



GRAÇA MACHEL
TRUST

EXPANDING

EQUALITY

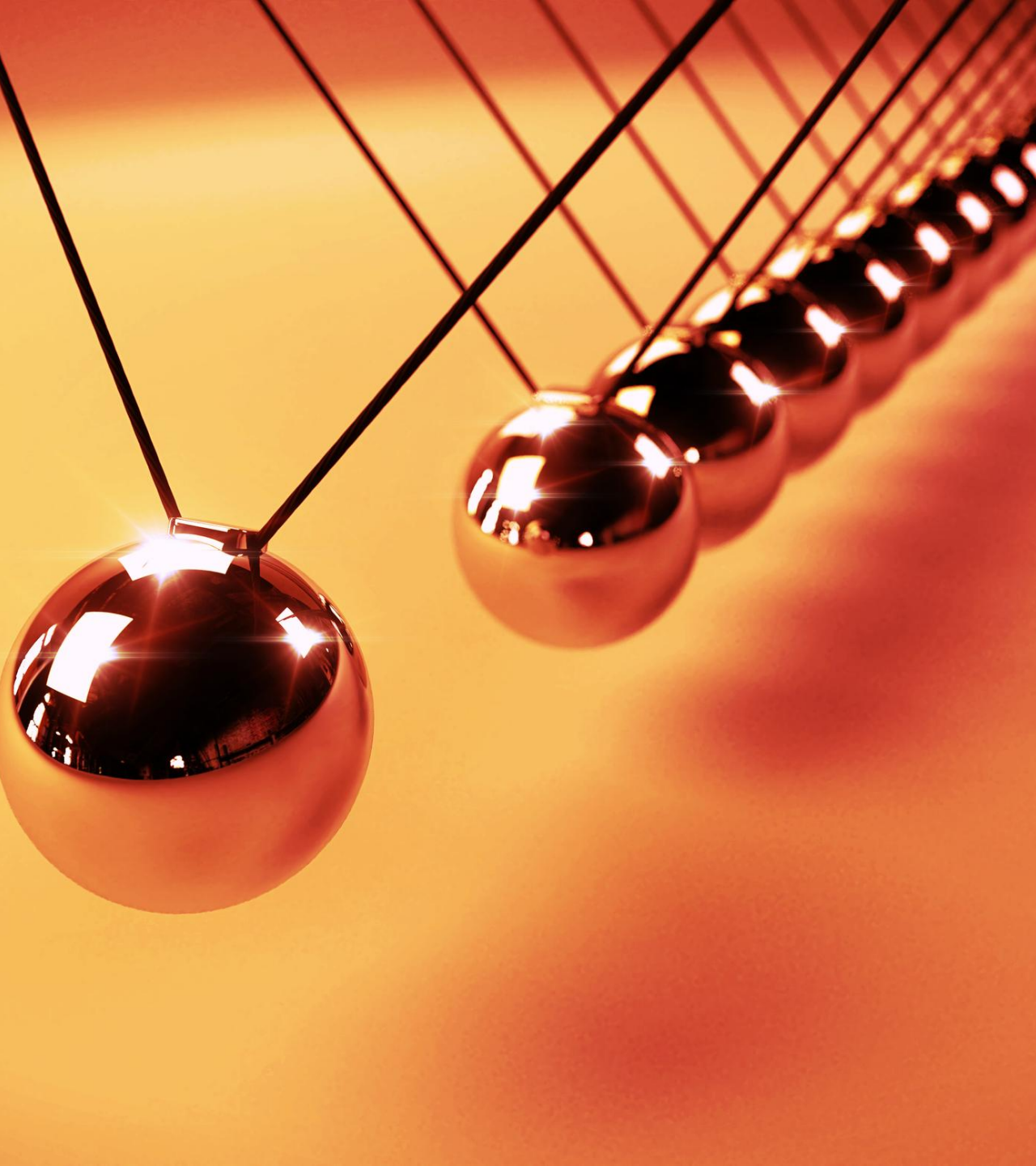
ILIZWI :The Voice –
Brainstorming
outcomes

“

We have been presented the opportunity to reimagine and redesign our society into a vibrant and equitable one. We must place women at the core of the response and beyond.

