



planning, monitoring
& evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



2ND REPORT

of the DPME on
measures implemented
by the South African
Government to combat
the **Coronavirus disease**
(Covid-19) during the
disaster phase

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For more information, please contact:
Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
Private Bag X944
Pretoria
0001
South Africa

Tel: +27 12 312 000
Fax: +27 12 323 8246
www.dpme.gov.za

Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
(DPME)

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic makes it clear how interrelated society is. South Africa will not be able to tackle the COVID-19 crisis in a unified way if it does not mitigate the worst of its inequalities (Wits, 2020). The strength of a health system is inseparable from broader social systems that surround it. Epidemics place increased demands on scarce resources and enormous stress on social and economic systems.

This summary report accounts for progress

made to contain and mitigate the effects of Coronavirus Diseases (COVID-19) by South Africa. It is a second DPME report on effects of COVID-19 and interventions to deal with it. The first report was produced on 2nd May 2020, covering the period early March to mid-April 2020. This report limits itself to interventions implemented in the latter part of April 2020 to the end of May 2020. However, some reference outside the reporting period is also reported on into the second week of June 2020.

2. Background

The 01st May 2020 marked the first day the country eased national lockdown to Level 4 from Level 5. Thus opening up more activities when compared to Level 5. This followed the announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa of the adoption of a Risk Adjusted Strategy by the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC). The Risk Adjusted Strategy by the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) is an approach adopted by the South African government to guide its steps on easing lockdown restrictions¹.

Elaborating on the Risk Adjusted Strategy, the President stated that “Level 5 means

that drastic measures are required to contain the spread of the virus to save lives (Table 1). At Level 4 some activity can be allowed to resume subject to extreme precautions required to limit community transmission and outbreaks. Level 3 involves the easing of some restrictions, including on work and social activities, to address a high risk of transmission. Level 2 involves the further easing of restrictions, but the maintenance of physical distancing and restrictions on some leisure and social activities will be maintained to prevent a resurgence of the virus, and Level 1 means that most normal activity can resume, with precautions and health guidelines followed at all times”².

Table 1: Risk Levels

L5	High virus spread and/or low health system readiness	Lockdown
L4	Moderate to high virus spread with low to moderate readiness	High restrictions
L3	Moderate virus spread with moderate readiness	Moderate restrictions
L2	Moderate virus spread with high readiness	Reduced restrictions
L1	Low virus spread with high readiness	Minimum restrictions

The Risk Adjusted approach to the management of COVID-19 is guided by rates of community transmission and health care capacity as key criteria. For community transmission, two indicators are utilized, namely the rate at which the proportion of the tested population (testing coverage) is increasing (higher is better) and the rate at which the proportion of positive tests is increasing (lower is better). For health care capacity, two further indicators are to be utilized, namely the rate of increase in fixed and makeshift hospital beds in both public and private sectors per 1000 population (higher is better) and the rate at which the proportion of hospital beds being utilized for COVID-19 is increasing (lower is

better). With the transition to Alert Level 4, from 01 May to 30 May 2020, interventions were intensified in an effort to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of section 27(5)(a) of the Disaster Management Act, the national state of disaster expires after three months after it is declared, therefore the current declaration lapses on 14 June 2020 unless it is extended by the Minister of COGTA in terms of section 27(5)(c) which provides that the national state of disaster may only be extended by one month after the first three-month period. A special Cabinet meeting on Thursday, 4th June 2020, extended the State of Disaster to 15 July 2020.

3. Epidemiological Patterns by 10th June 2020

The easing of the lockdown occurred against the backdrop of increasing cases of COVID-19 which is contrary to the World Health Organization's (WHO) six criteria for the easing of the lockdown. The resulting increased activity in the different sectors in Level 4 and 3, means transmission is likely to increase significantly.

Government's stance was informed by the need to strike a delicate balance between measures for containing infections and to support livelihood. Prolonged lockdown will lead to economic depression as a result of large-scale business failures and loss of income. Already, it is estimated that there will be 7 million job losses by the end of the pandemic.

While on 1st May 2020, South Africa's confirmed COVID-19 positive cases were at 5 951 with 115 deaths, this had increased fivefold to 32 683 positive cases and 683 deaths by 31st May 2020. Indeed, President Ramaphosa asserted on 24th May 2020 that scientists advising government predicted rise in infections going forward. The models built to predict the trajectory of the virus indicated two important factors. Firstly, the coronavirus pandemic in South Africa will get much worse before it gets better. Secondly, that the duration, scale and impact of the pandemic depends on the actions of South Africans, and their behaviour as individuals. Meaning government can do its part, but if the citizens do not change their behaviour, infections will rise and scupper the country's ability to contain the spread of infections.

¹ Statement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Covid-19, 23 April 2020
² Statement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Covid-19, 23 April 2020

Globally, 8 506 107 individuals were COVID-19 positive with 455 231 deaths, as at 20 June 2020³. The global case fatality rate is 5,3% while fatality rate on the African continent stands at 2,3%. On the African continent, a total of 205 943 cases and 4 720 deaths had been confirmed by 20 June 2020⁴, with 5 792 cases detected in the last 24-hours. A total of 101 147 people have recovered from Covid-19 on the continent, yielding a recovery rate of 49,1% as at 20 June 2020. In the meantime, South Africa has experienced a total of 83 890⁵ cases, which constitutes 40,7% of the total burden of Covid-19 disease on the continent. The country has also recorded 44 920 recoveries (54%) of all cases and 1,704 deaths (2,0% of all cases).

South Africa's Covid-19 recovery rate is significantly higher than the average on the continent (49,1%), while the case fatality rate of 2,0% is marginally lower than the continental average of 2,0%. In addition, the death rate of 50% is lower than the continental figure of 2,0%. The major contributory factor to these outcomes is the whole of government and whole of society response to Covid-19, implemented by the government of South Africa, which has also enhanced the resilience of the health system. However, there are major interprovincial and inter-district variations in the pattern of the Covid-19 pandemic in the country. As at 18 June 2020, four Provinces account for 95,9% of Covid-19 cases. These are Western Cape (56,6%); Gauteng (19,0%); Eastern Cape (15,1%); and KwaZulu-Natal (5,2%).

As at 18 June 2020, the situation for the 4 provinces was as follows:

Province	Total cases	Recoveries	Active cases	Deaths	CFR ⁶
Western Cape	47 522	31 824	15 698	1 243	2.6%
Gauteng	15 898	3 756	12 142	109	0.7%
Eastern Cape	12 639	6 331	6 308	254	2.0%
KwaZulu-Natal	4 360	2 133	2 227	74	1.7%

These four provinces are also home to the 12 of the hotspots proclaimed by the Minister for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Dr. NC Dlamini-Zuma, on 28 May 2020, in terms of the Disaster Management Act (No. 57 of 2002). These are the City of Tshwane metropolitan municipality (metro); City of Johannesburg metro; Ekurhuleni (all in Gauteng Province); EThekweni metro and iLembe district in KwaZulu-Natal; Nelson Mandela Bay, Buffalo City metro and Chris Hani district in the Eastern Cape; as well

as the City of Cape Town metro, and the West Coast, Overberg and Cape Winelands district municipalities in the Western Cape.

Rurality has emerged as a buffer against Covid-19. As at 9 June 2020, the remaining 5 Provinces, which are predominantly rural, less densely populated and which are not the epicentres of economic activity in the country, had much lower cases of Covid-19 cases.

The Pattern of Covid-19 in these provinces as at 9 June 2020, was as follows:

Province	Total cases	Recoveries	Active cases	Deaths	CFR
North West	604	88	516	4	0.7%
Free State	391	123	268	9	2.3%
Limpopo	253	158	95	3	1.2%
Mpumalanga	184	111	73	1	0.5%
Northern Cape	122	41	81	2	1.6%

None of these 5 predominantly rural provinces has a hotspot officially declared by the Minister of COGTA.

4. South Africa's interventions led by Risk Adjusted Strategy

4.1. Directions

When the government declared a nationwide lockdown on 23 March 2020, regulations⁷ and directions gazetted on 26th March restricted economic activity severely. All except for any business or entity involved in the manufacturing, supply, or provision of an essential goods or services ceased operations. Essentially, only those in the food and healthcare value chains and essential services were allowed to operate during the initial 21-days lockdown period.

Exemptions were made for alleviating economic and social effects of the national disaster on livelihood of individuals by allowing healthcare, banking, hotel and retail property to coordinate their response measures such as debt relief, rental relief and potential space for quarantine premises⁸.

Noting that the small business and the informal sectors will be hard hit by the lockdown, directions were issued to assist SMMEs operating grocery stores, corner shops and spaza shops.

Alert Level 4 phased in limited economic activity in with respect to manufacturing and mining operations. They were now permitted to resume production with capacity of up to 50% of employment. Wholesale and retail trade remained open for essential services, with additional products available, but excluding clothing stores. In contrast tourism related activities such as accommodation for leisure and air travel remained prohibited, while e-commerce was limited to essential goods.

3 World Health Organisation (WHO) Coronavirus Dashboard, 10 June 2020

4 World Health Organisation (WHO) Coronavirus Dashboard, 10 June 2020

5 National DoH, Covid-19 Progress Report, 18 June 2020

6 The case fatality rate (CFR), indicates the number of deaths against the total number of Covid-19 cases. The national average is 2% as at 18th June 2020.

The new regulations prohibited the sale of tobacco products, e-cigarettes and related products. As consequence, SARS reports that government has lost R1.7 billion due to ban on alcohol and cigarettes⁹.

Some aspects of rural economy (food production and veterinary services) and environment (collection of waste and field ranging and basic animal care in national parks) were declared as essential services, allowing these services to continue during the lockdown. Food-related agriculture, livestock, transportation of live animals, auctions (subject to health specifications) and related agricultural services resumed during May 2020. In addition, all fishing operations, fish hatcheries and fish farms; and harvesting and storage activities essential to prevent the wastage of primary agricultural goods, were allowed to continue from 1st May.

Directions in the transport industry limited taxi and bus operating hours and reduced their carrying capacity, while prohibiting interprovincial travel under strict hygiene conditions. Previously suspended services like Gautrain, marine and air transport were also permitted but only for the shipment of cargo. Government reversed its approach regarding assistance to the taxi industry on the 1st of May 2020¹⁰, offering assistance in the form of the provision of face masks and hand sanitisers. While the Department of Transport promised to provide support to the taxi industry, this was restricted to the supply of sanitising booths, hand sanitisers and masks, gloves as well as concentrated disinfectant chemicals (SA Gov, 07 April 2020¹¹).

