

# *Vulnerability and Indigence Assessment in South Africa*

## *A Civil Society **Emergency** Response to COVID-19*



**A South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID)  
Transdisciplinary Study**



**UNISA** | university of south africa PRESS

**Convened by Vuyo Mahlati | Foreword by Zanele Mbeki**

**Coordinator & Editor-in-Chief: Lulama Makhubela | Co-Editors: Maureen Tong and Pali Lehohla**



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On behalf of the South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID), I am pleased to release this Executive Summary on *Vulnerability and Indigence Assessment in South Africa: A Civil Society Emergency Response to COVID*. This SAWID Transdisciplinary Study was initiated and convened by the late Dr Vuyokazi Mahlati. Thus, it is completed in honour of her memory.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This 16-page high-level Report gives a synopsis of a rapid desktop transdisciplinary study that uses literature review and case study approach to underpin its approach and outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has sharpened the fault lines in our society regarding the socio-economic situation and health provisioning. In contrast, all sectors of society have been impacted one way or another, the poor among whom women are over-represented due to poverty's feminisation, bear the brunt of the pandemic's negative impact. For this reason, the study asks, among other questions, what are the macro and microeconomic effects of COVID-19 on South African women. The Government's response and its programmes to provide short - term relief to the most distressed sectors of the country and the most vulnerable communities has highlighted the deficiencies in its delivery systems. This situation prompted SAWID, given its historical focus on addressing poverty and inequality challenges to undertake this study. The intended outcome was implementing strategies for poverty eradication, to make recommendations on how to better manage the Government's response, given the fact the impact of the pandemic will be felt for many years to come.

## **STUDY PURPOSE**

This summary report is the outcome of a six-month rapid transdisciplinary desktop study. The reason for this study began in the first week of the country's level five lockdown. It followed Dr Mahlati's concern about the plight of indigent people, especially women, in adversity, many of whom were already struggling with sustaining their families. Therefore, the study started early enough to assist in re-imagining policies and approaches towards assisting the vulnerable in South Africa. SAWID has observed, since its inception in 2003, that as far as guarantees of social intervention contained in the Constitution are concerned, there are

structural gaps that deliberately work against women and these gaps persist to this day. SAWID, therefore, undertook to study these gaps and make proposals.

### **Theoretical Framing of the Study**

The study uses a feminist approach to unpack the socio-economic effects of COVID-19. It makes a distinction between feminist policymaking and gendered policymaking. This distinction is important because gendered or mainstream approaches assume that the frame is non-negotiable and that women's interests are addendums to main, male-defined State priorities and resources. A feminist analysis suggests that the policymaking model needs to shift and centralise women as assessment units, budget allocation, state planning, and primary expenditure. The study gives an overview to contrast gendered economic interventions and feminist economics in addressing COVID-19 in the South African context. Gender-responsive budgeting is a good starting point for a feminist approach to policymaking.

The transdisciplinary study is framed and underpinned by an eclectic approach anchored in the Theory of Change considering the above approach. It draws strengths from the Design Thinking and Systems Thinking approaches with the gender lens as an entry-point at the centre of critical discourse. In this context, eclecticism means that the researcher draws from different philosophical sources and reconstructs a theoretical position to explain the study's approach. The Critical Reflexive Model, which forms this methodology, takes a holistic ecological approach and uses case studies to create meaning and identity.

### **Methodological Procedures**

The South African Constitution promises several socio-economic benefits to its citizens, framed as human rights in the Bill of Rights. These rights include social services, disaster management and the right to social relief when conditions of distress emerge from disasters. These are further elaborated in the National Development Plan Vision 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the United Nations provide international support for ensuring socio-economic support to the vulnerable. However, since its inception, SAWID recognised that most women would not take advantage of the State's many opportunities under the new democratic dispensation because most women were held back by poverty. To that end, SAWID's poverty eradication project, the Development Caravan and later the Zenzele Development Programme implemented by the Women's Development Banking Trust (WDB Trust) were initiated to target

individuals, families, and communities. The focus on women is that they are part of families that include men and women in their diversity.

The methodological procedures for the 6-months rapid desktop study followed secondary data analysis and case study content analysis supplemented by webinar discussions with policy formulators and gender activists. An analysis of the content review of the current state of policies and programmes for effective social protection, food security and service delivery systems, while proposing ways to improve these areas going forward was done by a team of 17 researchers. The analysis was to ensure that government and affiliated stakeholders can enhance the mammoth efforts already conducted.

