

**CONCEPT NOTE**  
**ON THE**  
**SOCIAL SECTOR SUMMIT**

**DATE: 14 JULY 2022**

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# 1. Introduction

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) operate in a changing Global environment and should be able to adapt and develop programmes to mitigate against new global challenges such as: human trafficking, terror Financing and Money Laundering, conflict zone and climate change

In South Africa the role of CSO has evolved over the years and requires CSOs to be able to position themselves as agents of change. Their role could be summarized as advocates for social justice; service providers and are currently forced to develop programmes to address contemporary issues such as gender, LGBTIQ; femicide, Substance Abuse (alcohol and drugs), teenage pregnancy and mental health (suicide).

The dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994 gave birth to complex set of tasks, responsibilities, hope, aspirations, values, and expectations ably captured in the founding provisions in the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996: 3) broadly defined as:

- “Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom.
- Non – racialism and non-sexism.
- Supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law.
- Universal adult suffrage, a national common voters roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness.”
- National unity and social cohesion.

In enabling these complex set of tasks, responsibilities, hope, aspirations, values, and expectations a partnership between government, civil society organizations, and the private sector has always been necessary. Civil society organizations have always been at the center of development by playing a complimentary role to the state or by directly providing services where government cannot reach people. There is no doubt that the civil society organisations have profoundly influenced the emergence, shape, and nature of our modern South African democratic society.

# 2. Background

When discussing the Civil Society sector, acronyms such as NGOs, NPOs, CBOs, FBOs and NPCs are commonly used and sometimes they are used interchangeably.

Civil society is inclusive of Community Groups, Women’s organizations, Professional Associations, self-help groups, Social Movements, Business Associations, Coalitions and Advocacy Groups and a host of other development and social forms of organisations working tirelessly on the social fabric of society.

The CSO sector's importance is often overlooked and understated, but this "third sector of the development equation" makes a substantial and important contribution to maintaining the health of the country's democracy. South African civil society organizations are characterized by diversities stemming from, amongst others, the circumstances and purposes of their establishment, scope of their operations as well as their structural formations. These factors advantageously position and enable them to identify and respond to community needs by providing programmes, services, and support in order to improve people's lives, particularly where markets have failed and where government have not reach-out. The civil society sector further provides a collective voice for the society as it gets involved in issues of common concerns of communities.

The development priorities and targets as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP) emphasize the role to be played by CSOs towards achieving the set targets.

### **3. The role of civil society in promoting development**

The government recognizes the multiple functions civil society organizations play in addressing the main challenges of poverty and inequality at all levels, from the local to the national. The growing strength and sophistication of civil society actors in the development arena presents us with new challenges in building multi-faceted and creative alliances with civil society partners. To design and sustain genuine partnerships with civil society actors, it is essential to understand the civil society sector, assess its capacities and weaknesses, and develop appropriate and effective tools and instruments to engage with civil society organizations.

In addition, behaviour of business in sustainable development when they meet not only economic sustainability, but also environmental and social sustainability (triple bottom line) may be seen as an element a component, or better, a pillar of the larger impression of sustainable development.

- **CSOs** are instrumental in development work but they generally do not have the means and resources to carry out their projects efficiently in a sustainable manner.
- Business desiring to be more responsible do not necessarily have the knowledge, training, or dedication to carry out development programs. In the same token, business has the capital, and efficiency to impact various stakeholders in a positive way. However, despite this capacity, there is a concern that business is not always attuned to the needs of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Collaborations between government; business especially Cooperate Social Investment Component and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with a view to achievement of mutual objectives is aimed at promoting development and improving the quality of life of South Africans and is widely considered an effective

model to resolve social issues. Secondly, there is the acknowledgement that government and CSOs have certain comparative advantages that they bring on board hence the need for partnerships.

There is a need to question the notion of social compact that define the state and the Civil Society sector partnership in both policymaking and service delivery.