Operating hours for passenger road transport were extended under strict

requirements for every passenger to wear a mask, daily sanitising all public transport vehicles as well as a seven-day easing of inter-provincial travel to cater for people wanting to return from their home provinces in preparation to going back to work. The regulations permitting public transport (taxis) to carry only up to 70% of their load capacity and limited operating times, is expected to impact negatively on the profitability of the taxi industry.

The provision of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) services was initially not categorized as an essential service, but was reclassified as such later under level 4. It was during alert level 5 that the Interim Steering Committee on GBVF handed over the Emergency Response Plan Report to the President, signaling the beginning of the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBV. Working with Non-Governmental Organizations, government prepared safety plans and referral pathways for survivors of GBVF.



Photo Credit: businessinsider.co.za

Gatherings were prohibited, with no more than 50 people in gatherings for example for funerals. Amendments to Directions affecting gatherings were released on 28th May 2020, allowing for reopening of places of worship under controlled conditions: only 50 worshipers, less than 2hours, screening before entry, wearing of masks etc. However, many places of worship chose to remain closed and take advantage of electronic mode of worship in the interim. The fact that many major churches chose to stay closed raises questions on whether the consultations for quicker opening of places of worship were effective.

Early Childhood Development and Partial Care facilities were closed down as part of the lockdown 18 March 2020. Since the dissemination of the circular, ECD centres have remained closed.

Beneficiaries of the temporary disability grant whose grants expired during the lockdown period have had their grants continued through a ministerial directive. Furthermore, grants that are not collected for three consecutive months do not lapse as originally prescribed in the Social Assistance Regulations

DSD institutions continued to render social services to vulnerable target groups housed in Substance Abuse Treatment Centres and Halfway Houses, Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs), Shelters for Victims of Crimes and Violence including Gender Based Violence (GBV), Old Age Homes and Frail Care Facilities, Residential Facilities for Persons with Disabilities (Respite Care Facilities), Protective Workshops and

Day Care Centres for Children and Adults with Disabilities, Community Nutrition and Development Centres (CNDGs). The Department of Health has been conducting health screening and referrals in some of these facilities through its mobile services whilst the police have been providing security and maintaining peace and order.



On 07 April 2020, new directives permitted the movement of children between co-holders of parental rights with a court order or parental plan in place were issued.

The Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant and top ups of existing was introduced (see section 4.2.5 for more detail).

On 9th May, directions regulating the release of survivors of Gender Based Violence and Persons with Disabilities from shelters and Places of Care, were amended to include protection and safety of persons with disabilities on 2nd April 2020.

⁷ Disaster Management Act, 2002: Amendment of Regulations Issued in terms of Section 27(2), 26 March 2020

⁸ COVID -19 Block Exemption for the Hotel Industry, 27 March 2020; Covid-19 Block Exemption for the Healthcare Sector, 19 March 2020; COVID-19 Block Exemption for the Retail Property Sector, 24 March 2020; COVID-19 Block Exemption for the Banking Sector, 23 March 2020

⁹ Media Statement, 5 May 2020, <https://www.sars.gov.za/Media/MediaReleases/Pages/5-May-2020-Statement-by-SARS-Commissioner.aspx>

The plan for reopening of schools was guided by strict health protocols, and social distancing rules. Schools were to open in a phased in approach, initially only Grade 7 and 12 learners were to return to schools by the 1st of June. However, before they could reopen they had to meet COVID-19 protocols developed by DBE. Provincial Education departments were to put in mechanisms to ensure elevated hygiene and continuous screening of both teacher and learners¹². Working with Department of Water and Sanitation, DBE reached an agreement on providing tanks in schools struggling with water.

Department of Higher Education and training issued guidelines for managing Covid-19 post the lockdown on April 30th. The resumption of campus-based academic activities will be guided by the work and decisions of the National Command Council (NCC). Department of Higher Education will as consequence direct and manage the way institutions carry out their academic mandates at all times within this strategic and policy framework. In a joint effort with other organisations, the Minister announced a comprehensive set of PSET guidelines on managing Covid-19 in the PSET sector, post lockdown¹³.

4.2. Interventions undertaken and their effects

During the period the health sector continued its implementation of the 10-Point Plan response to COVID-19, consisting of the following elements: COVID-19 testing; triaging care; isolation and contact tracing; monitoring screening and testing; monitoring geographical location of new cases; identifying hotspots (case clusters); monitoring recovery and de-isolation; generation of information to determine when and where the lockdown can be eased.

By May 2020, the country's COVID-19 response shifted focus from Provinces to districts, with the aim of identifying hotspots and clusters of cases within hotspots. The WHO's six criteria for a country to ease a COVID-19 lockdown was considered. South Africa adapted WHO standards to local realities. In applying the South African version of identifying hotspots the country faced the conundrum that hotspots are in economic hubs of the country, contributing significantly to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).



A number of interventions are being implemented in an effort to tackle the hotspots. These interventions include: (a) surveillance to identify and intervene in hotspots, (b) spatial monitoring of new cases; assigning full-time team of experienced personnel including epidemiologists, family practitioners, nurses, community health workers, laboratory, public health experts and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) supported by Cuban experts, NDoH Staff, South African Military Health Services (SAMHS), National Institute of Communicable Diseases/National Health Laboratory Services (NICD/NHLS) to investigate outbreaks and intervene; (c) Case management through assessment of case

load and capacity, managing staff exposures and infections, building field hospitals for triage and expanding ICU bed and ventilator numbers; (d) multi-sectoral, multi-department, community, response teams for each affected community established to focus on: community education; surveillance; (e) border and provincial boundary closures; (f) wearing masks; handwashing and sanitizing; social distancing; and (f) monitoring implementation of containment measures.

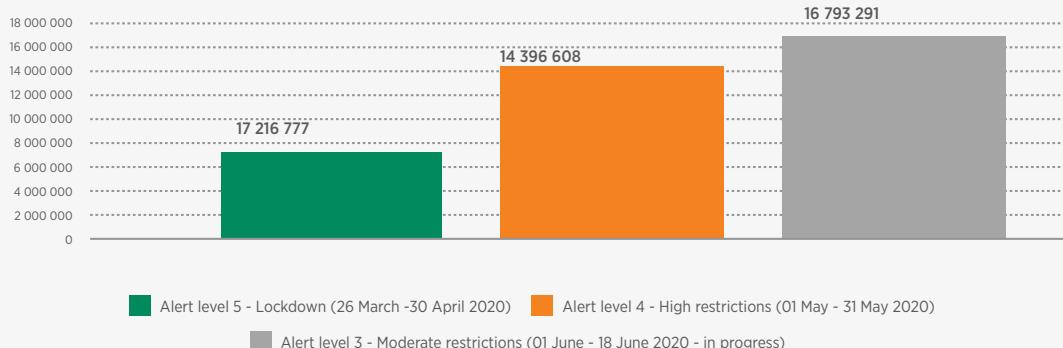
Diverse public health infections containment measures were implemented, which included intensified screening, testing, contact tracing, and health systems strengthening, as reflected below.

4.2.1. Screening

Cumulative number of persons screened for COVID-19 has doubled from 7 216 777 at the end of 30 April 2020 to 14 396 608 on 31

May 2020 increasing to 16 793 291 people by 11th June (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Cumulative number of persons screened during Alert Levels 5,4 and 3



Source: Adapted by DPME from the daily Covid-19 reports of the National Department of Health and the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD)

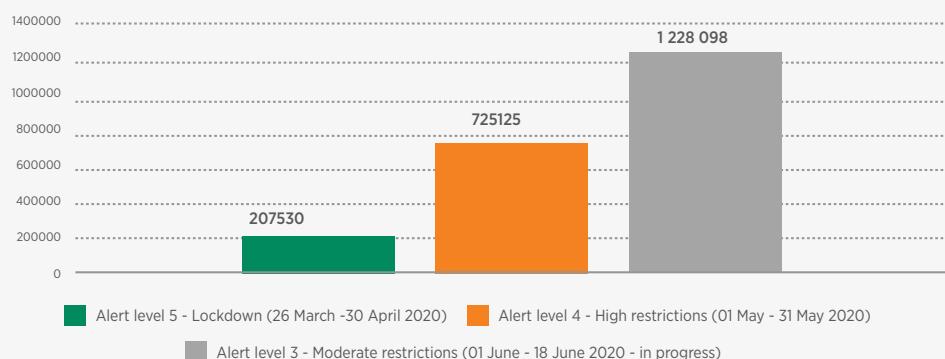
¹⁰ GCIS, 01 May 2020. Fikile Mbalula briefs media on Level 4 transport regulations. Accessed from <https://www.youtube.com/user/GovernmentZA/videos> on 11 May 2020.
¹¹ SA Gov, 07 April 2020. Premier Job Mokgoro distributes disinfectants and sanitizers to taxi operators. Accessed from <https://www.gov.za/speeches/premier-job-mokgoro-disinfectants-and-sanitizers-taxi-operators-7-apr-2020-0000> on 19 May 2020.
¹² Government Gazette No. 43258, "Risk-Adjusted-Strategy-Regulations", 29 April 2020.,
¹³ Minister of higher Education, Science and Innovation statement on the implementation of measures by the Post School Education Sector in response to COVID-19 epidemic of 30th April 2020

4.2.2. COVID-19 Testing

As shown in (Figure 2) below, the cumulative number of Covid-19 tests conducted increased threefold from 207,530 at the end of 30 April 2020 to 725125 on 31 May 2020. Currently, as at 18 June 2020, a total of 1,228,098 tests have been conducted. Of this figure, 51% of tests were conducted in the public sector which serves 84% of South Africa's uninsured population, while 49% were conducted in the private sector.

The increased capacity of the health sector is therefore a major strength. Testing screening enables active case finding, as opposed to passive case finding where health services would wait for people to get sick prior to being tested for Covid-19. The global shortage of test kits threatens the stellar performance of the country in terms of testing.

Figure 2: Cumulative number of Covid-19 tests conducted (public & private sector laboratories)



Source: Adapted by DPME from the daily Covid-19 reports of the National Department of Health and the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD)

4.2.3. Case Finding

Improved testing capacity has enabled the detection of COVID-19 cases. A total number of confirmed COVID-19 positive cases increased six fold, from 5 647 by the end of April 2020 to 34 357 at the end of May 2020. This has increased to 52 991 as at 9 June 2020. Whereas this reflects increased finding, it also indicates the weakness associated with the easing of the lockdown from Level 5 to Level 4. During Level 4, the movement of people increased while social distancing decreased

in many instances, leading to higher rates of COVID-19 transmission.