Founder Graça Machel Trust





Why ILIZWI (The Voice) ?

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Graça Machel Trust (GMT) has launched ILizwi (the voice): **African Women and Children shaping policy discourse of the COVID-19 pandemic response.**

The campaign was driven by a growing need to have context-specific responses in order to mitigate the adverse impact of the pandemic and to inform policymakers, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the private sector on effective pathways to socio-economic recovery.

Through ilizwi (the voice), GMT implemented a communications push that collates and amplifies the shared experiences of women and children at the forefront of the discourse. The intention was not to limit ourselves to voices from only non-governmental internal actors but to obtain perspectives from community leaders, youth, sector specialists and private sector players within our vast network and influence.

The activities under ILizwi (the voice) will build into GMT's Expanding Equality Initiative, which is a platform to showcase and build momentum across Africa and across sectors over the next decade, so that every institution, every organization, and individual can play a part in building communities where everyone has the potential to thrive. It is a platform geared to amplify and promote collective policy actions that tackle the root causes of inequality, drive women's economic advancement and holistic development of girls in Africa.

The COVID-19 pandemic emboldens the ambitions of the Expanding Equality Initiative, and while the dominant responses promote social distancing as a key prevention strategy against the spread of the virus, the strategies undertaken magnifies the interconnectedness of global economies and policy responses required not only to fight the pandemic, but looking to the future, to meeting both continental and global developmental frameworks.

Sample of external partners who participated in the ilizwi brainstorming sessions



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BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation





Demographic representation included the following countries:

- Senegal
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- The United States of America
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe
- Kenya



Brainstorming questions:

I. To what extent are the governance challenges in the continent affecting efforts in curbing the effects of Covid-19?

II. Which groups of women and children are at the most risk of the socio-economic ripple effects of Covid-19 in Africa?

III. What lessons can governments and civil society draw from past public health crises such as Malaria, HIV and AIDS and Ebola to address the Covid-19 crisis?

IV. What are the opportunities coming out of the global and national responses to the Covid-19 crisis that can be harnessed to accelerate progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa Union Agenda 2063?

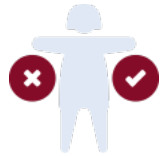
V. What does the new normal mean for Africa (governments, business, civil society and ordinary citizens)?

Q1. The extent of the effect of governance challenges in the continent on curbing effects of COVID-19



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Accountability

Issue

There has been widespread corruption and favoritism in the disbursement and procurement of COVID-19 resources and in the distribution of care packages.

Detail

Effect

The resources are not reaching the intended beneficiaries.



Corruption

Corruption has curtailed efforts by African governments to quarantine suspected exposed individuals. In countries like Cameroon 'back door' moves have impeded quarantine efforts.

Corruption has aided in the spread of the virus as the exposed continue to have contact with the uninfected population.



Transparency

Some governments such as Tanzania are not being transparent with data on the extent of the effects of COVID-19.

Response approaches that are not aligned to how the effects of COVID-19 differ by gender, class and race.



Poor representation of women

Most responses adopted across the continent are gender blind with decision-making bodies and committees having limited representation of women.

Women and girls have been disproportionately impacted by the respective lockdown regulations, with a reported increase in gender-based violence (GBV) cases, loss of income from informal trading and out of schoolgirls.

Q1. The extent of the effect of governance challenges in the continent on curbing effects of COVID-19 II



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Issue

Detail

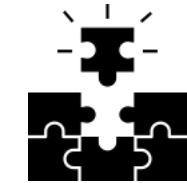
Effect



Rule of law

Police brutality and harassment recorded in Uganda, South Africa , Zimbabwe , Kenya when enforcing government COVID-19 guidelines.

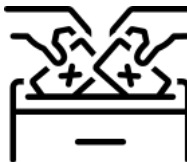
Loss of confidence in governments.
Civil unrest in South Africa has resulted from state sanctioned police brutality and military heavy handedness.



