

## Our Vision as a Nation must Expand and be built on Socio-Economic Justice

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***The Movement for a United South Africa (MUSA) was formed to advance a renewed consciousness for social and economic justice in South Africa.*** Socio-Economic justice has to be pursued more concertedly in South Africa and must provide the framework for the nation to reach much higher and to stretch our human and economic development capability and potential. A constrained vision of who we can be as a nation and what we can be as a country is limiting our ability and creativity. It is also restricting us to divisive practices and behaviours clouded by a race to the bottom mentality with regard to mobilising, accessing and utilising resources.

***The pursuit of justice as a higher moral and ethical standing with an expansive vision for the future is viewed as a necessary precondition to transform society*** and fundamentally overhaul and change the conditions and systems breeding and perpetuating poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption, violence especially gender-based violence, and a racially and spatially fragmented society.

***Socio-economic justice is the continuous process of embedding fairness and equity in society as a higher moral and ethical principle.*** It is about redressing past inequalities and addressing current practices that undermine the upliftment of people and the ability of the mass of people to become more self-sufficient. It is about promoting and enabling those that have resources as individuals and in the private sector to utilise them towards upliftment and in pursuit of excellence and betterment of the country. It is also about promoting and protecting a sense of belonging for **all** citizens to cohere better as a nation.

***The Constitution of our country provides the direction and impetus for socio-economic justice*** and positions us as a people and a nation to rise to the best of our potential individually and collectively. The Constitutional prescripts aligns with the core values and belief systems of most South Africans in protecting human life, advancing rights, freedoms, dignity and solidarity to uplift especially the marginalised and vulnerable.

***Unfortunately, in practice we have drifted from the Constitutional prescript.*** Instead of utilising state resources and institutions for the purpose of genuinely levelling the playing field and benefiting the upliftment of the mass of people, they have been mis/used mainly to enrich the elite few. Whilst the private sector has benefitted from the more conducive climate generated by the democratic dispensation it has not invested and embraced opportunities sufficiently to grow the economy and jobs or unlock potential within or for the marginalised areas where the mass of people lives in townships, informal settlements and rural areas.

***MUSA would like to see our country return to the spirit and intent of the Constitution. The Constitution must be implemented in a practical way*** by ensuring that all conduct and actions by government and all people in society are aimed at promoting fairness, inclusion, dignity and supporting upliftment of people especially the vulnerable and marginalised. All people must be served by the State conscientiously as a right irrespective of race, class, gender, level of physical abilities, ethnic, religious, cultural or political affiliation. People must be served in a manner to enable their empowerment, growth and development and not for purposes of reciprocating favours in the form of votes for political parties. The State has to be an instrument for genuine upliftment of people rather than a self-serving institution or an institution that is manipulated by powerful and corrupt elites.

***This transformative vision for socio-economic justice has to be the platform upon which we can dream higher*** and upon which our nation can be built in the image of the lofty aspirations of the liberation struggle. It entails infusing a deep consciousness for socio-economic justice across all levels of society where at an individual and collective level each person or organisation can drive practical change in the way they treat or relate to fellow South Africans, and how they contribute to positive actions in building people and the country. In particular, this consciousness has to be implanted amongst the intellectual and political elites as well as business, labour and civil society leadership that can influence change in society.

It goes further. Beyond meeting basic needs of society and dignifying people, ***socio-economic justice deeply embedded in the consciousness and activism of people can be the***

***critical ingredient for building a harmonious and prosperous society and a sovereign winning economic nation based on ethical behaviour and global human solidarity.***

***MUSA wants to unite South Africans in this socio-economic justice consciousness movement to reach higher and stretch our potential as individuals and in solidarity as a nation. As such MUSA operates not so much as an organisation but a movement where anyone and everyone can embrace its ethos to harmonise, network, collaborate and advance socio-economic justice within an expansive transformative vision.***

***Building a unity on the foundation of socio-economic justice is a critical mission.*** MUSA believes that a South African identity and patriotism needs to be forged in this manner in an inclusive way amongst the diverse array of our people as a critical force for well-being and economic success. This socio-economic consciousness has to be infused throughout society but leadership across government, private sectors, labour and civil society have to set the tone through selfless and ethical conduct. This can inspire a new Human Consciousness and the idea of being South African within this human consciousness, as a deeper awareness of existential purpose and aspiration to always act from the highest point of human virtue and potential promoting and spreading solidarity, compassion, mercy, and generosity in South Africa, on the continent and beyond.

