



Initiative aims to push back poverty

By **Karabo Ledwaba**

“In approximately seven months, Covid-19 has unravelled what we have done over the past 20 years.”

These were the words of Busisiwe Mavuso, the CEO of Business Leadership SA, at the second annual justice summit and virtual launch of Thuli Madonsela’s Social Justice M-Plan crowd-funding project, which aims to eradicate poverty and equalise opportunities by 2030.

According to Mavuso, it is the role of the business sector to ensure that no one is left behind during a period where poverty has intensified. She said SA’s economy was struggling because the system is heavily flawed and because the country is in an incomplete transition from apartheid.

“About 18-million people depend on grants and this is unacceptable ... Interventions from business must be to change the economic structure of the country into a diamond economy. Businesses have resources and need to do more to drive a post-Covid recovery programme,” she said.

The Musa Plan for Social Justice, which has been in the works since 2018, is named after Palesa Musa, an anti-apartheid child activist, who later criticised democracy for not eradicating poverty as promised.

The M-Plan’s objective is to empower law and policy makers using data analytics to move sustainable development goals along to completion. It also aims to mobilise resources



Former public protector Thuli Madonsela

Madonsela sets her M-Plan in motion

and capital from all sectors of society.

The key activities that will be launched is a social justice hub that will allow for a think-tank type environment where policy briefs can be created.

There will also be a legal empowerment initiative that will, in collaboration with students, assist with giving disadvantaged communities access to justice.

Madonsela, who is currently the law trust chair in social justice at the law faculty of Stellenbosch University, agreed with Mavuso that the Covid-19 pandemic had worsened inequality in SA.

She said the M-Plan sought to recognise the intersectional politics in vulnerable groups that make people even more poor, such as being a black woman living in a rural area.

“It’s important for women to be targeted as a critical group [in the M-Plan]...we have to use mechanisms that meet people where they are in order to disrupt the inequality,” she said.

Other speakers at the virtual summit included Gloria Serobe, chairperson of the Solidarity Fund and founder of the Women Investment Portfolio Holdings Limited (WipHold), and vice-chancellor of Wits University, Adam Habib.