Inclusive participation

A few months into the COVID-19 crisis governments are still employing a top down approach and not including civil society, grassroots organizations and ordinary citizens in consultations

Adoption of responses that are not aligned to the reality of majority of citizens who live in poverty.



Democracy

Some governments have used the period to tighten and frustrate their political opponents like Cameroon.

Democracy at risk.



Debt

Governments have borrowed excessively and use their current budgets mainly to refinance debt leaving no room for emergency and social safety net spending.

Inability to respond or cushion devastating impact of crisis on the most vulnerable.



Issue

Detail

Effect



Poorly resourced

Governments in Africa have struggled to deal with the unintended consequences of the virus on both economies and livelihoods.

Inability to self-isolate due to housing issues (majority living in informal settlements) and following lack of government capacity to provide adequate isolation facilities.



Poor intergovernmental planning

Restricted uptake and execution of emergency response mechanisms from an intergovernmental perspective

Curtails efforts in dealing with the virus and its effects. Insufficiently addresses transportation challenges and global supply shortages.



Under resourced and inefficient health systems

Few testing kits available. Limited testing happening across the populous.
Health systems that are buckling under this added burden of the pandemic.

Inaccurate data on how COVID-19 is spreading. Inability to test, trace and mitigate infection spread. Over – reliance on imported medical equipment and material.

“ COVID 19 has unearthed massive inequalities within our societies and brought to glaring light the unique burdens which women carry the world over. As we respond to the impacts of COVID 19 both in the immediate and long term, we have an unprecedented opportunity to completely redesign our ways of living with innovative and large-scale action to cater for the magnitude of the task of transforming the African continent.

Dr Shungu Gwarinda - Interim CEO and Director of Programmes



Q2. Groups of women and children most at risk of the socio-economic ripple effects of Covid-19

in Africa



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People living in informal settlements due to lack of access to basic and adequate social infrastructure; regular and clean water facilities.



Women and children living with disabilities - hard for them to take the necessary measures to protect themselves.



Migrant and asylum-seeking women and children whose status is more precarious and are at bigger risk of trafficking, extortion, and will have more difficulty in accessing relief support.



Women and children in informal settlements have poor access to personal protective equipment and the insufficiency of stimulus programs to support livelihoods.

Q2. Groups of women and children most at risk of the socio-economic ripple effects of Covid-19

in Africa



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Women in the informal sector especially cross-border traders and commercial sex workers.



Women and children living with disabilities



Women entrepreneurs running small and medium businesses including daily market and cross border traders who have lost livelihood due to social distancing requirements.



Women requiring sexual reproductive health services such as maternal care, newborn checkups due to diversion and focus of medical fraternity as well as fear of going to the hospital

Q2. Groups of women and children most at risk of the socio-economic ripple effects of Covid-19

in Africa



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Women working in the essential services. Women make up the majority of those in the nursing profession, those working in the commercial retail, making them more exposed to the virus and more likely to care and look after the sick.



Women who are domestic workers and are employed on temporary and or verbal contracts risk losing their livelihood or having their terms changed unfavorably.



Women due to gender-based violence and intimate partner violence.

Q2. Groups of women and children most at risk of the socio-economic ripple effects of Covid-19

in Africa



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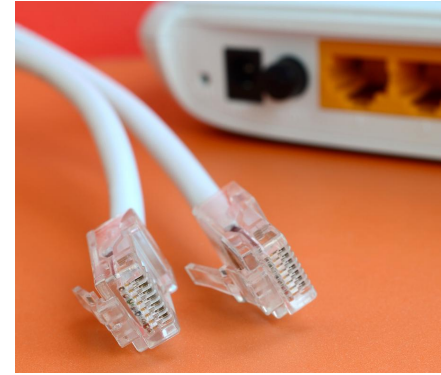
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Children living in abusive homes. With schools closed the capability to notice and report abuse is limited.



Children facing abandonment and neglect due to reduced parental ability to support them.