Measures have also been implemented to reduce the burden of COVID-19 disease in the Western Cape, particularly in the Cape Town metro and the three municipalities officially declared as hotspots. The interventions to strengthen the COVID-19 response in the Western Cape include increased testing capacity, increasing contact tracing.

4.2.4. Provision of local government services during the lockdown

COGTA has mobilised resources through the reprioritization and repurposing of existing grants such as the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, Municipal Disaster Relief fund etc. The Department also collaborated with various social partners to fund COVID-19 related interventions.

During Alert level 5 of the lockdown period, Gauteng, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape demonstrated capacity to ensure waste removal during the lockdown. Other municipalities augmented residential services with business collection services that came to a stand-still during the lockdown period.

In the transition to Alert level 4 lockdown period, most provinces reported compliance to the protocols in relation to waste management. However, concerns relating to densely populated informal settlements and rural areas continue to persist. There is therefore an urgency to heed the call for the upscaling of refuse removal services to an acceptable standard of hygiene.

To minimise the impact of the virus, COGTA has provided hygiene packs such as hand sanitizers and soap in identified COVID-19 hotspots. During April 2020, provincial disaster operation centres were used to facilitate the distribution of hygienic packs to municipalities, traditional authority areas and high-density areas. Although the provinces understood the importance of sanitising and cleaning public buildings and taxi ranks, it is disconcerting that the cleaning of sanitation or ablution facilities remained inadequate.



Over the national lockdown period, various social partners have contributed in-kind support to the value of R92 million towards water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives.

- Tirisano Construction Fund provided in-kind support to the value of R50 million for hand sanitizers and soap bars, water tanks and the installation of boreholes.
- Santam Financial Services group has donated PPE valued at R200 000 to the National Disaster Operations Centre.
- Telkom, BCX and Microsoft have provided ICT support to the COVID-19 Disaster Operations Centre valued at R150 000.
- Subinite has donated hand sanitisers to the value of R150 000 and committed masks to the value of R125 000.
- The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) has committed support to the value of R41.4 million towards water tanks, the installation of boreholes and repairing of water infrastructure.

Certain municipal services were allowed to function such as the issuance of permits to informal food traders. A total of 17 822 licenses were issued to informal traders across 6 provinces as at 12 April 2020 (Limpopo, Northern Cape and Western Cape had not reported the number of licenses issued). By 15 May 2020, a total of 38 599 informal traders' permits were issued by municipalities across provinces.

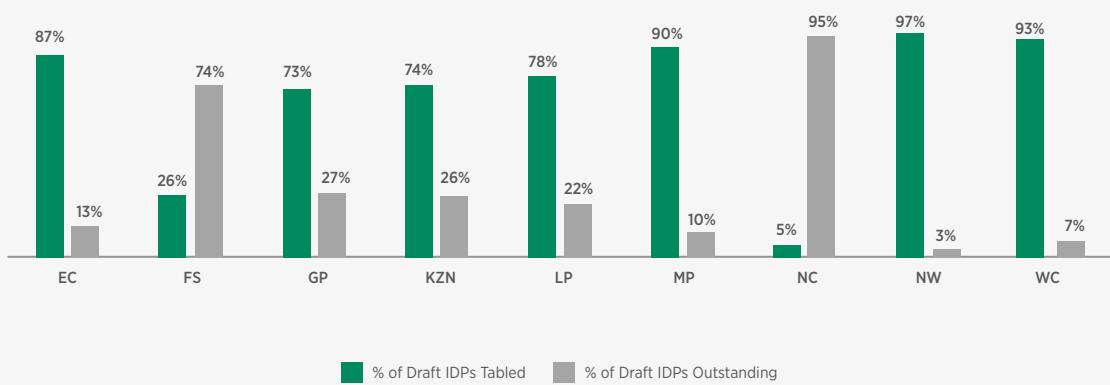
All provinces have embarked on COVID-19 public awareness campaigns that generally include; social media, community radio stations, newspapers, the distribution of pamphlets and government communication platforms. COGTA coordinates communication across all the three spheres of government by ensuring that provinces and municipalities are communicating coherent messages that are aligned to the national messages by the National Command Council. However, the efficacy of these messages and the platforms used in changing behaviour is in doubt.

The National State of Disaster has had an

impact on municipal planning and budgeting processes set out by legislation. As a result, a number of municipalities did not have the opportunity to adopt their draft Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) before the implementation of the nationwide lockdown on 26 March 2020. Municipalities were prohibited from conducting community engagements on the draft IDPs during the initial lockdown period. With the move to Alert Level 4 municipalities were allowed to convene council meetings to consider any council-related business, including the adoption of IDPs albeit using virtual platforms.

Provincial information reveals that a total of 186 (72%) municipalities have tabled their draft 2020/21 IDPs at 26 May 2020, however 71 (28%) IDPs are still outstanding. Most of these municipalities are in the Free State and North West provinces (Figure 3). On the other hand, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and Western Cape have the highest number of tabled draft IDPs, which have been published for public comment. The graph below depicts that status of tabling of draft IDPs in each province.

Figure 3: Approved and pending IDPs



There are clear signs that municipal revenue collection is under severe strain and this trend is likely to continue. This is because of the devastating impact of the lockdown on economic activity and loss of income by families. Preliminary figures presented by SALGA project that there will be a 5% drop in the payment of municipal rates, and it will cost municipalities an estimated total of R14 billion in lost revenue. This together with decrease revenues from the sale of water and electricity services is going to affect the ability of many municipalities to carry out their duties and in a number of cases increase their financial viability.

To empower municipalities to deliver services, an additional funding of R20 billion was made available to municipalities to provide emergency water supply, to sanitise public facilities and to support vulnerable communities. The National Treasury is working with COGTA and other key stakeholders to determine how to allocate and transfer these funds to the municipalities while ensuring necessary oversight.

COGTA has further encouraged municipalities to do their best to collect revenue while allowing for relief for the indigent and those with temporary payment problems in line with their existing credit control and indigent policies.

The Departments of Human Settlements (DHS) and Water and Sanitation (DWS) together with the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) are collaborating to ensure effective coordination between National, Provinces and Municipalities to facilitate households to have access to reliable safe water and sanitation during this period. The Water Command Centre (WCC) tasked,

amongst others, with tracking, on a daily basis, progress made regarding the delivery of water tanks and tankers, and whether delivered tanks have been installed and tankers are delivering water optimally.

An interim tanker service to fill the tanks has been prioritised and installation of rudimentary water supply schemes consisting of storage facility (5 000 to 10 000 litres in capacity), is being used in communities struggling with water.



4.2.5. Social and economic response package

Government has introduced a raft of economic measures to mitigate the anticipated economic devastation during and post the lockdown. The R500 billion social and economic relief package

(**Table 2**) is focused on three broad themes namely healthcare, hunger and economic distress, and support for companies and workers.

Table 2: R500 billion social and economic relief package

Intervention	R million
Credit Guarantee Scheme	200 000
Job creation and support for SME and informal business	100 000
Measures for income support (further tax deferrals, SDL holiday and ETI extension)	70 000
Support to vulnerable households for 6 months	50 000
Wage protection (UIF)	40 000
Health and other frontline services	20 000
Support to municipalities	20 000
Total	500 000

Source: National Treasury, 30 April 2020

The Socio-economic relief package includes R50 billion that has been set aside to achieve the following; increase the child support grant by an additional R300 for the month of May 2020 whilst from June 2020 to October 2020 caregivers of the child support grant will receive a top up of R500 to the normal child support grant amount. All other grants such as the Old Age pension will increase by R250 from May 2020 to October 2020 (i.e. six months). A new temporary grant called Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress valued at R350 per beneficiary was introduced also for a period of six months (from May 2020 to October 2020) targeting individuals who are unemployed and are not beneficiaries of any social grant or social insurance.

Applications were opened on 11 May 2020 and as at 21 May 2020, about 4 119 542

applications were received through a variety of channels, WhatsApp, email and USSD channels. Of the 4 119 542 applications, about 68.5% (or 2 823 660) had validly completed the applications and these are being adjudicated for eligibility. While applicants are yet to be paid the system operability has been tested successfully on ten applicants.

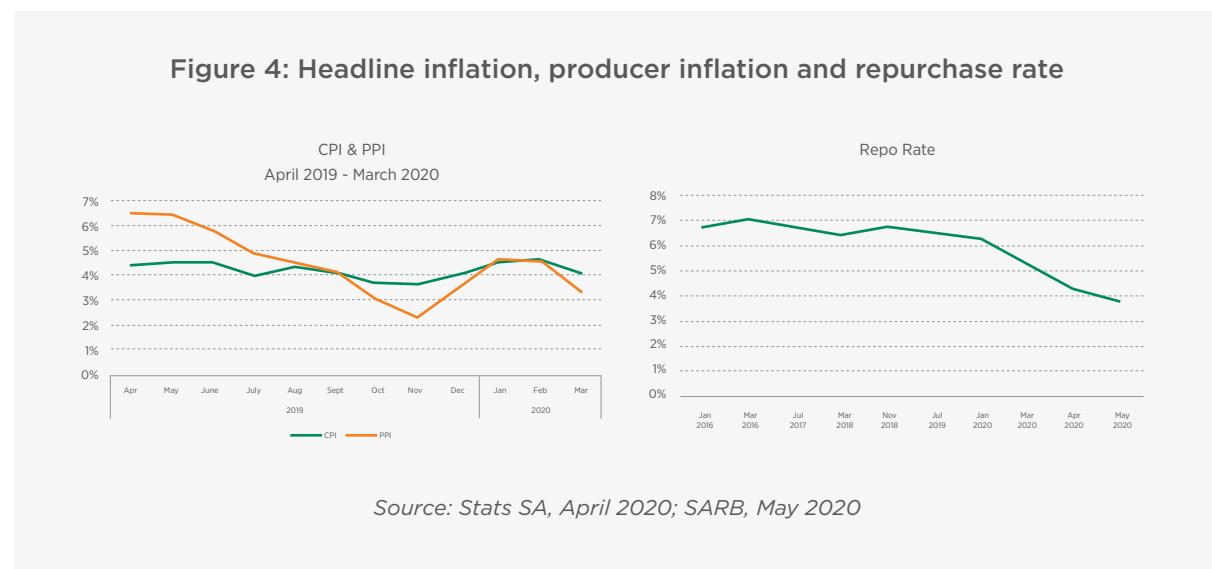
Noting that South Africa's fiscal position was already weak as outlined in the 2020 Budget Review, bulk of the funding for the social and economic package Relief Package will be from budget reprioritisation (R130 billion) from the current financial year. An additional R95 billion will be sourced from multilateral financial institutions.