Civil Society in South Africa contributes significantly to the social, economic and political development of the country as they often play an intermediary role within society and have the ability to provide particular goods and services where markets have failed or where government falls short. These services and activities range from providing direct services to poor individuals and communities, advocacy, research, and policy analysis to support work such as capacity building, technical assistance and funding to communities. There are a number of CSOs playing amongst others the following key roles:

- **Relief:** CSOs that provide humanitarian assistance to victims of famine and other natural disasters as well as wars and other conflicts.
- **Welfare:** CSOs that provide basic services (health, education, housing, etc.) to children, or adults and/or communities in need.
- **Service provision:** CSOs created to provide training and technical assistance to other CSOs or community organisations.
- **Technical innovation:** CSOs that operate their own projects to pioneer new or improved approaches to problems.
- **Traditional community based:** CSOs such as burial societies, savings groups, etc. this remains a largely unexplored and under-researched aspect of South African civil society.
- **Co-operatives or other non-profit but income producing:** Such CSOs are formed at the local level to collect resources from group members to invest jointly in a specific economic activity.
- **Religious/faith-based:** CSOs created by religious organisations, often with the emphasis on providing welfare services, sometimes combined with religious preaching.
- **Economic interest associations:** CSOs which group people with a similar economic interest such as professional associations.
- **Human rights promotion/protection:** CSOs formed to monitor abuses of human rights, to lobby against such abuses, and to protect and assist victims of abuse.
- **Civic/democracy education:** CSOs that concentrate on public education with regard to civic rights and responsibilities, especially in countries that are newly democratised.
- **Community development:** CSOs formed at community level sometimes with links to a wider association of such CSOs, aimed at promoting the development of their community through service provision.

- **Advocacy:** CSOs that often have no field projects, but that form alliances with other CSOs to educate and lobby on specific policy issues.
- **Networks:** CSOs that provide information and education services to other CSOs.
- **Social Enterprise:** An organization that applies commercial strategies to maximize improvements in human and environmental well-being, rather than maximizing profits for external shareholders. Social enterprises can be structured as a for-profit or non-profit, and may take the form of a co-operative, mutual organization, a social business, or a charity organization.

The sector is a major force in the economy, representing a billion rand a year industry, and a major employer. The conservative estimate has been that economic contribution by the sector has been 3, 2% of GDP's nominal amount. According to the "Review of Philanthropy Report within SA Phase II", the year 2017 was (R1, 1 trillion); therefore; 3, 2% per annum would be around R32 billion. In addition, the report state that 35 million South African's donate R22 billion. Additional contributors are Corporate Social Investment at around R8, 1 billion, whereas the National Lotteries Commission contributes R1, 9 billion. In the same breath, the Government grants to NPOs is R30 billion which highly is impactful for social services, ECD, health and literacy. But then the sector provides additional services including the value of 1 million Volunteers contribution to the country's development which is in the ranges of about R12 billion per annum and additional employment of people that is estimated to be 1,3 million people. (this is extrapolated from the base of 1 million in 2010 at R75 000 pa which totals R95 billion pa)

It against this background that the President made a call for a Social Sector Summit to improve the interface between the state and civil society. This national summit recognizes the important role that the Civil Society sector plays in society, and the enabling environment that government must create for Civil Society to be effective in discharging its function.

## **4. Situational analysis on the civil society sector**

### **4.1 Defining civil society**

CSOs are defined as organized structures and can come in many forms, some informal and some as formal entities such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), CBOs, faith-based organizations (FBOs), among many others. This is when a group of individuals come together for a common purpose, as in to fulfil a particular mandate driven by a particular need. NPO' is sometimes used interchangeably with 'CSO', but NPOs ought to be properly understood as a subset of CSOs involved in development and services charities.

## **4.2 Challenges faced by civil society sector**

Government acknowledges like any other sector the civil society sector is marred by several challenges which are outlined below:

### **4.2.1 Lack of funding and dependency on donor funding**

Civil Society Organisations particularly nonprofit organizations (NPOs) are being affected by the reduction of private donations and government funding and are facing an increasingly competitive business environment in the modern era. In addition, enormous funding challenges globally are due to a range of factors such as the economic crisis, war and conflict, unfavourable/hostile legislation, and health pandemics such as Covid and dependency to donor funding.

In most situations CSOs are funded by donors (Corporate Social Investment funders, international donor organizations, philanthropy funders) and government who often changes funding priorities depending on priorities at the time. External factors have a great influence in the extent to which donor funding is available to civil society organisations. In most cases civil society organisation changes their programmes to fit the agenda of funders. In some cases, these changes are not negotiated in advance and often come with unreasonable demands, or the changes might come due to pandemics and might require a new way of operation. Civil society might not be ready to accommodate such changes. For instance, since the advent of Covid, online and remote working conditions are the new norm and require organisations to have ICT to be relevant.