Impoverished children – lack of access to learning (due to limited online learning, radio and TV) that may lead to knowledge gaps, likelihood of school dropouts, increased possibility of early marriages for girls due to idleness and lack of income for families.



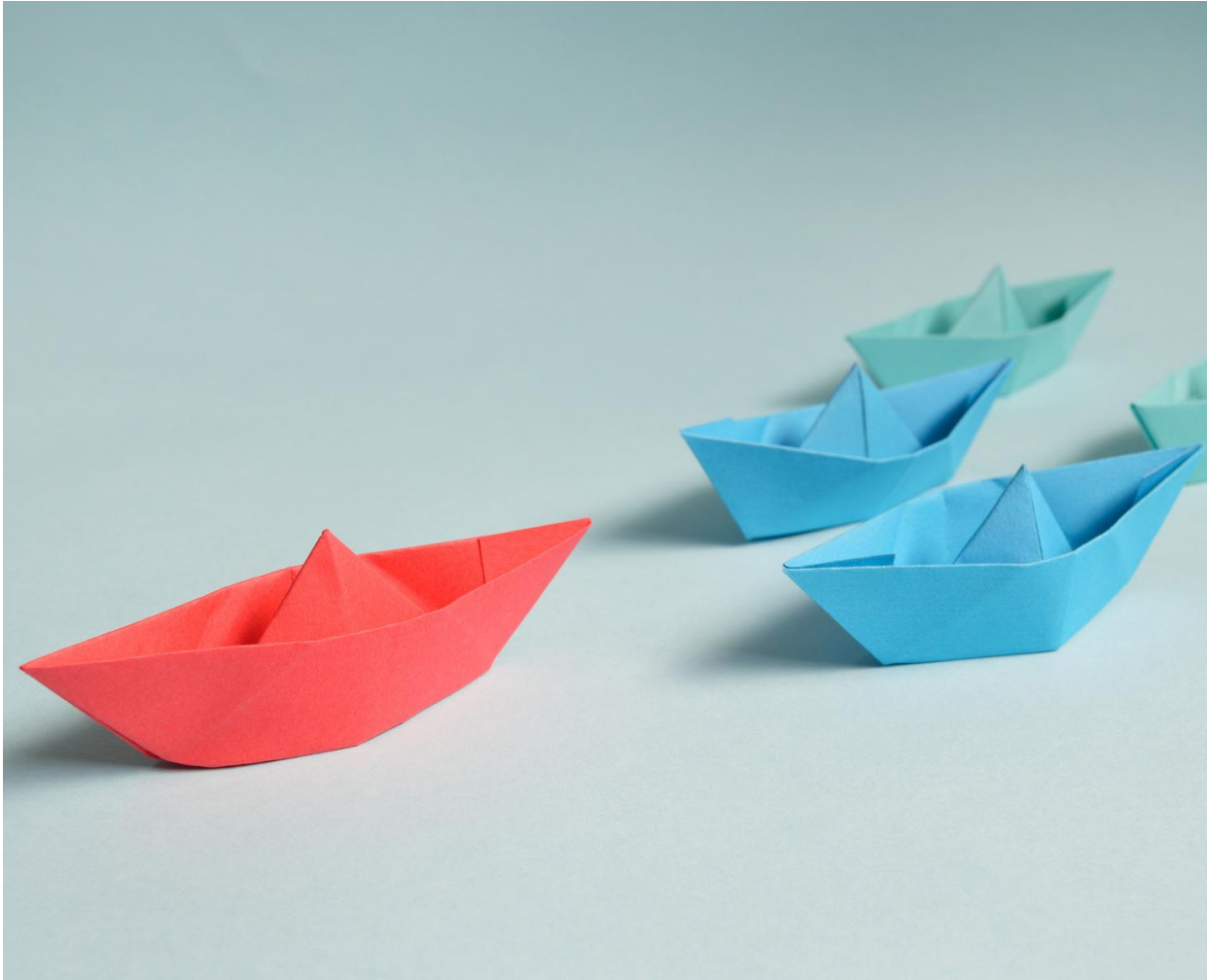
Adolescent girls with school closure are exposed to transactional relationships, teenage pregnancy, child marriages and abuse. Have also lost access to sanitary towels which are usually obtained from school.