## **CHAPTER SUMMARIES**

The research study is presented in Six Chapters.

**Chapter One** gives context and background to the study's transdisciplinary nature in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It foregrounds how a health crisis aggravated the socio-economic difficulties that South Africa continues to face.

The introductory Chapter gives the contextual background of the transdisciplinary study convened by SAWID in response to COVID-19 emergency facing the vulnerable and indigent in South Africa. The Chapter highlights the stark adverse health challenge from a global and continental manifestation of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a cursory dipstick into South Africa as a point of departure. Through a short synopsis, the Chapter presents the complex disposition of the research emanating as a predominate health challenge with associated higher morbidity and mortality levels yet of humanitarian proportion. Additionally, this challenge has led to unprecedented geo-political and socio-economic dynamics rooted in a quandary of inequality and gendered vulnerability and communities' marginalisation. The Chapter further provides a brief landscape of what is prospected in the context of COVID-19 casting a gender lens to elicit the nature of disparities to be addressed. Through these, SAWID foregrounds the COVID-19 crisis through four Workstreams: Unpacking COVID-19; Social Protection; Food Crisis and Delivery Systems that comprised the core of the study. Underpinned by the Theory of Change with eclectic approaches borrowing from the Systems Thinking and Design Thinking methodologies, the Chapter gives a brief discussion of the study's theoretical framing. A

discussion on the study method is followed by measures and tools and the instruments to address poverty and hunger, including the associated policy gaps. The study's organisation gives expression on each of the six Chapter's relevance of the overall goals aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (AfSD) and the Agenda 2063: the Africa we want. The Chapter concludes with limitations to the study.

**Chapter Two** uses a feminist approach to unpack the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 in light of systems in place before and since the onset of the pandemic. Thus, the Chapter is linked to sustainable goals 3, 5, 8 and 10, through relating to ensuring the health, gender equality and economic growth while seeing the need to reduce inequality. These systems are critiqued using the gendered lens to recommend areas that need further development to be better suited for women who constitute the vulnerable and indigent communities. The Chapter answers the fundamental questions: What is the impact of COVID-19 cash transfers on South African women? What are the macro and microeconomic effects of COVID-19 on South African women? Finally, the Chapter gives a pictorial overview to contrast gendered economic interventions and feminist economics in addressing COVID-19 in the South African context.

**Chapter Three** seeks to establish whether the basket of social protection measures provided by the State has reached the vulnerable and indigent in South Africa and what extent it has happened. The policies reviewed are not only related to social policy but also include those that cover basic services. Thus, the Chapter is linked to sustainable development goals 1, 2, 6, 8 and 10 as seen in Figure 10 as it touches on ending poverty and hunger while ensuring sustained water management, economic growth and inequality reduction. An analysis of whether these social protection measures result in self-reliance and sustainability instead of dependability is conducted with a specific emphasis on the pandemic's effect on these measures. The relevance of current social protection measures for women and children are also assessed critically to establish their effectiveness during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa.

**Chapter Four** interrogates the current structure of South Africa's food system. In particular, it aims to identify the elements that compromise the national food system, whether the national policy framework has enabled an effective response to COVID-19 regarding food security and what is needed to make South Africa's food security policy framework more resilient? Consequently, the Chapter tackles sustainable goals 2, 12 and 15 seen in Figure 10 as it is concerned with ending hunger, ensuring sustainability in consumption and production, and sustainable land use. Finally, the Chapter recommends a new framework to ensure food

security with the specific catering of indigent and vulnerable groups.

**Chapter Five** examined current service delivery systems to determine their driving factors and future potential. The main research question was, does the Government have efficient delivery systems to deliver services under emergency and disaster conditions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, within the Disaster Management Act No 57 of 2002? The Chapter addressed this research question by describing current delivery systems, showing their effectiveness and expounding how the Disaster Management Act provided poor groups. Specific measures intended for COVID-19 and whether these were accessible or not to the vulnerable are discussed as various hindrances experienced during this process. Thus as seen in Figure 11, the Chapter speaks to sustainable development goals 9 (sustainable industrialisation and innovation), 16 (promoting peace, inclusivity and justice for sustainable development) and 17 (global partnership). Finally, the Chapter used the case study method to acknowledge NGOs and civil society as an extension of the Government. Case study analysis signalled that the social contract between Government and society requires reinforcement through partnerships between civil society and the State.