In promoting this socio-economic justice consciousness and transformative vision, ***MUSA has assessed that a new economic paradigm and a new socio-economic model has to be implemented.*** The unfortunate context provided by the devastating COVID pandemic is seen by many economists and experts as an opportunity to bring about much needed economic changes and new inclusive models.

***South Africa's Economic Recovery Plan in response to the pandemic is much needed and must be supported to be implemented speedily and competently. However, it falls far short of the required socio-economic justice and expanded vision framework. It does not put primary focus on people and the mass upliftment of people that is needed as a critical ingredient for resilience and long-term success.***

A deeper look at a socio-economic justice application will reveal the gaps in the Plan's main driver, that is, massive infrastructure development. Whilst infrastructure is a critical driver,

it requires good planning, financial structuring, project management and implementation systems to ensure that resources are spent efficiently and effectively without wastage and corruption so that benefits to people and communities are maximised. The mechanisms to ensure this are not convincingly addressed in the plan and cannot be left to chance. They require full proof checks and balances. The Blended Financing mechanisms contained in the Plan will assist greatly but the processes need to be transparent and credible, and inclusive with healthy involvement and considered sustainable empowerment objectives of communities, small and medium black enterprises rather than toxic “tenderpreneurship” and emerging trend of “hijacking” of projects in communities.

***The Plan is located within a traditional economic paradigm and does not adequately deal with big existing problems in government and society or the dual nature of the economy.*** Policies, tools and mechanisms to fundamentally empower communities and support community-driven self-reliance are missing and especially as they can relate in more practical terms with performance measures to the various economic sector interventions highlighted in the Plan. ***More thought and innovation have to go into extracting best value from policy, government programmes and spending including models for affordable housing finance and delivery in context of building functional places and sustainable communities.*** A reinvigorated socio-economic justice framework and expanded vision will go a long way in inspiring new and creative solutions.

Economic Recovery has to also rest on creation of a conducive investment and business environment. ***This depends on the State returning to its primary role and function which is providing Security and Protection to the country and all citizens equally.*** The level of crime and impact on especially poor communities for example has reached crisis levels and is a key stumbling factor in communities building their livelihoods and dreams. Crime, corruption, poor governance are equally key stumbling factors in attracting higher domestic and foreign investment necessary for economic growth and development. The developmental nature of the State has to be built on the State’s capability to provide security. Security is viewed in broad terms and relates to the protection of life and property, ensuring fairness in trade and access to opportunities, and protecting rights to freedoms that have to be undertaken responsibly.

***MUSA calls on all South Africans to promote socio-economic justice and to drive this movement for socio-economic consciousness and activism.*** This is a time for visionary and transformative leadership across state, private sector, labour and civil society that can turn crisis and uncertainty into a golden opportunity to build a harmonious and resilient nation. It requires a new social compact as President Ramaphosa has called for, but within a transformative socio-economic justice framework and based on the appreciation that the world is now different and how economies, societies and governments operate will and has to change. Government, labour, private sector and civil society have to think and act differently and be prepared to depart from entrenched views, positions and negative conducts. ***New socio-economic paradigms and models are needed together with a realisation that the rules and framework for a new equitable and inclusive economy within the realm of our control can be designed and made. We need a mind-set change, belief and confidence to co-create a fair system and a successful nation together with the urgency to act.***

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