The South African civil society is not immune to these factors as result financial constraints are most often the top challenge reported by Civil Society in South Africa. Many organisations have collapsed and many others tittering on the brink of collapse due to a combination of lack of financial support, and inadequate funding to the sector from the traditional funding agencies, public sector, and government. This situation is exacerbated by the lack and the inability of CSOs to sustain itself through generating its own income.

It is therefore advisable for civil society to explore new funding opportunities and engage in sustainable funding sources in South Africa in line with the agenda of the developmental state. This includes exploring social entrepreneurship and the available funding opportunities in the green economy. CSOs have vast technical expertise, however these expertise have not been exploited as a source of income, albeit by limited blue-chip organisations usually located in Metropolitan areas and suburbs. The sector should lobby government to amend the national treasury regulations to be favourable to CSOs as well. They should be part of the main stream economy by participating directly in economic activities that seek to rebuild the economy which has declined due to the impact of Covid-19.

#### **4.2.2 Fragmented regulatory framework**

South Africa does not have a single regulatory framework. The current legal framework on CSOs consists of a complex set of legislation, regulations and are administered by different government department and agencies. The key legislations are the NPO Act (NPOs), Companies Act (NPCs), SARS (PBOs) and Trusts (Trust Property Act). These regulations serve mainly three purposes. Firstly, to enable organisations to establish themselves as legal structures. Secondly, it regulates the way in which such legal structures operate. Part of this includes the registration of a legal entity with a government registration authority. Thirdly, it provides tax and other incentives for the sector to financial and otherwise sustains itself.

This regulatory framework has evolved piecemeal, and as a result, the different types of regulation are not aligned. Misalignment within the regulatory scheme arises in two ways. First, the legislation governing legal form, governance and taxation is not harmonised. There is an agency responsible for the coordination of CSOs who are supposed to coordinate themselves without any funding provision for that purpose. The poorly aligned regulatory framework imposes unnecessary costs to the sector.

#### **4.2.3 Transformation in the sector**

Transformation of the sector remain a huge challenge in South Africa. Specifically in the sector there in the context of funding previously advantaged organisations which remain the main recipients of government, international donors and the private sector funding. It could be argued that there are three main challenges associated with transformation in South Africa. Firstly, there is no equitable access to required funding as well as capable workforce to render quality services to the target groups and communities. The previously disadvantaged and emerging civil society organizations are mostly the ones who experience this challenge. Secondly, there is often no equity in the provision of services that CSOs render. Many of the big CSOs are not easily accessible to communities or target groups who live far from (big) cities. Thirdly, some CSOs do not appreciate the importance of equity in the employment of personnel in senior positions in their workplaces as employers and in most cases, they appoint the previously advantaged race group in their governance structures

Commentaries from the role-players within the CSO t sector and newspapers' headlines are full of incidences of the current funding crisis experienced by the sector. There is evidence that the economy flourishes best where there is pluralism, social stability, public trust of institutions and respect for the rule of law. The civil society sector encourages all these factors, thus providing significant support for the growth and sustenance of the market economy. It is therefore imperative for the government to develop regulations that will foster transformation in the sector.

#### **4.2.4 Limited Scope of CSOs in community development**

South Africa is a developmental state which requires a comprehensive community development (Comm Dev) process – one that creates a mutually beneficial balance between economic growth, the environment and societal development. Underpinning this process lies clearly defined social, cultural, economic, infrastructural and environmental objectives which include the: “alleviation of absolute and relative poverty; the correction of glaring inequalities of social conditions (between genders, classes, regions, ethnic groups, social origin, age and disability); provision for personal safety and security; and the tackling of looming threats such as environmental degradation”.

The civil society sector as one of the central role players in community development must integrate both the socio-economic elements of community development in their effort to alleviate poverty, inequality, and other social ills.

However, it has been observed that government is not considering CSOs as viable entrepreneurs when implementing development projects, instead government prefers the private sector to conduct community (facilitation) development. Evidence suggests that this approach is not viable and has stalled the implementation of development projects in many communities. Moreover, it perpetuates funding dependency of CSOs to both the government and donors. It is in this context that CSOs would like to broaden the scope of community development as an enabler to participate in the mainstream economy. This will contribute immensely to job creation which the country is crying for, whilst promoting sustainable livelihoods. This may require legislative reforms to safeguard community development against exploitation by business interests. Comprehensive Community Development cannot be implemented by government alone nor the private sector without partnering with CSOs.