**Chapter Six** gives a synthesis of all chapters in the Report. The Chapter provides study recommendations and policy implications across all the themes discussed in the various chapters and identifies possible future research areas.

## **STUDY KEY FINDINGS**

The Report makes a quick scan on each of the five chapters before it proffers recommendations:

**In Chapter One**, SAWID asserts that South Africa's response to COVID-19 should not only be engendered but that it should be done from a transdisciplinary approach anchored in systems thinking. This thinking is not a commonly used approach in Government. Upon their establishment in 2003 SAWID noted that the structures and theatres of citizens' engagement with Government and the State more generally are opaque. These engagements by design are about citizens going to the State, thereby undermining the in situ solutions of role players favouring officialdom and rigid stovepipe based solutions. This approach is a sojourn for partial access to a societal challenge so complex that its inherent genetic deformity from design fails a day

one test. In this Chapter, SAWID has assembled evidence about its mission and its commitment to executing it consistently in its fight to eradicate poverty.

Sadly, the study preliminarily finds that the organisation and management of the package of basic services deployed for addressing poverty by Government, are opaque to society and have blind spotted fundamental prerequisites of the issues that most concern women. In their approach to eradicating poverty, SAWID heavily relied on science and human agency, and in this regard, they are unequivocal on gender-based approaches that can and should unlock value. To this end, the Report points to 'man' made blockades of straitjacket policy domains, a near fetish disposition to neoliberal thinking and action, and a serious aversion to women's human agency, especially, to the challenges of poverty.

The Report suggests that SAWID remains true to the mission and has assembled scientific methods not only to interrogate poverty. However, through action research, they have defined the struggle against poverty and women agency's supremacy in that terrain. In fact, in the context of COVID-19, evidence on who bears the pandemic's brunt is that it is women. The feminisation of poverty is in domestic and filial matters, economy and livelihoods, lives and health, social and relational, and violence, particularly domestic and GBV. In all these, the stakes are heavily loaded against women. The face of societal distress is that of a woman.

**In Chapter Two**, SAWID poses a specific challenge on the form and content of policies. This challenge is not only in respect of those relating to cash transfers but rather the "hard" macro and micro-economic framework that South Africa has pursued for years. SAWID provides a historical lens on how colonialism executed its mission and draws lessons that suggest the colonial project has not been abandoned. However, it is abetted by government policies favouring the market as an allocator of production factors and distribution of rewards - the so-called tendency to move towards equilibrium. The question is how fair and developmental, especially to women, is a macro-economic fundamental that excludes forty per cent of the labour force from the dignity of work. SAWID observes that whilst human agency of women, in particular, have made gains in exacting benefits in the ongoing dialogues with the Government on some of the stringent policies of the lockdown that left most women without lives and livelihoods. These gains have neither been adequate nor transformative. Poverty is complex. Addressing it requires holistic immersion of those pioneering in these struggles.

**In Chapter Three**, SAWID unpacks the concept and practices in Social Protection. It identifies four categories in which these measures fall. SAWID itemises these measures and has elegantly identified how South Africa opted for a stovepipe design, be it by accident or intention. In this regard, SAWID identified gaps and valleys between these stovepipes. Through these gaps, women especially are on a free fall and take a sail in vain with no pillars to hold onto for survival. The COVID-19 pandemic has made these empty policy valleys spectacularly visible, whilst the design of protection stands on five pillars that are kept compact by design. Society cannot find itself slipping through the gaps. Of these social protection measures, the first is Protective measures which come as safety nets. The second is Preventative measures that provide social insurance. The third is Promotional measures that come in the form of microfinance. The fourth is Transformative measures that engage the rights platform, and there is an emergent fifth - the Developmental social protection model focusing on eradicating poverty. It is the choice to eradicate poverty that SAWID made earlier that is transformative and leave no gaps in social protection measures.

**In Chapter Four**, on the South African Food System's performance in the context of the vulnerable, poor and indigent, SAWID identifies the excessive development limiting, growth sucking and poverty propelling monopolistic practices in the production and distribution of food. They further expound and unleash a critique on the government stovepipe designs that obstruct the developmental theatre for food production and consumption. Detailed mapping of government institutions in this space reveals that the strategy can hardly fit the five-pronged social protection paradigm. The Government may dream and intend development, but their design rejects it. In this context, when SAWID in 2003 decided on starting with poverty eradication, a somewhat emergent and nascent strategy in social protection was established. They illustrated that they started with the end in mind and formed the veritable platform upon which the other four social protection measures would culminate. Skinning the political economy of food systems lays bare the fact that underdevelopment is a matter of deliberate design.