The R200 billion Credit Guarantee Scheme, which would be administered by the Reserve Bank, will add to government's contingent liabilities.

According to National Treasury, contingent liabilities are expected to increase from R979.9 billion in 2019/20 to R1.16 trillion by 2022/23, mainly from guarantees to state-owned companies¹⁴. While the scheme will exacerbate the fiscal risk outlook, it is a necessary intervention for small to medium businesses that do not have the balance sheet to weather the COVID-19 storm.

Over and above the fiscal response detailed above, government, through relevant institutions has intervened through the monetary and financial regulatory measures and other laws. The South African Reserve Bank bought R10.2 billion worth of government bonds during May 2020, a lower than the April figure of R11.4 billion but much higher from R1 billion it bought in March 2020, as part of its measures to introduce liquidity in the market¹⁵. The measure follows the central bank's decision to reduce the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) from 100% to 80% to promote the short-term resilience of the liquidity risk profile of banks¹⁶.

Figure 4: Headline inflation, producer inflation and repurchase rate



Severe and persistent droughts, constrained economic growth and downgrading necessitated the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) to make available R1.2 billion financial assistance for agricultural support and food security.

While most of the interventions taken by government and stakeholders were aimed at containment of the virus, how industry

in general and mining in particular works, can easily undermine efforts to contain the virus. Factors such as labour intensity, confined working spaces and worker transport (cages), increase the risk of spreading infections. The return of infected but asymptomatic migrant workforce from home to workplaces can intensify the contagion and further undermine containment efforts in Level 4 and 3.

14 Budget Review 2020 <http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national%20budget/2020/review/FullBR.pdf>

15 <https://www.news24.com/fin24/Economy/South-Africa/reserve-bank-bought-r102-billion-worth-of-govt-bonds-in-may-20200605>

16 Directive D1/2020 issued in terms of section 6(6) of the Banks Act 94 of 1990, 31 March 2020

Following a court challenge by Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), on 05 May 2020, the Labour Court ordered the mining sector to publish safety guidelines on working amid the COVID-19 pandemic by 18 May 2020. Meantime, the DMRE implemented temporary Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), in the interim until a permanent set of guidelines can be announced. Despite the development of the 10-point action plan by the Minerals Council to help mitigate the spread of the virus in the mining sector, the action plan can neither be enforced nor translated into compliance regardless of involvement of all stakeholders. Some legally binding mechanism from the regulator (DMRE) was needed.

The State ICT Agency (SITA) continued to assist NDoH with tracking and tracing, with operators providing data analytics and joined forces with the DBE to ensure virtual learning is realised through the SABC and DSTV (Mzekandaba, 26 March 2020¹⁷). The department and ICASA welcomed the reduction in data prices, which greatly assisted all sectors particularly the DBE with making online teaching and learning possible while making data affordable to the poor.

The COVID-19 lockdown from level 5 up to level 4 has demonstrated improved levels of trust in the government, a sense of belonging and a willingness to participate and help others, which are all classic signs of strong social cohesion and a capable state.

Trust in institutions remains essential for compliance to measures to prevent the spread and contain the virus and even more critical to maintain peace, security and stability. The capability of the state is

therefore put to test on its ability to maintain the constitutional order of democracy and rule of law. Maintaining reasonable levels of trust between citizens and their institutions continues to be a daily challenge for most countries with the unprecedented individual and collective tension and anxiety brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. (Accord 2020).

Sport, Arts and Culture released R150 million Relief Fund to assist artists, athletes, technical personnel and the core ecosystem of the sector to soften the economic impact of the pandemic on their livelihoods and loss of income due to cancelled Events/Projects/Productions; and loss of income to Athletes and Arts-practitioners who were confirmed to participate in events that have been cancelled. Out of a total of 470 applications received for sport, 297 have been approved for payment with 173 declined. With regards to arts and culture, a total of 3346 applications were received, 2671 processed with 985 applications recommended and 409 paid with the balance to be completed by the end of May 2020.

DSD partnered with the Solidarity Fund to deliver 58 750 food parcels to the value of R43 500 000 (an average of R740 per food parcel). The Solidarity Fund distributed an additional 250 000 food parcels in partnership with other National Food Relief Organisations - Gift of the Givers, Food Forward, Islamic Relief, Afrika Tikkun. Other non-profit organisations such as the Red Cross, Gift of the Givers, Islamic Relief, SASKO, Mostafa and South African Council of Churches have provided support with the facilitation of the distribution of food parcels.

4.3. Lockdown effects

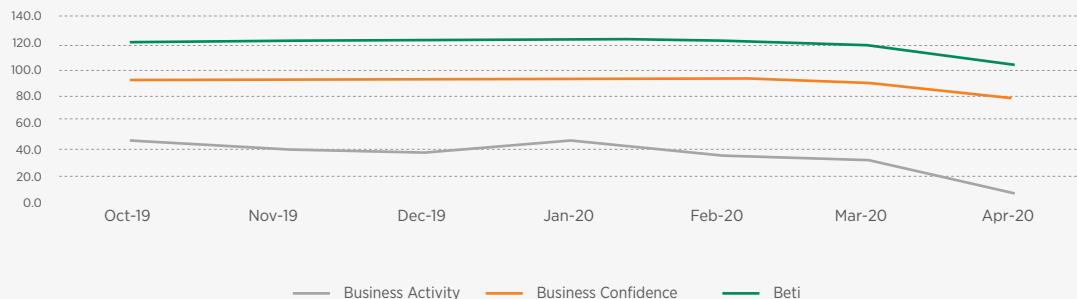
Based on available data, indications are that the immediate impact of the lockdown on the economy is severe, and going forward projections point to an even more precarious economic position. The business activity index, which has been on steady decline since October 2019, deteriorated further to an all-time low of 5.1 points in April 2020, (Figure 5). Similarly, the business confidence index fell to a 35-year low of 77.8 points in April, from 89.9 in March.

The BankservAfrica Economic Transactions Index (Beti), that captures interbank electronic payment transactions under

R5 million dropped by 12.3%, which is the biggest monthly decline ever recorded. The above data indicates that economic activity reduced substantially in April, and manufacturing almost came to a standstill. New car sales for April dropped by 98% compared to the same period last year, and improved somewhat in May, having declined by 68% compared to the corresponding period in 2019. The National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (NAAMSA) has reduced its forecast for domestic new-vehicle sales by 23% to 405 000 units for the year¹⁸.

Figure 5: ABSA PMI Business Activity, SACCI Business Confidence and Beti

Business Activity and Business Confidence, Oct 2019 - Apr 2020



Source: BER, SACCI, Bankserv Africa, May 2020

The IMF projects that South Africa's economy, which is already in recession, will plummet by 5.8%¹⁹ in 2020. The SARB expects the economy to contract by 7%²⁰, and National Treasury by 5.4% to 16.1%, based on the quick and long recovery scenarios²¹. This is despite the R500 billion social and economic relief package currently being implemented.

Based on available preliminary data, it is

apparent that businesses, small businesses in particular, did not escape the lockdown unscathed. This was predicted by various surveys, including the Business Impact Survey by Stats SA which showed that 90% of businesses that participated reported a lower turnover than their normal expected range; with affected industries including mining, trade, transport, manufacturing, as well as social and personal services.

The Stats SA survey showed that 36% of firms indicated that they will be laying off staff in the short-term as a measure to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, this is an increase from 28% in the first survey.

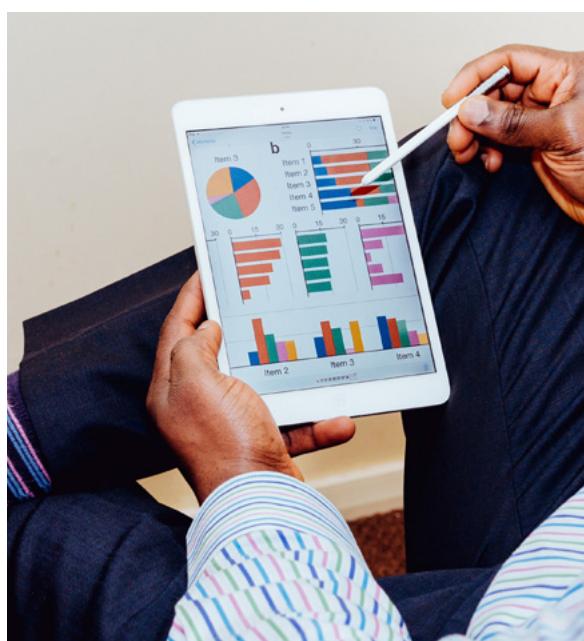
The National Treasury estimates that job losses could range between 690 000 and 1.8 million, with the variants depending on the progressive easing of the lockdown. Phasing in economic activity under Alert Level 3 is expected to mitigate, to an extent, the negative employment implications.

The sectors that are expected to shed most of the jobs are the trade catering and accommodation, construction, manufacturing, and finance and business services. The construction sector, which has seen five consecutive quarterly declines by the end 2019 and lost 131 000 jobs between 2018 and 2019, will bear the brunt of COVID-19 as fixed capital investment, particularly by the private sector, is expected to be subdued.