### **5. Effects of COVID - 19 Pandemic in the operation of CSOs**

President Cyril Ramaphosa declared the COVID-19 pandemic a National State of Disaster on 23 March 2020, and the government subsequently instituted a national lockdown restriction to stem the rate of infection and to protect lives. Towards dealing with the challenges posed by the pandemic, the President called upon all role players, including CSOs, to join forces to find rapid and innovative responses to ensure that citizens are not experiencing devastating effects posed by the Covid-19.

The unprecedented crisis necessitated government to put in place urgent and drastic measures to curb the spread of the virus and this affected the way all sectors including government had to do business going forward. All sectors remained affected by the pandemic with serious socio-economic

consequences. Financial pressures, impacting both large and small business enterprises, the social sector including CSOs felt a double blow wherein their ability to sustain normal operations was threatened. Despite the lack of funding, which has been highlighted previously, the Sector was then expected to ramp up their work to respond to the consequences of the pandemic. Throughout forced closures (national lockdown restrictions) for example months of remote work, and inconsistent reopening plans, CSOs were compelled to constantly adjust by implementing different strategies to stay afloat.

One of the major impacts felt by all industries including the CSOs during the COVID-19 pandemic was the sharp switch to remote working conditions and the cancellation of most in-person events. Adapting to these new conditions, CSOs had to strategize on ways to make virtual communication effective to pursue their business in line with COVID 19 guidelines. Whilst some CSOs have successfully navigated through the pandemic and relied heavily on digital platforms switching their efforts to social media and email campaigns, others really struggled keep up with the new normal and could not survive. This was revealed by the study on the impact of COVID 19 conducted by Tshikululu that organisations with operations in more rural provinces appear more likely to have suffered the worst as they experienced a decline in income, did not have necessary infrastructure for digital platforms and had limited/no financial resources to remain afloat than those in urban provinces.

The pandemic exacerbated South Africa's pre-existing crises of poverty and unemployment and towards dealing with the impact thereof, South African Government, through the President Cyril Ramaphosa a COVID-19 Stimulus Package as outlined in the Reconstruction and Recovery Plan was announced and implemented. The main aim of the Recovery Plan was to steer the country back to desirable growth levels in the aftermath of the Coronavirus pandemic. Amongst the interventions implemented to stabilize livelihoods, support CSOs and uplift economic growth including Early Childhood Development Practitioners Stimulus Package, youth enterprises and small-scale farmers, significant stimulus for the creative, cultural, and sporting sector, grants towards extension of food production in a form of food parcels and cooked meals and many others.

The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has exposed social weaknesses and the challenges of the entire world. Businesses collapsing, workers losing their jobs with family heads struggling to put food on the table. Government intervention was an attempt to protect jobs and to support organisations to survive during the period of crisis as they (CSOs) had a critical role to play towards assisting government to deal with the pandemic.

As the pandemic continues to shape 2021's economy, CSOs will realize that the need for flexibility remain a key consideration in planning. With vaccine accessibility and downwards trending case numbers, it is possible for in-person work and fundraising to resume in 2021. CSOs can expect an opportunity to build public trust going forward. Digital engagement such as, virtual platforms and networking events may be integrated into the new normal. As the COVID-19 pandemic begins to wind down, NPOs will continue to see lasting effects on their structures.

## **5.1 Challenges brought about by COVID-19**

During the ongoing pandemic, civil society faced several constraints on its ability to carry out its work, because of recent Covid regulations which resulted in the lockdown, social distancing, and quarantine measures. It is evident that the crisis posed several challenges to the roles of civil society in monitoring, accountability, advocacy, and promoting social justice and some of the challenges included the following:

- Organisations experienced a decline in their income since the lockdown and experienced difficulties in raising funds to carry out their operations throughout lockdown This was due to different contributory factors such as inability to run income generating activities, late payments from donors and funders etc.
- In ability to adjust to the new normal due to lack of adequate resources and necessary technological infrastructure to be able to function remotely.
- The Relief funding set by government e.g., the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), falling under the Department of Employment and Labour, put a special benefit in place to pay employees who are not being paid or are being paid less because of COVID-19. Most of the small sized organisations could not benefit for the Relief as they did not comply with the requirements, for example their employees were not registered with UIF and thus could not qualify.