**In Chapter Five**, SAWID explores the terrain of Social Relief to Sustainable Self-Reliance Initiatives. They refer to the supreme law - the Constitution - wherein it provides for the protection of socio-economic rights including social services, disaster management and the right to social relief when conditions of distress emerge from disasters. Here again, significant gaps arise from the design, that has made the Department of Social Development the theatre of struggle against poverty. The Department was proven to be woefully



underprepared as it has no inkling and design for the know-me-systems - a classical failure has been in the delivery of R 350 distribution for COVID-19 relief.

## **STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Several recommendations emerge and can be viewed from two perspectives. There are those related to form or structure and those that are transformational. As a significant and lead actor, the Report notes how the Government has held onto form and structures and abandoned the constitutional imperatives of transformation. The authors argue that clinging to form and structure has taken the locus and stadia of struggle away from poverty, where it belongs to halls of smoke and mirrors. The main constraints to addressing poverty are the timidity with which policies fail to confront the transformational pillars that inspire eradication of poverty but instead abet it as part of a natural state, and approve of dependency as perpetually desirable. It is for these reasons that the following transformational and related structural recommendations are made.

**Recommendation 1:** The challenge is poverty, and the choice to be made is to eradicate it. Such a choice must be a holistic enjoined commitment, especially with the Government who by ascendancy to power through the democratic election is a rights holder to policymaking. In this regard SAWID having taken the posture of eradicating poverty must ensure that the policy levers of protective social development start with the end in mind - eradicating poverty - in that way as a start, it is possible to transform South Africa towards the landscape of developmental social protection; in that regard, the following strategies are recommended in the prosecution of poverty:

- i. delink basic livelihood from wage labour and begin to develop policies that deliver an economically secure future for all;
- ii. Providing a basic income of R561 corresponding to the food poverty line to everyone who does not receive a grant and impact 33 million people aged 18 to 60 at a cost R18.6 billion per month;
- iii. Get South African Reserve Bank, which has foreign exchange reserves worth R800 billion, fund a basic income for six months;
- iv. Impose wealth taxes, land and financial transactions; and ringfence that revenue for poverty eradication measures;

- v. Enhance the multiplier (or secondary) impact of the new spending to generate a higher rate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and new tax revenue sources that would offset a significant portion of the costs.

**Recommendation 2:** The design and execution strategies must be knowledge-driven and evidence-based. In this regard, the Critical Reflective Model is key and rests on three fundamental pillars of:

- i. Systems thinking,
- ii. Design thinking; and
- iii. Participatory action research.

Further, the strategies must:

- i. Capitalise on StatsSA novel design of COVID-19 Vulnerability Index released on 14 December 2020;
- ii. Enhance StatsSA capacity to generate small area data that is useable by women agencies
- iii. Align intergovernmental frameworks to their intention in order to optimise their functionality and optimise delivery;
- iv. Enforce all enabling legal and policy frameworks;
- v. Remain true to The NDP emphasis on building and strengthening of people's capabilities which places citizens at the centre of governance

**Recommendation 3:** In light of the limitations observed in Chapter One, the study concludes that further work is still needed to ensure complete and sustainable self-reliance and empowerment among vulnerable populations in South Africa. This limitation could be achieved through an empirical longitudinal study envisioned to take this work forward.

**Recommendation 4:** To deal with morbid form and structure that has held back women's emancipation that the Report raises, SAWID must adopt a natural and deliberate path the participatory action research through which praxis and learning are born. The paradigm shift will transform the stadia of struggle from form and structure to action with women in situ as agents of their change; in specific terms