“

Millions of women are taking mental health strain working longer hours, while juggling domestic duties, such as childcare, home schooling in addition to their professional obligations. Increased responsibilities at community and household level are resulting in increased physical and emotional stress as well.

Richard Montsho- Children rights manager





Leadership and governance

- a) Fostering strong political leadership and regional solidarity amongst African leaders.
- b) There is a need for greater regional integration and sharing of best practices amongst African governments and civil society organizations.

Communication and advocacy strategy

- a) The importance of education and awareness to fight the stigma associated with COVID -19.
- b) The role of the media in crafting messages in local languages and using cultural context.
- c) Activating local responses to a global crisis – mobilizing at the grassroots and community level.

Q3. Lessons governments and civil society can draw from past public health crises such as Malaria, HIV and AIDS and Ebola to address the Covid-19 crisis



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Strengthened health systems

- a) Increased investment in research and development around a universal vaccine, particularly because the virus may in the future mutate into a different strains as was seen during the Spanish flu era.
- b) Stronger and resilient health systems need to be prioritized within national budgets to improve infrastructure, capacity and access.
- c) The importance of surveillance in tracing and disease control – Africa CDC has adopted the use of SORMAs – Surveillance Outbreak Response Management and Analysis System.
- d) The leveraging of technology to increase and improve access to quality care.

“ The fragility of African health systems is revealing itself and women and children are most vulnerable to the lack of attention and adequate specialized services the diversion COVID-19 is causing. Female healthcare workers on the frontlines of the response are at a greater risk of exposure to the Coronavirus than male nurses and doctors.

Leila Akahloun – Special Advisor to Mrs. Machel

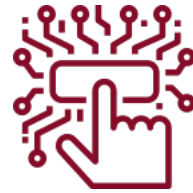




Education delivery in Africa



Opportunity for governments and private sector to invest in ICT infrastructure.



This is the opportunity to narrow the digital divide between the West and Africa and within the continent itself.



Focus on greater equity in education with a specific focus on poor children living within informal settlements and rural areas who lack access to online platforms and services and cannot rely on parental support to education as well.



Improved teacher training and curriculum that is fit for the 21st Century and 4th Industrial Revolution.



Encourage own study.



Adopt homeschooling and the increased involvement of parents in the learning process.



Use of radio programs / TV and learning applications.



Building trust with citizens



Renewed commitment to providing accurate information to citizens.



Reignite community responses by including the voices of community leaders in issues of governance to promote buy-in.



Opportunity for innovative access to justice processes (i.e. online hearings, virtual offerings for GBV survivors, criminal justice reform).

Q4. The opportunities coming out of the global and national responses to the COVID 19 crisis that can be harnessed to accelerate progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa Union Agenda 2063



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Prudent spending by governments



Cut down in expenditure related to travel and accommodation with greater adoption of virtual meetings and the subsequent reallocation of those resources to health and education.

Reducing and repurposing amounts that are going towards paying sovereign debt.

Narrow the inequalities



More equitable access to resources for all citizens.

Greater political will in issuing of social grants and building safety nets.

Increase Intra Africa Trade



Increased regional trade;
Acceleration of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) increasing intra-Africa trade.

Q4. The opportunities coming out of the global and national responses to the COVID 19 crisis that can be harnessed to accelerate progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa Union Agenda 2063



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Improve access to water and sanitation services



The opportunity to prioritize the provision of water and sanitation.

Use of technology to bring citizens closer to policy makers



The use of digital technology now enables citizens with access to the internet to participate in government forums being held virtually.

Inclusion and deepening of the Private sector



The crisis has shown that the private sector has a role to play in sustainable development agenda as it has not been spared from the effects of Covid-19.