To adapt to our new world, most organisations have adopted new ways of working to ensure that they remain relevant and operational and are able to deliver services to communities. This proposes that organisations have maintained a positive outlook about the long-term future. The hard lessons must be learned from the mistakes made under the COVID-19 pandemic to equip the country for the next series of challenges to come, including action on the climate crisis. What is clear is that in responding to such crisis, the state should recognize the value of civil society and partner with it, across a diverse range of civil society forms and responses. Doing so will lead to more joined-up and effective responses that respect rights.

## 6. The size and the scope of the sector

Whilst South Africa does not have an integrated national data base of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), evidence suggests that CSOs continue to rise in dominance and status. And the largest growing subset of CSOs is the Non-Profit Organisations with an increase in the number of registrations under the NPO Act. The number of registered NPOs has grown from 198 873 by the end of March 2018 to almost 256 212 by end of March 2022, representing a growth of 11% on average per annum.

The NPO data base remains the most comprehensive database of Non-Profit Organisations (NPO) and is held by the National Department for Social Development Non Profit Organisations Directorate .

### 6.1 National Sector Breakdown of Registered NPOs

Sector	Registered
Business and Professional Associations, Unions	2 910
Culture and Recreation	19 262
Development and Housing	70 060
Education and Research	11 530
Environment	2 559
Health	14 882
International	107
Law, Advocacy, and Politics	5 506
Philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion	1 864
Religion	35 155
Social Services	92 377
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>256 212</b>

## **7. Civil Society and government partnership**

Collaboration between Civil Society and Government is a critical element that will ensure there is mutual trust and provision of service delivery to most vulnerable communities. Therefore, fostering collaboration is of utmost importance. There is a general consensus amongst stakeholders that to a greater extent the relationship between the government and Civil Society is less than satisfactory. There are often attitudinal problems that get into the way of a smooth and mutually supportive working relationship. It is also widely acknowledged that most of these relationships change over time becoming better or worse due to a variety of factors and due to experience of development problems and policy options. Very minimal has been done by government to ensure that there is regular, effective, and constructive engagement within civil society organisations itself and with government and other stakeholders. This “ad hoc” form of engagement has resulted in a break-down of trust and lack of tolerance towards government and the sector. This could be observed and confirmed by lack of tolerance and by the sector. However, despite the various doubts and misgivings expressed powerfully by both partners, there exists a strong body of experience of good collaboration between government and CSOs, however; this has not been adequately documented, recognized, built on and absorbed into development policies.

The planned Social Sector Summit as pronounced by the President of the Republic of South Africa, seeks to initiate a mechanism on how capacity of CSOs can be enhanced through creating platforms that promotes generation of new knowledge and innovation based on the current challenges faced by the sector, learning, and sharing amongst the sector and relationship building for effective collaboration. It also seeks to propose mechanisms on strengthening relationship between the Sector and its stakeholder, i.e. government in particular.

This is relevant in the current context, where the country is still recovering from the distractive 2021 July civil unrest, unprecedented high unemployment rate, exorbitant energy (fuel and paraffin) prices and the rolling electricity loadshedding by ESKOM. All these factors have an adverse effect to the civil society sector which finds itself as recipients and advocates for social justice.

It is common cause that when government is seen as non-response to such challenges, the society at large would expect CSOs to advocate on their behalf.

Therefore, this Summits takes place at the critical time when the country is experiencing unprecedented socioeconomic challenges. The objective of the Social Sector Summit is to discuss common issues and seek solutions to problems shared by Civil Society Organisations. These would entail issues that relate to economic constraints, unemployment (youth and women), skills capacity, regulatory framework within which Civil Society operates.

There is an expectation that some form of collaboration would be forged through the agreement framework which hopefully will contribute to a social compact. It is hoped that this agreement framework will map a clear policy direction favorable to CSOs. Moreover, one of the anticipated outcomes of the summit is the development of an implementation plan with clear deliverable, time frames, roles and responsibilities. Hopefully this will push government to deliver timeously on agreed interventions, whilst the CSOs will collaborate with government to achieve the desired outcomes, rather than the current confrontation which is characterized by civil unrest and litigation.

## **8. The national social sector summit for civil society**

As discussed above, the summit is intended to initiate a national discourse on pertinent developmental priorities that affects government, business, and civil society. In the midst of it is poverty which is a violation of basic human rights and more so because poverty eradication is a central principle of both national and international development agendas and South Africa is not immune. Moreover, the implications of functioning under COVID 19 restrictions have yielded negative economic conditions and exacerbated unfavorable CSOs operational conditions.