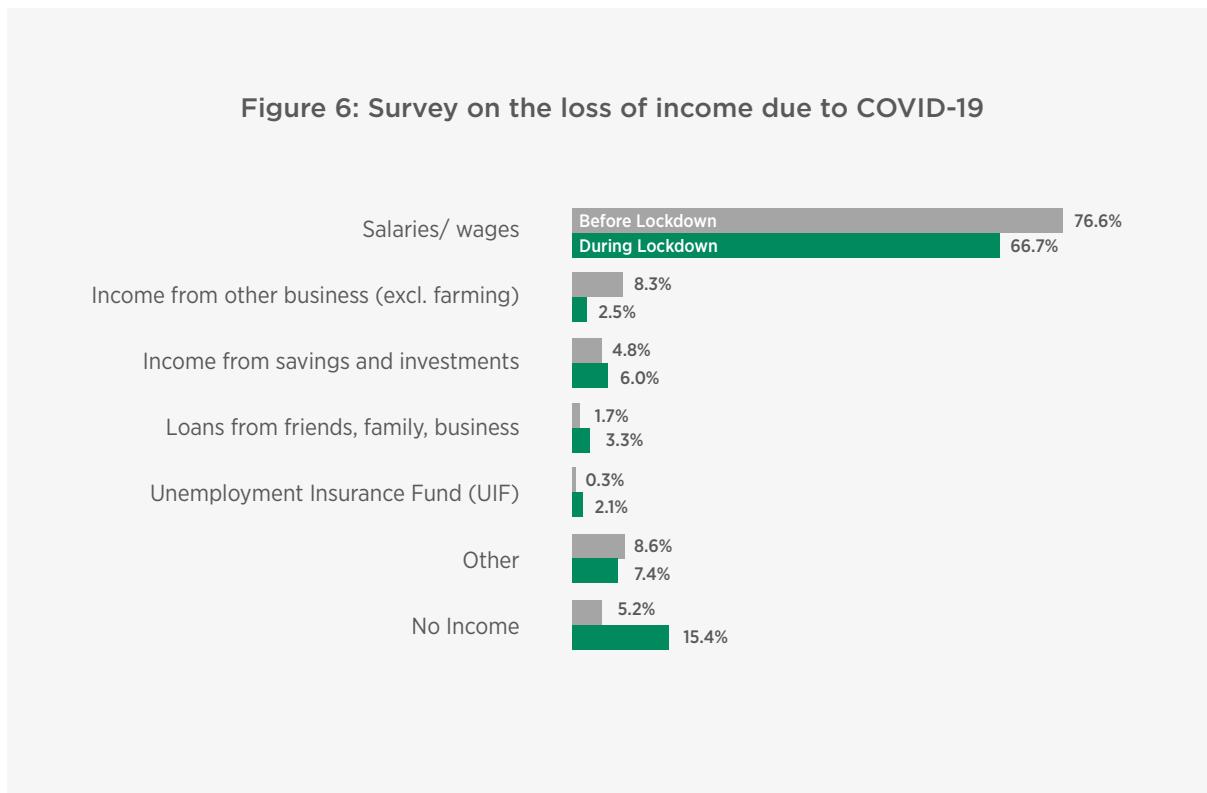
A unique but shared South African narrative during this trying time focused on the need to work together as a nation with greater social cohesion and solidarity.

Of note, is the continuous contributions by business, civil society, individuals and Non-Governmental Organisations to the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund. This includes among others pledges from a number of prominent business families and companies to help limit the lockdown's impact on the economy such as Nicky and Jonathan Oppenheimer who donated R1 billion to support small medium and micro enterprises; Mary Oppenheimer and daughters, R1 billion to support the humanitarian needs of everyone living in South Africa; Motsepe

family and associated businesses, R1 billion for the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other equipment and resources which might be needed to deal with the pandemic; R1 billion from the Rupert family and Remgro Limited towards helping small and medium enterprises across the country; R1.5 billion from Naspers to combat the spread of the coronavirus in the country; Dischem donated R2 million and Vodacom R40 million towards the Department of Health.



During the lockdown many individuals experienced loss of income in some form. (Figure Figure 6)²².



Not only has the COVID exposed people to hunger and food insecurity, it has increased people's vulnerability and this has led to the development of various coping mechanisms. The Stats SA survey report revealed that as coping mechanisms, 75 percent of respondents reduced spending, 57 percent have had to access their savings to cover for spending deficits, about 37 percent depended on family, friends and their social network. Only 14 percent depended on the UIF whilst a paltry 3 percent relied on relief dispensed by government and NGOs.



17 Mzekandaba, S. 26 March 2020. Government makes provision for virtual learning during lockdown. Accessed from <https://www.itweb.co.za/content/Gb3BwMW8LQkq2k6V> on 11 May 2020.

18 NAAMSA, Media releases of new vehicle stats for May 2020

19 IMF World Economic Outlook, April 2020

20 SARB, Monetary Policy Statement, May 2020

21 NT presentation to Standing Committee and Select Committee on Finance and Appropriations, 30 April 2020

22 Statistics South Africa. 2020. Results from Wave 2 survey on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and income in South Africa. Retrieved from: http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=Report-00-80-03&SCH=72638

There is a debate on whether GBVF increased during lockdown or not. International experience says lockdown increases GBVF. However, South African data shows the contrary:

- The DSD Gender Based Violence Command Centre received and rendered relevant services in response to 105,339 callers for the Pre lockdown period 01 Jan 2019 - 05 Feb 2020: CALLS - 92 644; USSD - 11 286; SMS - 1 409. For two months, during lockdown, calls to the GBV command Centre dropped. For the period 27 March - 30 May 2020, which is during lockdown; the total calls received are 40 774 of which 1 407 (3, 45 %) were GBVF related.
- The preliminary research conducted by the Institute of Security Studies points out the following: "The Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust works closely with the National Prosecuting Authority, police and Department of Social Development at three Thuthuzela centres in the Cape Town metro... reports a roughly 50% drop in rape and sexual assault cases against women during this period. Similar reductions have been seen at other Thuthuzela centres in the province." ISS May 2020
- South African police data confirms the reduction in reported cases of domestic violence. On 22 April Police Minister Bheki Cele said, 'The national picture reflects a decrease by 69.4% from 9 990 cases between 29 March and 22 April last year to 3 061 since the lockdown until 20 April 2020, meaning a difference of 6 929.'

According to ISS (2020) "The most likely

explanation is that the ban on alcohol sales has reduced the severity of domestic violence cases and the opportunity for rape (outside of the home). Sober partners may still be abusive and controlling, but are perhaps less likely to resort to extreme physical violence. This may mean that women are not able to report their cases because they can't get to a police station or because they cannot make a call to one of the hotlines without their partner knowing about it. This would lead to a reduction in the numbers of reported cases." (ISS 2020). Research is being conducted by the Department of Women to ascertain the facts on the impact of GBV on the lockdown.

The disability rights directions have been developed and reasonable accommodation is defined in the directions within the legal context to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities and it is awaiting approval from Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to ensure that no one is left behind. COVID-19 has a disproportionate negative impact on the disabled.



The lack of recognition of disabled people's organisations and other Non-governmental organisations supporting Government in implementing COVID-19 emergency relief on the ground has led to difficulties in obtaining essential services or travel permits.

The early recess of schools meant over 13 million learners in both public and independent schools had no access to schooling, 444 857 educators were at home and 24 998 schools are closed. The Minister of Basic Education (DBE) announced that schools will reopen on the 1st June 2020 only for grade 7 and 12 learners. This meant in June around 1 million grade 7 learners and 484 966 grade 12 learners were expected to return to school out of 12.4 million public school learners. However, before schools could reopen, all schools needed to meet COVID-19 protocols for preventing the spread of the virus that DBE developed and were approved by the DoH.

The success of the sector to reopen hinged on its ability to meet the basic requirements

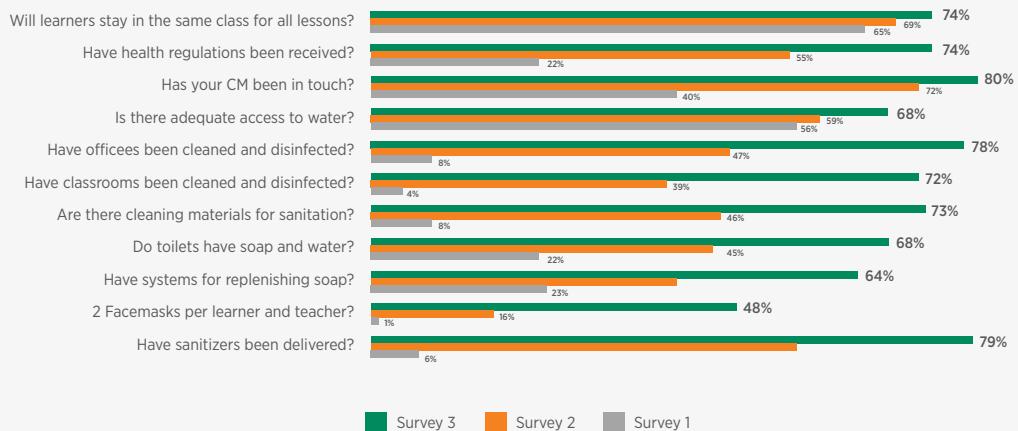
such as the minimum health, safety and social distancing measures of COVID-19. By 28 May 2020 some provinces were not ready, consequently Basic Education Minister postponed the reopening of schools to the 8th June.

It is clear, however, that by the first week of June, DBE had made strides towards the reopening of schools. Unions' survey by 5th June shows DBE had made vast improvements and was ready to reopen schools. By June 5, most of the respondents (68%) were indicating that water is being delivered to schools as shown in the table below (Figure 7).

Only WC opened their schools on the first of June while in the rest of the country schools reopened on the 8th June or soon thereafter. The availability of water and sanitation as well as the availability of Covid-19 equipment remain a challenge in some of the schools. A number of schools were soon forced to close because teachers or learners exhibited symptoms of being infected.

Figure 7: Union comparison survey

COMPARISON SURVEYS 1, 2 AND 3: % RESPONDENTS RESPONDING 'YES'



Source: Teacher unions survey, June 2020

As a consequence of school closure during the lockdown, 80% of learners relying on school nutrition could not be fed, school health programs were halted meaning no health screening could take place and no psycho social programs could be offered when learners needed it to cope with the impact of the pandemic. Business that depend on schools' activities lost income; for example 100% of the scholar transport services lost income and as did food vendors. At the same time, teachers employed through the School Governing Bodies (SGB) lost income since schools were not all able to collect school fees during the lockdown. Essential sanitary pads that are distributed by schools were halted, meaning girls could not access this important service.

DBE increased its broadcast of education material as a way of mitigating lack of connectivity and data. It developed Radio, Television and Online including Virtual learning approach and implemented it. A total of 110 Radio Stations deliver lessons to support learners including those in the remotest of areas in the country. An evaluation of the impact of these methods of learning is needed and whether they made a difference especially if the pandemic is going to be with us for a long time. It is also important to remember that leaners differ in resilience, motivation and skills to learn independently and online.

DHET was determined to save the 2020 academic year and therefore put in place measures to enable all institutions and students to complete academic requirements, with the prospects of extending into early 2021 depending on the epidemiology and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic threat. The completion of the academic year 2020 and the start of academic year 2021 will be

aligned with the plans of the Department of Basic Education in terms of the completion cycle of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations and the release of the NSC results. Each university will have to put plans in place to ensure its specific programmes, resources, and capacity are adequate to offer various forms of remote and flexible learning from the beginning of June 2020 until a full return to contact teaching and learning is feasible.