- i. The Government must recognise that expenditure and taxation policies have implications for women and men and differentially affect their ability to contribute to the market and the care households and communities. This difference is especially to be recognised in the context of COVID-19 and relief deployment.
- ii. The Zenzele Development Programme of the Women's Development Banking Trust (WDB Trust) is a SAWID Development Caravan replicator. Zenzele aims to implement the three United Nations Social Protection requirements. Firstly, Zenzele facilitates access to 18 dimensions of government services by reaching out to vulnerable and indigent families by visiting them at their homes to ensure that they know the services and benefit from such services.
- iii. The Government should learn from the Zenzele Development Facilitators outreach strategy to the poor communities of barefoot service providers as a worthy vehicle, especially in the light of the urgent deepening health, economic and emergent social crisis.
- iv. Similarly, in the Early Child Development (ECD) sector, the Kago Ya Bana project implemented by the Hollard Foundation Trust illustrates the value of the empowering women in poor municipalities to enable them to contribute towards the national goal of achieving universal access to quality ECD, through sustaining this largely women-driven sector in our country. The Kago Ya Bana project leveraged its existing relationship with the Government to draw attention to the day mothers' plight in the ECD sector during the COVID - 19 hard lockdown.

**Recommendation 5:** SAWID initiated transdisciplinary research. This effort must be sustained for SAWID to secure longevity and legacy of emancipation through women agency. Its posture in terms of the terrain of struggle must learn together, empower and progress to new challenges. In this regard SAWID should adopt participatory action research that plays a self-liquidating catalytic role in the struggles of women;

**Recommendation 6:** As a knowledge-cum-activist driven emancipatory institution led primarily by women issues, SAWID must participate actively in policy research and design with demonstrable long-term effects on societal transformation. It should be a force and recognised voice and contributor to economic and social policy in South Africa and international relations. In this regard SAWID must create a policy research arm that will link up with other research institutions that are seized with policy designs including in the main poverty and macroeconomic issues;

**Recommendation 7:** South Africa is said to be food secure, yet its population is afflicted by hunger, food insecurity, and poverty without meaningful food access strategies, especially during a disaster. This anomaly speaks to the fundamental shift that has to be made both in land ownership and access to productive agricultural assets that provide nutrition at different levels of geography, food production and food consumption units, such as households, community formations like schools, churches, stokvels, burial societies and soup kitchens including emergencies. The Government should break the vertical integration of food production and distribution systems by following SAWID women advocated food production and nutrition initiatives that are community-based with shorter geographic multi-channel supply chains and variable social exchange formations to create a broad-based market for food exchange and the food value chain systems; in this regard-

- i. Supporting SAWID in driving door-sized vegetable gardens to instil self-reliance and food-security psychology is sorely needed from the Government to raise resilience and eliminate vulnerability and indigence.
- ii. Relief interventions on their own are not enough, and that self-reliance enhancing approaches with vulnerability assessment and indigent strategies would need to become the focus.
- iii. The SAWID/Zenzele approach has proven its mettle as being closer to United Nations standards and norms than the government approach through the Department of Social Development and should therefore be adopted.

**Recommendation 8:** A social protection system that is anchored in the eradication of poverty should be put in place as opposed to the multiple, often, contradictory stovepipes that are in place for this purpose;

**Recommendation 9:** A deliberate strategy that is system thinking and system design based should be put in place to unify the five areas of protective, preventative, promotional, transformative and developmental social protection to shift the stadia of action from the centre to where the action is required;

**Recommendation 10:** In order to drive sustainable development at the local level, SAWID has, in collaboration with other organisations that focus on socio-economic rights, to play a major educative, planning and activist role in the integrated development programmes using its leverage of knowledge base and practice;

**Recommendation 11:** SAWID has to implement a transformative strategy that minimises the risks of its survival by building formidable broad-based leadership as a grassroots organisation. It should engage the self-liquidating catalytic strategy as a principle and practice of building leadership and programme success and succession;

**Recommendation 12:** For too long, the State's government and governance systems remained dysfunctional, and COVID-19 continues to make the statement very loudly. In this regard to play a self-liquidating catalytic role for conscientising itself and society, SAWID should take on the formal responsibility of embarking on technically proficient tools that evaluate the performance of Government and embed as a unified evaluation and assurance system reports of the Auditor General, the Statistician-General, Constitutional Court Reports and the Public Protector reports as action-oriented tools. These will not be for holding themselves to their mandate and Government accountable only but to apply these as progressive tools for renewal through Theory of Change, Design Thinking and Systems Thinking;

**Recommendation 13:** There has to be strong ethical leadership, and that has to begin at the centre of Government to ensure that the public service is free of corruption;

