

It is generally accepted that South Africa's post Covid-19 economic recovery is largely dependent on the social compact among government, business, labour and civil society. However, historically the conversations among these social partners, especially between government and big business, has often been described as the conversation among the "deaf". What should be the key attributes of such a compact for it to yield the desired outcomes?

South Africa after Covid-19 – redefining the country's social compact. In the first two State Of the Nation Addresses under the administration of Cyril Ramaphosa, the president put emphasis to a “new social compact among all role players, business, labour, civil society and government- to restructure the economy and achieve inclusive growth”. These attempts were strategically taken by the president because, historically in south Africa it has been noticed that there is a lack of consensus among these social partners. Fast pace to the current epoch where a pandemic(COVID-19) has caused massive and rapid devastation to the South African economy, the economic crisis has revealed decades of a frail social compacting that requires a conducive collaboration from all stakeholders to leverage their capacities. It is evident that all sectors are now expected to make firm commitments that will address the economic and social disruptions, caused by the pandemic. What should be the key attributes of such a compact for it to yield the desired outcomes post Covid-19. The key attribute in making this possible is, strong leadership from the government, labour and civil society to increase a meaningful social compact. In South Africa, the government over the years has become corrupt infested with a tendency to mismanage state funds that should be targeted towards public service deliveries. Arguably, it could be stated that the SA government has failed to address issues that continue to divide its people long before Covid-19 occurred. Subsequently, there is a need for the government to commit itself into eradicating corruption so as to provide an environment that builds trust and cooperation with other stakeholders. One of these prominent stakeholders are the business enterprises. The business sector has an important role to play in addressing the health and economic impact of this crisis. Businesses of all sizes must act responsibly to do no harm, care for employees and allow the government to do its job in protecting people. To collaborate with this sector, the government should identify the hardest affected businesses so as assist in keeping them afloat. The government should also increase communication with this social partner so as to douse fears and instill confidence, as well as include business industries in Covid-19 recovery plans. Another important social actor that should work with other stakeholders in building South Africa after Covid-19 is the civil society. The World Economic Forum (2013:8) refers to civil societies as a “wide array of organizations, community groups, NGOs, labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, professional associations and foundations.” For the purpose of this article, a brief highlight is made on the importance of labour unions, faith-based organization, indigenous groups and educational institutions. As Covid-19 has changed how businesses operate, there has been a growing trend towards utilizing technological equipment which essentially replaces human labour. Subsequently, there is a need for the business sector to work with labour unions like COSATU to find tangible solutions to increase employment after Covid-19. There should also be peaceful engagements with government officials to find solutions that will make a positive impact for the current economic situation. Faith based organizations are also important to collaborate with as this is where a majority of South African people are heavily influenced. Government and business sector should increase cooperation with church leaders so as to include them in the reforms that are to take place after the demise of Covid- 19. A heavily marginalized civil society are the indigenous groups. These include the Khoi Khoi and San people in South Africa. They are important to collaborate with as they are the groups most vulnerable to the global pandemic. They have no access to public health and are left to fend for themselves. It is important to notice that they have indigenous knowledge practices on medicine that

should be scientifically researched and not disregarded. Another civil society that is important for social compacting is educational institutions. These institutions include research centers and universities dedicated into finding a scientific solution to the Covid-19 virus. Government, businesses and various stakeholders should increase cooperation with this social actor as it has the potential to find a vaccine or cure to permanently get rid of the virus. However, it has been noticed that other fields of studies have been greatly marginalized in the fight against Covid-19. An example of this, is the field of social sciences. It is important for social scientists to be given the basic resources to conduct research as they deal with human interactions and are the best placed scientists to relay information on how this virus has impacted the masses on the ground. Under the leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa, it is clear the president aims to build social cohesion, however this is only possible if all relevant parties cooperate.

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