Zero Hunger), 5 (Gender Equality), 13 (Climate Action) and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions):

1. Join hands to end **HUNGER** as an initial **Musa Plan Key Focus Area** through research, strengthening of synergies and breaking new ground.
2. Scale up social upliftment partnerships anchored in SDGs and Musa Plan and tripartite collaboration between business, society (including academia) and government.
3. Initiate integrated Social Justice Education anchored in Constitutional and Legal Literacy plus peace building.
4. Support the CEO initiative on fixing selected national challenges.

5. Systematise Data Science for Social Policy Research and Social Policy Integration in Data Science to prevent social injustice through the SIAM and related initiatives.
6. Support inclusive economic growth and integrate same in social responsibility and corporate/organisational strategies.
7. Support voluntary redistribution initiatives in land and other areas of life.
8. Support local governance as a primary engine for social change by contributing to building capacity for good governance, including ethical leadership and sustainable development management.
9. Strengthen social accountability initiatives aimed at pushing back against corruption and ending impunity; and
10. Implement the Hazendal and Boschendal Declarations and Programme of Action.

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