PSET introduced remote multi modal learning methods, however these also showed up the inequality that exists in the country. Not all universities were in position to provide learning remotely. Those without resources historically have struggled to make the transition. While DHET reached an agreement with telecoms to zero rate educational sites, many students could not access data and therefore DHET needed to reach agreement with telecoms to buy data at cheaper rates, however the data provided has many exclusions. Some institutions were unable to take up these data packages for their students, as these came at a considerable cost. A total of 670 192 NSFAS beneficiaries (441 634 universities) and (228 558 TVET) continued to receive their allowances.



DHET has opted to restructure curriculum offerings of TVET colleges in line with the continuity of the lockdown under Level 4 national protocols. It entailed restructuring of national examinations for the trimester, semester and full-year programmes.

During this lockdown period, the Department of Higher Education ensured payment of stipends to all SETA learnerships and also cleared and corrected the misunderstanding that existed at the beginning of the lockdown where some SETAs stopped the payments²³.

The JCPS Cluster adopted a multi-disciplinary approach. On the element of stamping the authority of the State, the focus was on improved regulations of firearms, reduced organized crime and balance between trade and security at ports of entry. Thorough and responsive

investigation of crime focused on reducing levels of contact crime, violence against women and children, the comprehensive utilisation of forensic investigative aids in the investigation of crime and reducing levels of serious corruption and commercial crimes and ensuring the effective response to cybercrime.

With regard to collaborative and consultative policing, to reduce levels of contact crime, and GBVF, this was to be done through strengthening community partnerships and increased visibility.

On the borders, patrols along hotspot areas i.e LP, MP, FS, KZN and EC were intensified. Tightening of borders and related security measures were implemented and enforced to uphold the objectives of the lockdown. These arrangements remain in place until all neighboring states are stabilized.

5. International comparisons

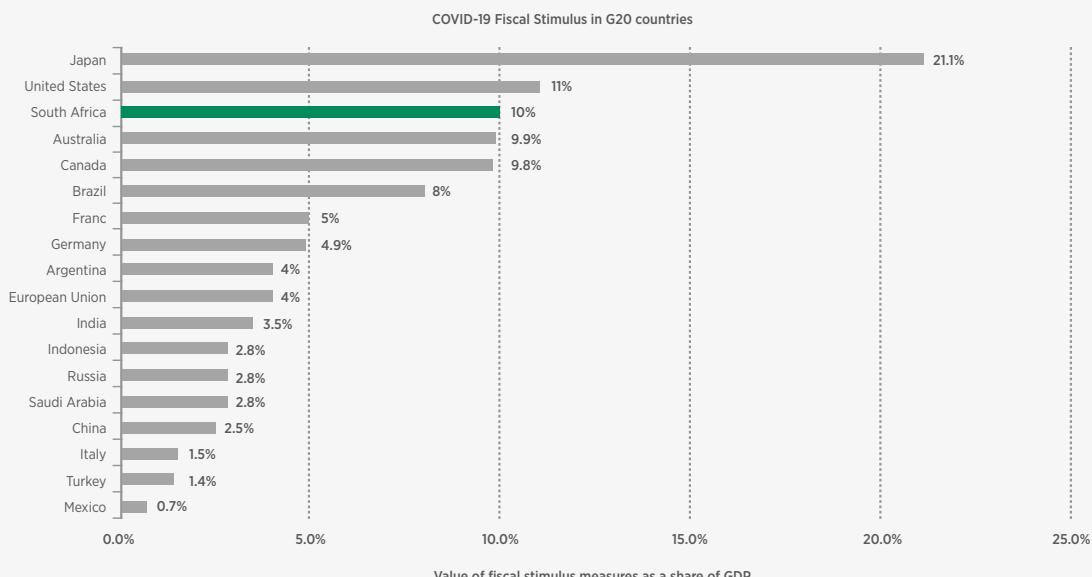
Different countries have responded differently to the pandemic. Not all countries (except for India and Botswana) went for the complete and hard lockdown like South Africa.

Countries have introduced a number of stimulus and social relief packages to assist depressed businesses and individuals as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The package differs from country to country (Figure 8).



²³ Minister of higher Education, Science and Innovation statement on the implementation of measures by the Post School Education Sector in response to COVID-19 epidemic of 23rd May 2020

Figure 8: COVID-19 Fiscal response as % of GDP



Source: Statistica, April 2020

Similarly, South Africa introduced a massive social and economic relief package of up to R500 billion putting it amongst the top 3 in terms of the value of the stimulus as a share of GDP.

Key economic measures from most countries include cash handouts to affected individuals and firms; deferral of tax payments and social security contributions; concessional loans from public and private financial institutions; accelerated disbursement of unemployment insurance and extension to migrant workers; tax relief and basic income support for the self-employed; grants to small business owners and self-employed persons severely affected; and state-level loan guarantees.

Interestingly, South Africa at 10% of GDP, ranks higher than developed countries such as Canada, Germany, France and Italy. This may suggest that the higher levels of poor

economic growth, rising inequality, poverty, unemployment, hunger and sub-optimal public healthcare system required an aggressive intervention from government.



6. Key lessons and challenges in dealing with the pandemic

An analysis of the country's response to Covid-19 during the period under review reveals diverse strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities and threats, which have significant implications for the management of similar diseases in future.

6.1. Strengths

6.1.1. Effective Leadership

The major strength of the leadership of the country's Covid-19 response is that it is led very ably at the highest level of government by the President, the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) and Cabinet.

Despite the six-fold increase in case detection from the end of April to end of May 2020, the recovery rate also increased from 42,2% by the end of April 2020 to 50,3% at the end of May 2020. As at 18 June 2020, it is at 54%.

Both surveys from BrandSA and UJ-HSRC on citizen perception conducted in April 2020 confirm confidence (73%) in the President and government in handling the Coronavirus outbreak, and 56% believe that current measures taken by government including the phased-in lockdown are the best ways to minimise the spread of the virus. A low level of confidence (29%) has however been noted in the ability of the health system to deal with the impact of COVID-19 is also noted (BrandSA. 2020).

Ability to make strategic decisions was shown by how the country leadership moved quickly to mitigate the effects of lockdown on the vulnerable. The existence of social assistance/grants framework, the South African Social Security Agency

(SASSA), made it possible for government to implement very quickly interventions to ease suffering brought about by the lockdown of alert level 4 and 5. The interventions include increased value of grants for a limited time of different grants such as child support grant, for caregivers, and Old Age pensions. A new temporary grant called Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress valued at R350 per beneficiary was introduced targeting individuals who are unemployed and are not beneficiaries of any social grant or social insurance.



6.1.2. Evidence-based planning

The comprehensive Covid-19 preparedness plans, were presented by the Department of Health to the Portfolio Committee on 04 March 2020. Subsequently, the Presidency developed the National Covid-19 Strategic Plan, which informed the implementation of the national lockdown. The country's response has since been consistently based on the evidence provided to government by the Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) on health, which consists of 51 health experts. Planning has been effective.

6.1.3. National support for government's Covid-19 interventions

South Africa's response to Covid-19 enjoyed the support of citizens. Empirical data from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) study released on 26 April 2020 on interviews of 19 000 citizens, reflects that 99% of the respondents complied with the lockdown and Alert Level 5 restrictions²⁴. This suggests that the leadership succeeded initially during level 5 in rallying the country behind government's response to Covid-19. Country's lockdown was difficult but government made the tough call and was able to communicate the decision in a clear way, and consultations were adequate to rally support across all political players and civil society.

South Africans are able to come together and rally behind a common goal. Partnerships formed. The idea of a COVID-19 grant was the brainchild of the faith based organisations and academia.

Private individuals, companies, trusts etc. have donated funds to help cope with the pandemic and lockdown.

6.1.4. Health Systems Capacity

The South African health system has shown resilience against Covid-19. A major strength in this area is South Africa's health workforce is well trained, capable and qualified, and sought-after globally. A key challenge is that despite the competency of South African health workers, the country has a shortage of health care providers. The arrival of 217 Cuban medical professionals in South Africa in April 2020 to assist the country in the fight against Covid-19 presents an opportunity not only for augmenting human resources, but also for skills transfer.

Another strength is that South Africa possesses extensive and globally renowned laboratory capacity. The National Health Laboratory Services (NHLs) has demonstrated a systematic increase in its capacity to conduct Covid-19 tests.



²⁴ HSRC Study on COVID-19 indicates overwhelming compliance with the lockdown, <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/media-briefs/general/lockdown-survey-results>

6.1.5. Robust economic systems

At 10% of GDP, the R500 billion fiscal response ranks higher than some developed countries such as Canada, Germany, France and Italy²⁵. In addition, the income protection measure for workers in the form of COVID-19 UIF Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Scheme is playing a critical role in ensuring that workers earn an income and provide relief to employers.

South Africa's sound competition legislation enabled the country to respond appropriately with regards to protecting consumers from excessive price hikes²⁶. This saw price increases that characterised the early period of lockdown begin to decline as reported by Stats SA.

6.1.6. Constitution

COVID-19 pandemic or not, the Bill of Rights of the Constitution guarantees all inhabitants a certain minimum living standards, thus the imperative to respond to the shocks of COVID-19 lockdown particularly on the lives of the poorest. New and enhanced interventions protecting the minimum living standards were thus easy to introduce – politically and socially acceptable.