Based on the listed challenges, it is therefore important to engage in a conversation that seek to explore how government can strengthen partnership with CSOs towards contributing to Economic Recovery Strategy for sustainability.

The Date of the National Summit is envisaged to be held on the 04-05 August 2022.

### **8.1. The Theme of the Social Summit**

Based on the environment and challenges that the summit is seeking to address, the chosen theme that is most suitable is as follows:

*Fostering Social Cohesion to enable economic participation in communities”*

### **8.2. Overall mission (purpose) of the social sector summit**

Over and above the President’s directive to host the summit, the rationale for the Civil Society Summit was further necessitated by the environment in which Civil Society operates within in its endeavours to act as catalysts and advocates for development and for betterment of society as whole; however, the social and economic conditions are forcing that the Government and Civil Society need to come together dialogue. Therefore, the summit would be a strategic platform that brings different perspectives together to talk about the solutions.

The Social Sector summit seeks to consolidate interventions implemented by government, CSOs, research and academic institutions. Moreover, the summit will endeavor to achieve broader goals which include:

- Strengthening partnership and affirm the role of Civil Society Organizations to achieve the objectives of the Developmental State.
- Dialogue on the strategic framework that will enable CSOs to contribute to Economic Recovery Plan for sustainability.
- Advancing transformation agenda and Strengthening of the institutional capacities within Civil Society Organizations.
- Promoting CSO learning and sharing of experiences globally and regionally.

### 8.3. Objectives and outcomes of the national social sector summit

The National Social Sector Summit will be designed in such a manner that it endeavours to meet the following objectives and outcomes: -

Objective	Outcomes
To strengthen and reaffirm partnership and collaboration between CSOs and government, including business.	A social compact that will bring Business, Government, Development Partners and Civil Society together to contribute to Economic Recovery for sustainability of CSOs.
To mobilise and strengthen Civil Society Sector to contribute to Economic Recovery Plan for sustainability of CSOs	Participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the mainstream economy by encouraging Social Entrepreneurship.
To identify and unlock barriers to entry (legal framework, financial challenges, infrastructural) for CSOs to participate in the economy and finding alternative means to overcome in ensuring CSOs effective participation in the economy.	Identified opportunities and linkages for supporting the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to ensure they are sustainable.
To create a conducive environment for Regional and International partnerships for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) capacitation.	
To recognise and identify the responsibility of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to the social contract and transformation agenda as employers	Exciting realities of CSOs capacities and the Action plan on transformation agenda for Civil Society as employers
To reclarifying the role of Civil Society Sector in advancing the objectives of the developmental State.	A Progressive Civil Society

## **8.4. Approach of the Summit**

### **8.4.1. Built up towards the summit**

Civil Society Sector summit is hosted in recognition of the role that CSOs have played in the fight against apartheid and the role that they continue to play in society in advancing the objectives of a developmental state through the implementation of welfare, economic empowerment, skills development, sports and recreation, advocacy, and human rights programmes. Their continued existence is key to the country's developmental agenda.

The summit targets the following subsets of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs): Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs, NPCs, CBOs, FBOs), Co-Operatives, Traditional Leaders, Faith Based Organisations and SANCO. The summit will target the following categories of Civil Society Organisations i.e. Health, Education, Welfare (this will include Early childhood development, older person, Disability, families, youth), Development, Environment, Energy, Safety, Business Associations, Woman, Youth Arts and Culture.

#### **8.4.1.1. Provincial dialogues**

The national summit will be preceded by dialogues between the provincial governments and Social Partners organizations within provinces. Cumulative data gathering approach form provincial dialogues through webinars.

The deliberation of the provincial dialogues will contribute to the national summit. Both the provincial dialogues and national consultative summit will use a combination of participatory methodologies to encourage debates and discussions.

The content for both the dialogues and national summit will be informed by the following themes:

- ✓ Resource Mobilization
- ✓ Fragmentation in the regulatory framework
- ✓ Transformation and employment creation
- ✓ Capacity support
- ✓ Community development

The reflections on these issues should help create common ground for the establishment of a Government; Business and Social Partners collaboration and way forward on how to tackle the challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality in our society. And ultimately, kick starting a national discourse. Social Partners are key to this collaboration.