**Recommendation 14:** For SAWID to inform policy and contribute effectively, SAWID may consider a SAWID Annual Convention where it shares its knowledge and strategies chest on macro-economic policy;

**Recommendation 15:** Government delivery mechanisms should be redesigned along the five social protection pillars driven by the focus on eradicating poverty;

**Recommendation 16:** There has to be a formal interface of SAWID and organisations with similar objectives with parliamentary structures at least annually;

**Recommendation 17:** SAWID should provide gender and feminist programme for the National School of Government to implement system thinking and design thinking in its Government leadership training courses.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is worth reiterating that this study was initiated and convened by the late **Dr Vuyokazi Mahlati**. The study was

intended to be a six-month rapid desktop secondary data analysis to assist in re-imagining policies and approaches towards assisting the vulnerable in South Africa. Vuyo had dedicated 17 years of her life in SAWID to achieve that goal. Sadly, she met her untimely death before the conclusion of the work presented in this publication. It is for that reason that SAWID dedicates this work to her posthumously.

This publication is the product of extensive work done by the 17 researchers spread across the Six Workstreams. To that end, the 17 recommendations presented form the first phase of an anticipated broader longitudinal study. Fundamental is to seek alternative pathways to addressing poverty and unemployment among women, in the main, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

SAWID anticipates that policymakers and sponsors will come on board to ensure that the recommendations presented are brought to life. Implementing these recommendations will require action plans and implementation programmes. While inviting others, it is critical that, in line with appreciative inquiry, women and children will be at the centre of future research. SAWID takes heed of the caution that scientific thinking is "a contested terrain." Local communities can think scientifically, and their language of science has to be deciphered in a negotiated space by both researchers and local communities involved in the research. This study affirms that science and scientific thinking need to be looked at in a broader sense. It cannot be taken that researchers are the only custodians of scientific thinking while excluding the ability to think scientifically located in local communities.

As SAWID, we are the ones we've been waiting for. We hope the knowledge contributions made in this study will bring desired solutions that will make a difference in the lives of the vulnerable and the indigent in our society as we mediate the complex intersectionality and the balancing act between health and the economy.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study raises limitations that in part, were imposed by COVID-19. The study was a rapid desktop literature review and secondary data analysis but also aimed at being inclusive. However, because of lockdown conditions, it was conducted virtually. The researchers in the various Workstreams could not reach out to practitioners in situ rooted in community development.

Secondly, the study points to a practical challenge of continuity and institutional survival of SAWID. The chair who was an accomplished and forceful leader passed on (MHSRIP) raised major challenges to progress on the Report specifically but poses some major challenges that could be existential for SAWID.

Third, the ambition of crowding in the University of South Africa (Unisa) could not take off despite its long-standing partnership with SAWID.

As far as studying government institutions is concerned, this desktop transdisciplinary study's scope was limited to the Department of Social Development (DSD) as one of the delivery departments due to time and resource constraints. The authors of this Report acknowledge that a more extensive study will need to be pursued to receive direct input from the Department and social services recipients. The scope of the desktop research, while it was limited, gave us a glimpse across the Zenzele, Kago Ya Bana and City of Ekurhuleni food bank case studies, into what is possible when collaboration is maximised between Civil Society and Government social impact.

## **PROPOSED FUTURE STUDIES**

This transdisciplinary study is envisaged as the first phase of a broader longitudinal study to understand the extent and severity of the existing social delivery systems' gaps. The study seeks to pursue and unearth holistic solutions to poverty eradication through the social compact between Civil society and Government. The longitudinal study should ensure complete and sustainable self-reliance and empowerment among vulnerable populations in South Africa.

The study reviews systems for ensuring the health, gender equality and economic growth while seeing the need to reduce inequality. The gendered lens is used to critique these systems to recommend areas that need further development to be better suited for women predominant among vulnerable and indigent communities.

There is a need to conduct research that explains and links service delivery under COVID-19.

On behalf of the SAWID Trustees, I endorse this Report. I recommend that it be read with the main Study Report to appreciate the depth of the issues unpacked in the six chapters in tackling vulnerability and indigence assessment from a Civil Society perspective. Further, may I also encourage the readers to peruse

the extensive 58-page Annotative Bibliography that supplements the references cited and consulted to prepare this timely study.



**Ms Thoko Mpumlwana: Chairperson of SAWID Board of Trustees**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thoko Mpumlwana'.

**We are the ones we've been waiting for.**