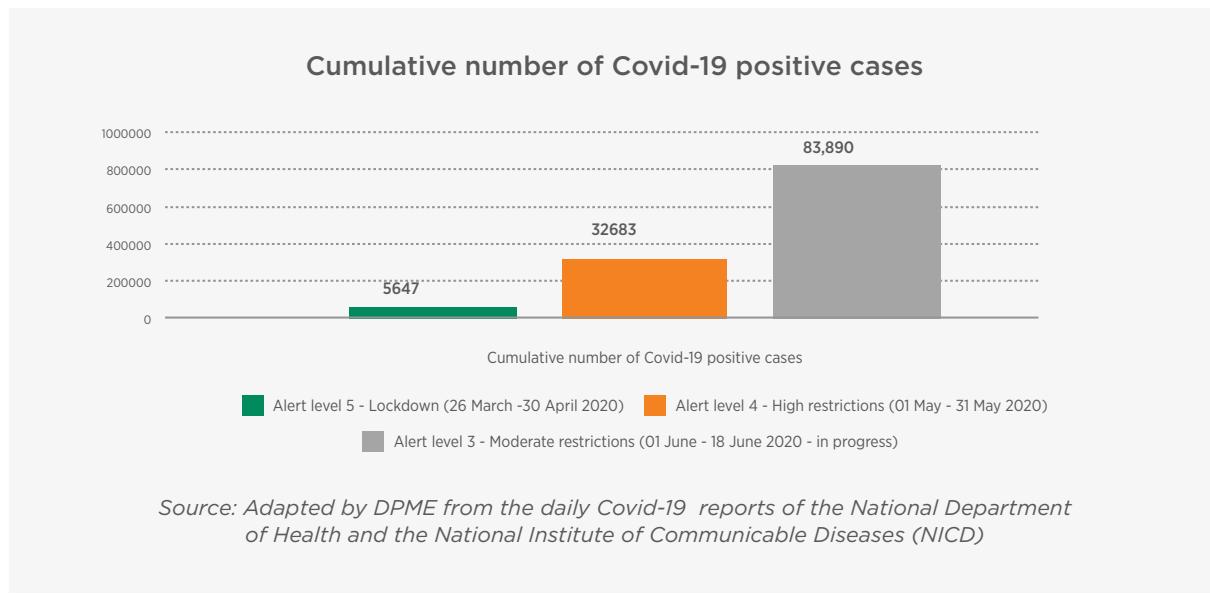
The country remained relatively stable during the transition from full lockdown (level 5) to partial lockdown (level 4/3). There was reduction in serious and violent crime, indicating the lockdown was largely complied with accompanied by visible policing.

6.2. Weaknesses

6.2.1. Significant increase in Covid-19 cases in South Africa

The transition from Alert level 5 to Alert level 4 occurred against a backdrop of increasing

cases of Covid-19. In addition South Africa did not fully comply with the World Health Organization's (WHO) six criteria for the easing of the lockdown restrictions while cases began to increase exponentially.



25 Comparison of COVID-19 fiscal response as percentage of GDP between G20 countries according Statistica in April 2020
26 Consumer and customer protection and National Disaster Management and Regulations and Directions, 19 March 2020

The unity of the country's response is gradually being undermined by some unilateral actions by Provinces. In April 2020, the President announced a R500 billion Covid-9 relief fund, which included an allocation of R20 billion to the health sector. However, as at 18 June 2020, these funds have not been transferred to the health sector. On 05 June 2020, National Treasury informed the National and Provincial Departments of Health that the sector needed to surrender a total amount of R130 billion. It was further stated that the R20 billion promised to the health sector should be found within the sector itself, with the National and Provincial DoHs having to surrender amounts of R15 billion and R5 billion respectively to National Treasury. Fiscal constraints result in contradictions on how the executive instructions are mediated through the government process thereby laying seeds for conflicts post Covid-19 on the sustained agenda of government.

Pre-existing weaknesses were magnified through the pandemic and had the effect of limiting the country's response to the pandemic. For example, the basic education option of creating online learning platforms showed inequality in that some students were able to continue learning while the majority could not take advantage of the available systems. Better resourced schools and communities received remote tuition directly from their teachers, in addition to the online platforms organized by the department as their schools have resources to provide such lessons. Furthermore, some teachers themselves from the underprivileged schools were not ready to switch to virtual modes of teaching owing to lack of resources and skills.

Failure to provide all schools with infrastructure that meet minimum norms and standards is a historic issue that led to a protracted delay in reopening of schools as the unions and SGB associations did not want to open schools until the preconditions for reopening schools were met. The infrastructure backlog in relation to sanitation facilities and water provision became a point of contention. Three thousand five hundred schools were identified by DBE as having critical water supply challenges. The highest numbers of these schools were in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

6.2.2. Pre-existing weaknesses in services

The pandemic has exposed many **failures of municipalities in the provision of basic services** to communities especially in informal settlements and rural areas. Through the support of national government, critical infrastructure such as water and sanitation issues amongst others, had been prioritised during this period to safeguard and prevent the spread of the virus. With the heavy investment seen in such infrastructure, it is important that municipalities prioritise resolving and sustaining the service delivery interventions far beyond the lockdown period.

School vandalism in search of food, IT equipment and lately in search of resources brought to schools for protecting learners and teachers has shown a worrying increase. Indicating schools are not protected by communities, but instead seen as legitimate targets for stealing and vandalising by certain members of society.

6.2.3. Resource and budgetary constraints

Resource constraints hamper the country's implementation of plans for getting the health system ready to tackle the possible rise in infections. There are, therefore, continuing shortages of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) across Provinces. The shortage of ventilators especially in the public sector is a major source of concern.

The restrictions on import and export of goods have caused bottlenecks, created shortages and reduced the volume of cargo flights, **preventing the import of essential goods.** The agricultural sector, which was permitted to operate at full capacity, faced severe constraints in exporting goods produced.

The recessionary environment in the domestic economy had been long time coming, following consistent contractions in major productive sectors of the economy, particularly since 2015. This means government's response to COVID-19 is unlikely to resolve the structural constraints and unfavourable regulatory environment that led the economy to where it currently is.

The R200 billion Credit Guarantee Scheme is not accessible to many small businesses as the strict conditions are not suitable. This includes dictating where the money could be used and business owners having to take on new financial risks with personal surety on the line. Moreover, many small businesses do not meet the lending requirements of commercial banks, which defeats the purpose of the Scheme.

Though about 788 283 food parcels have been distributed, this figure is small when

compared to the 3.3 million households who have been identified as having **inadequate access to food.** Furthermore, many households who may have been regarded as well off, may have transitioned to below the upper bound of poverty line owing to reduced wages, lost jobs and poor business performance.

Unregistered operators provide ECD services to over 1.5 million vulnerable children. A survey conducted by Bridge, et al. (2020) indicated that; 99% of operators reported that caregivers have stopped paying fees owing to the lockdown, 83% of operators have not been able to pay full staff salaries over the lockdown period.

The DSD has provided shelter and food to 14 781 people without homes in 166 shelters, psychosocial support, family reunification services, rehabilitation and skills development to those eligible. Withdrawal symptoms, theft of blankets, non-compliance with COVID-19 measures, over-crowding, food shortage, and personal protective equipment, and absconding are some of the challenges experienced with regard to the sheltering of the homeless. Post lockdown period, the homeless will continue to be excluded and live on the fringes of society in the absence of an overarching policy response to the homeless.

6.3. Opportunities

During May 2020, the country's Covid-19 response shifted focus from Provinces to districts, with the aim of identifying hotspots and clusters of cases within hotspots. This provides further opportunities to arrest the spread of the pandemic.

Opportunities include the allocation of additional R20 billion to the health sector, if it is eventually found, following the President's announcement of a R500 billion resource envelope to flatten the epidemic curve of Covid-19, as well as donations to the health sector from the Solidarity Fund.

New ways of providing services were introduced for example queues were reduced at the payment points and smoothing economic activity across the month through splitting the payment file. The Department and South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) resolved to stagger the payment of social grants in the Months of April and May. The staggering was also intended to ensure that there was physical distancing to minimise the chances of the spread of the virus and that beneficiaries who are elderly and those who had disabilities and frail were not caught up in the congestion.

6.3.1. New ways of providing services

Covid-19 has brought into sharp focus inequality and the dangers it poses to the country. However, it also provides opportunities to accelerate service delivery in the attempt to control the spread of the

virus. To illustrate, given the centrality of regular handwashing in efforts to prevent Covid-19, government provided water tanks to communities without water, particularly in 29 communities identified as most vulnerable. The delivery of water tanks by the Department of Water and Sanitation to deprived communities doubled within a period of two months, from 9,205 tanks delivered at the beginning of April 2020, to 18 686 tanks delivered by 5 June 2020²⁷ indicating the speed government can operate with to deal with delivery issues.

Maintenance of public buildings and infrastructure, tourism and hospitality skills programmes, mine closure and environmental rehabilitation programme, district-based good green deeds programme and waste management infrastructure, and initiatives to support informal sector and create self-employment are some of the **areas identified as possible ways of increasing employment**.

Access to economic relief measures required companies to be formally registered, thus providing an opportunity for the small business in the informal economy to enter the mainstream economy.

6.3.2. Creating new capacities and opportunities

Government's response to the pandemic has created opportunities for new capabilities in the industrial sector.

²⁷ Department of Water and Sanitation, Public Health Infections Containment Workstream, June 2020

Through the call for proposal, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition hopes to have a minimum of 10 000 ventilators manufactured in South Africa by end of June 2020. In the medium to long term, production of ventilators in South Africa has the potential to position the country as a preferred supplier of these products in the African continent. This is in line with the re-imagined industrial strategy adopted by government.

The lockdown provided an opportunity for PRASA to carry out maintenance on both its rail network and fleet, which have been ailing prior to the pandemic. Additionally, PRASA may need to be ultra-vigilant by significantly raising security over all its assets to prevent any potential loss or malicious damage to its property by both organised crime and disgruntled commuters, affected by the cost of disrupted passenger rail operations.

The temporary assignment of Radio Frequency Spectrum, including high demand spectrum, to deal with the anticipated rise in demand for network capacity or data services is a precursor to the long-awaited process of auctioning the spectrum before the end of this financial year²⁹. Furthermore, Data service providers have demonstrated that it is possible to zero rate educational websites. For instance, Vodacom offered free online educational content for all grades. MTN provided zero-rated online resources on siyavula.com, while Microsoft offered learners free access to Office365 by visiting mahala.ms. This good gesture should be elevated to a permanent arrangement³⁰.

This together with speedy resolution of the delays in issuing of water-use licences,

concluding the spectrum allocation process, policy uncertainty in the mining sector, and greening the economy particularly in the energy sector are quick easy wins to get the economy going and unlocking investments and jobs.

The lockdown has presented the education sector with an opportunity to strengthen the new methods of providing education through various platforms such as radio, television, online. The existing relations with the private sector should be strengthened so that even learners from disadvantaged backgrounds can benefit.

The challenges in reopening schools showed unions, school governing bodies and government can work together to resolve challenges within the sector. When such strong relationships are forged education would benefit as all sectors would be given platform to contribute meaningfully. What is required is a genuine engagement in which all parties are accorded the respect they deserve.

The Covid-19 crisis presented academics with an opportunity to develop resources that can be used in the upcoming academic year, allowing them to incorporate more blended learning techniques and review the curriculum. Transition to remote learning is not going to be easy for all PSET institutions. Experience has shown that quality online learning requires that the teaching material is prepared by a professional instructional designer, that the lecturers need to be pedagogically trained for delivering programmes remotely and the students need to be equally exposed to the pedagogy of online learning.