The provincial dialogues will be convened by Provincial governments led by the Provincial Department of Social Development and supported by office of the Premiers. Other government structures such as the Department of Social development, The National Development Agency (NDA) in provinces, National Department of Social Development; Nedlac Community Constituency and the Presidency will provide the necessary support role.

Discussion papers on the above-mentioned thematic issues will be presented in the dialogues. The outcomes of the provincial discussions on these thematic issues will be further discussed and refined in the Round Table Discussions.

The provincial dialogues will be limited to 300 various organisations. The invitations should be extended to both big and small (organised and unorganised) civil society organisations (i.e., civic organisations, non-profit organisations such as Non-Profit Companies, Trusts, Non-governmental organisations, Community based organisations and Social movements). Provinces in collaborating with NEDLAC should determine whether one or more provincial dialogues would suffice considering the number of CSOs in the province, the geographic sparse and logistical practicalities. Thereafter, each of the nine provincial governments should facilitate the identification of 120 organisations from the provincial dialogues. The identified CSOs will represent provincial civil society organisations in the national summit. The total number of participants in the summit will not exceed 600 civil society organisations and will represent all provinces. For logistical purpose and budget constraints the summit will be hosted in the Gauteng province. The dates will be finalised in consultation with the Presidency.

#### **8.4.1.2. Round table discussion**

The round table discussion will be held prior to the national summit. The objective of the round table discussion is to gather information from experts, academics CSIs, academics and experts in order to discuss, interrogate and understand the provincial reports and issues that emanated from provincial dialogues. Further, to shape and inform deliberations that will take place in the national summit.

#### **8.4.1.3. National social sector summit**

As indicated above the national summit will consider dialogue reports from the nine provinces covering challenges that have been raised which amongst other includes access to funding, regulatory issues, and transformation of the sector with a view to foster a state-civil society partnership to address challenges related to poverty, inequality, and employment and to deepen democratic participation.

The estimated dated for the National Summit is proposed to be one.

## **9. Stakeholders**

No structure, agency or government department can single-handedly ensure the success of the summit without the cooperation and contribution of other role players its success requires the contribution and participation of provinces, government departments and agencies and civil society.

The below lists stakeholders to be invited that are key to the success of the summit:

- Government Social Cluster
- Development Agencies
- Donor Community
- Civil Society Organisations from all sectors.

## **10. Potential risks associated with the social sector summit**

The summit of this magnitude may have a potential risk that could affect its objective as well as the success.

### **10.1. Insufficient funding for the summit**

As a result of the global economic crisis, from which South Africa was not spared, the country's NGOs are experiencing funding problems. Funding is a major obstacle faced by CSOs in South Africa, considering the current economic climate and the effects of COVID 19. Government as well has experienced financial constraints in terms of limited budgets.

### **10.2. More interest Parties**

By virtue of this summit emanating or initiated from the office of the President; it may attract more interest parties and there may lead to a high number of potential participants. On the other hand; the summit may not be a closed-up session. The risk may be that the department may not be able to cater for the interested parties and may be constrained by national lockdown restrictions in terms of capacity of the venue.

### **10.3. A Summit with different agendas**

Civil Society means the entire range of organized groups and institutions that are independent of the state, voluntary, and to some extent self-generating and self-reliant. This includes NGOS, NPOs, but also independent mass media, think tanks, universities, social movements and religious groups.

This is a ground for the manifestation of diverse interests, and one role for civil society organizations is to lobby for the needs and concerns of their members and may therefore use the platform to present their

views which may not necessarily be on the agenda of the summit to the President. Some stakeholders might want to hijack the summit to show their anger on the exorbitant energy price, loadshedding, unemployment and the outcomes of the state capture report. It will therefore be imperative for the security cluster to be mobilised adequately to be ready for such activities.

#### **10.4. Project coordinator**

The lead project coordinator is the Department of Social Development and the Steering Committee consisting of the Presidency, DSD and NEDLAC.

### **11. Conclusion**

The Government of the Republic of South Africa has a clear interest and commitment in ensuring a healthy and active participation of civil society organisation. The current challenges experienced by the civil society organisations need concerted efforts by all stakeholders and role players within the sector to ensure that an enabling environment is created and sustained for the success of the sector. This national summit will therefore give impetus to the process of strengthening the civil society to be able to play its role in society.