28 http://www.thedti.gov.za/news2020/CFP_NVP.pdf

29 https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202004/43207gen238.pdf

30 Eye Witness News, 1 April 2020, <https://ewn.co.za/2020/04/01/lockdown-lessons-sa-pupils-turn-to-online-learning-to-keep-studies-on-track>,

6.3.3. Opportunity to improve plight of vulnerable

COVID-19 has highlighted the disproportionate negative impact on the disabled and on women particularly in terms of gender-based violence and gives an opportunity for accelerated implementation of various policy proposals. For persons with disabilities this would be accelerating the implementation of the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. GBVF can be dealt with through implementing the National Strategic Plan on GBVF. Quick wins include Sustained Media Campaign to change behaviour. - (TV, Social Media, Radio, newspaper & All media Houses to be part of the campaign) (#365 Days); Social Mobilization and Community Dialogues

on stereotypes, culture and norms & changing behaviour; Including of GBVF on the COVID-19 District Dashboard to enable Ministers and Deputy Ministers visiting Districts soon to mobilise communities to fight the pandemic and encourage them to end the culture of silence on GBVF; e.g. Neighbourhood watch teams and street committees; urgently constituting a team of detectives (similar to the Hawks) who are dedicated on a daily basis to follow-up these cases, trace perpetrators, arrest and bring them to justice; facilitating the establishment of a social movement for men that provides solutions on what they can do NOW to end violence against women and employing Social Workers to serve as change agents and break the cycle of violence

6.4. Threats

6.4.1. Challenges to decisions of the state

Alert level 4 shows there is a general misinterpretation of regulations among different stakeholders as the country moves down the alert levels of the risk-adjusted strategy for economic activity, including the rise in litigations against the State challenging the national lockdown regulations. This included the judgment delivered by the Gauteng Division of the High Court on 2 June 2020, declaring regulations under alert levels 3 and 4 of the national lockdown invalid and unconstitutional. This is one of over a 100 litigations against the state. This suggests confidence in the state's response could wane if regulations lack rationality by some citizens.

6.4.2. Inadequate budgets and loss of employment

Threats arise from the continued need for resources as the pandemic rages on. Intensified screening, contract tracking and testing of citizens for Covid-19, and effective clinical management of those who are symptomatic, will assist in curbing spiralling costs. However, these require investment of significant resources to achieve. It will be a formidable challenge for government to simultaneously address the disruptive impact of Covid-19 on the country's socio-economic development plans, and simultaneously address the inequalities that predate Covid-19.

The effect of the lockdown has also posed challenges for local government in the collection of revenue and further threatening future financial viability of municipalities. The increase in the job losses and cuts on salaries has affected businesses and households from meeting their financial commitments including the payment of municipal services. In turn, municipalities are more and more hard-pressed to meet their payment obligations to creditors. All of this does not augur well for local government sector in which many municipalities were already in financial and governance disarray prior to the pandemic.

Job losses are a major threat to government's response. Under Alert Level 4, certain manufacturing and mining activities were permitted to operate between 30% and 50% of employment capacity. The unintended consequence of this is that firms may find better ways of increasing production with fewer employees, potentially leading to retrenchments in the future.

Transport industry experienced loss of income resulting from reduced carrying capacity and operating times without any financial relief for transport operators. The costs of compliance to transport regulations relating to loading capacity restrictions to ensure social distancing seems to have been externalised to commuters, with hiking of transport costs by some taxi operators owing to the half-hesitant government approach to assisting the sector financially.

Corruption and financial mismanagement in both the public and private sectors remain an ever present threat. Increase in emergency procurement in the areas of health, education, water services and many others present particular risks in terms of

non-adherence to procurement prescripts, potentially leading to corruption. Further, the UIF TERS is one of the most vulnerable schemes to corruption due to the value of amounts processed and the number of beneficiaries applying.

The likelihood of a significant rise in infections at the workplaces, particularly in vulnerable sectors, remains a major risk and has the potential to limit the economy to operate at full capacity. The identified hotspots are areas with high levels of economic activity. The shortage of test kits for COVID-19 and longer turnaround times for results, which will be more pronounced as South Africa approaches its peak, will to some extent derail economic recovery efforts by disrupting operations as more positive results stream in.

China has been a key partner in Africa's infrastructure development through the Belt and Road initiative (BRI)-a multibillion dollar plan to link Asia, Europe and Africa. Emerging challenges in China resulting from the pandemic can result in it focusing on its internal pressing challenges much to the disadvantage of its partners, particularly Africa. South Africa's infrastructure pipeline is in need of funding and will not be immune to the foregoing shocks.

6.4.3. Instability

Ending the enhanced social assistance in October will be difficult and might lead to instability. South Africa had about 24% of the population (14 million people) who are food insecure (experience hunger) prior to COVID-19 pandemic. With COVID-19 lock-down food security has become a national crisis and about 50% of the population are at risk of food insecurity. Loss of income has resulted in food insecurity. There already are calls for government to convert the COVID-19 grant into a Basic Income Grant, a difficult call to respond under the constrained fiscal environment.

Instability can also arise in case financial resources run out for the COVID-19 grant. The funds budgeted for COVID-19 grant were expected to have a slow uptake beginning from 743 000 beneficiaries in May, rising up to 2.4 million only in October. Yet 6.4 million applications were received in May. Individuals who feel they qualify will become more agitated when seeing others receive their grants and they do not.

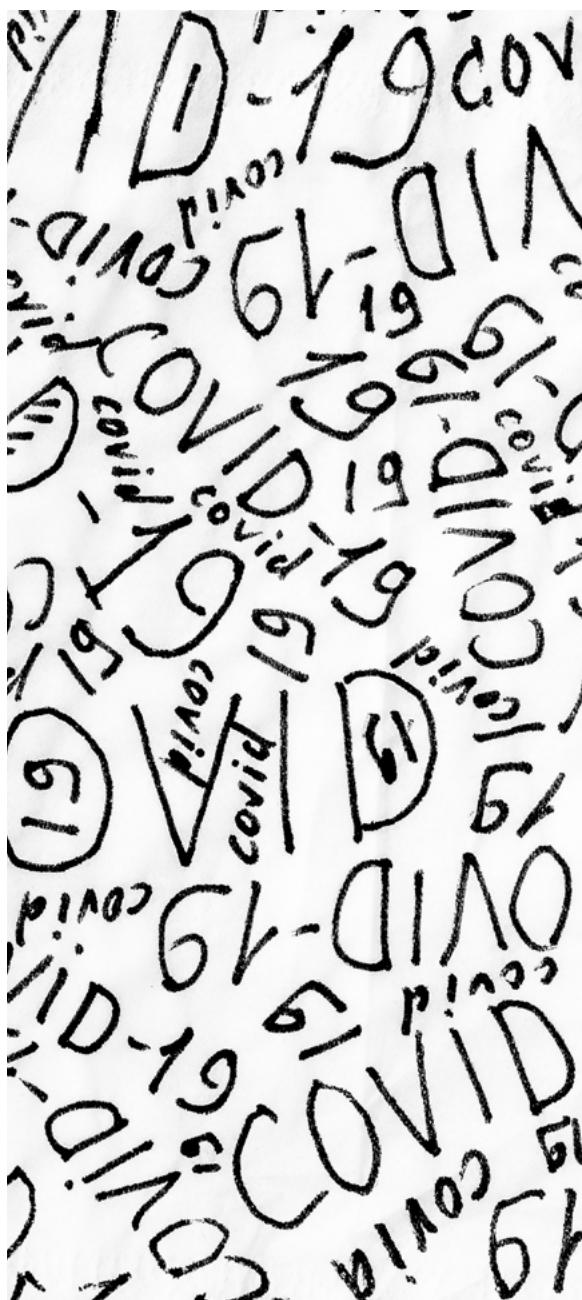
The externalisation of compliance cost to the passengers in taxi industry has a potential to cause economic and financial distress resulting in social discontent. The issue of taxi subsidisation still needs to be tackled by government.

6.4.4. Loses in gains made by society

The outbreak has created fears that racism and xenophobia may rise. Furthermore, migrants, particularly those without documents, avoid hospitals for fear of identification and reporting, ultimately presenting

late with potentially more advanced disease status (Devakuma, Shannon, Abubakar, 2020).

Longer periods of school closures can result in an increased risk of dropout among learners, particularly from lower income households and some studies also suggest increase probability of teenage pregnancies. Drop in family incomes due to the pandemic or lay off will affect learner attendance in fee paying schools.



7. Next steps

The country's response to Covid-19 has shifted from a national and provincial focus, to the development, implementation and monitoring of district-level responses to the disease. COGTA is in the process of developing 52 District Profiles, which will be used by political champions for monitoring the District Covid-19 response. These will be completed in June 2020 for immediate use afterwards.

South Africa has been lauded on the speed and measures it put in place to delay infections, while it puts in place measures that will enable it to respond to possible increases in infections. It was an important step and has largely succeeded in delaying the infection rate and containing it, the difficult part is how to ease the country's lockdown and to revive an economy that has been ailing even before the lockdown in the context of a surge in new infections.

Going forward leadership in the state, labour, industry and civil society is needed to cooperate in balancing the need to contain rising infections while putting in place policy actions that will make it possible for the economy to operate optimally. Systemic challenges facing the country have been laid bare by the pandemic, leadership on how to deal with these challenges in the midst of limited available budgets from the state and financially struggling citizens. Increased unemployment as a result of an already massively weakened economy, will be worse because of lockdown and the resulting fallout as companies close down or retrench many workers. Hard decisions lie ahead as the country tries to cope with the pandemic in addition to the social and economic challenges facing the country going forward.

Report produced by:

Mr. Thulani Masilela, Sector Specialist, Health,

Dr. Thabo Mabogoane, Sector Specialist, Basic and Higher Education

Mr. Hassen Mohamed, Sector Specialist, Local Government and Human Settlements

Ms. Josephilda Nhlapo-Hlope, Sector Specialist, Social Protection, Nation Building and Social Cohesion

Mr. Zakhele Mdlalose, Sector Specialist, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs

Mr. Mpumzi Bonga, Sector Specialist, Infrastructure and Operation Phakisa

Ms. Monica Kenneth, Sector Specialist, Justice, Crime Prevention, and Safety, and International Relations

Mr. Nyiko Mabunda, Sector Specialist, Decent employment and inclusive economic growth