Improved business environment



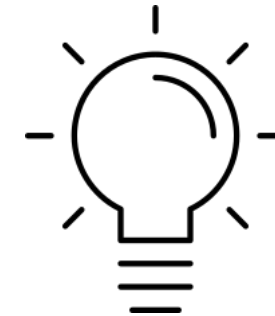
Lower cost of doing business through leveraging technology, reduced physical structures due to social distancing and more emphasis on local and regional products.

Mission driven leadership



- The rise of youth leaders as they take on the challenge of solving Africa's problems.
- An emphasis on community based and localized leaders.
- More collaboration of African governments with one another and speaking with one voice.

Increased innovation



- Senegal made home grown testing kits for \$1 which has improved testing ability.
- Kenyan innovators have developed a local video conferencing app that rivals Zoom.
- Madagascar made a traditional medicine to mitigate and cure the coronavirus.
- An opportunity for local manufacturing to thrive without the threat and flood of several lower priced and dumped imports.
- The rise of African innovators solving local, regional and local problems.

“

The continent is replete with micro and small to medium sized businesses with 85.8% of employment generated by the informal economy. Any successful efforts at economic revitalization need to encompass the informal economy as the informal sector makes up 55% of the economy in sub-Saharan Africa.

Andia Chakava – Investment Director



Q5. What the new normal means for Africa (governments, business, civil society and ordinary citizens)



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The acceleration of the 4th industrial revolution



- a) New ways of carrying out advocacy work using digital technology.
- b) Connectivity has become a basic requirement in the Covid-19 age. The new normal will require addressing issues around the digital divide and making digital platforms more accessible and cost effective.

Changes in travelling



- a) An overhaul of travel.
- b) Less time spent on travel.

Rising inequalities



- a) Deepened entrenched inequalities and poverty as many people have lost their source of livelihoods.
- b) Pressure to create and institutionalize safety nets for vulnerable members of society and emergency funds for highest impact sectors and small and medium enterprises.

Infrastructure modifications



- a) Virtual workplaces and global working opportunities.
- b) Better sanitation and structure in informal settlements.

Q5.What the new normal means for Africa (governments, business, civil society and ordinary citizens)



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Resource mobilization



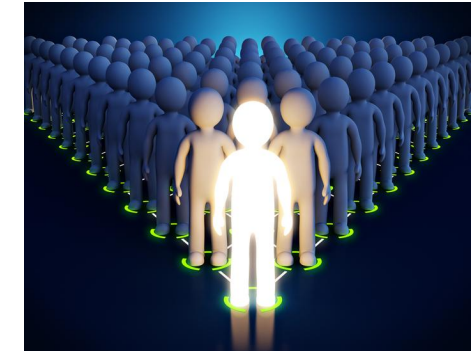
- a) Civil society organizations/NGOs will need to rethink how they mobilize funds.
- b) The rise and recognition of African philanthropy at both individual, community and institutional levels.
- c) Better public private partnership to foster development.
- d) Buy local and build local, to foster less reliance on imports.
- e) More opportunities for local innovation.
- f) Review of over-reliance on exports on critical items like condoms inter alia.

Stronger health and education systems



- a) Strengthening of health systems following the COVID experience.
- b) Strengthening of education systems to include more digital learning.

Enhanced leadership values



- a) More empathy in leadership and citizenry.
- b) Active and engaged citizens who stand up to injustice.
- c) Younger and community-based leaders.
- d) An increased focus on mental health, well-being and quality of life.

“

A Call to Bold Action:
Dismantling Structural
Barriers and Nurturing a
Culture of Innovation

Founder Graça Machel Trust





Our Proposal on the
Way Forward



All responses must take into account gendered impacts of COVID-19 and be informed by the voices of women.

Government and development partners must implement gender lens economic policies and sharpen the capacity of women as engines of economic growth.

Invest in women along the local food chains to improve food security.



Comprehensively strengthen the criminal justice system and increase efforts around survivor support and protection.

Build ICT infrastructure for online learning to bridge the inequality divide and retrain teachers on virtual curriculum so every African child, especially the girl child, has access to quality education.

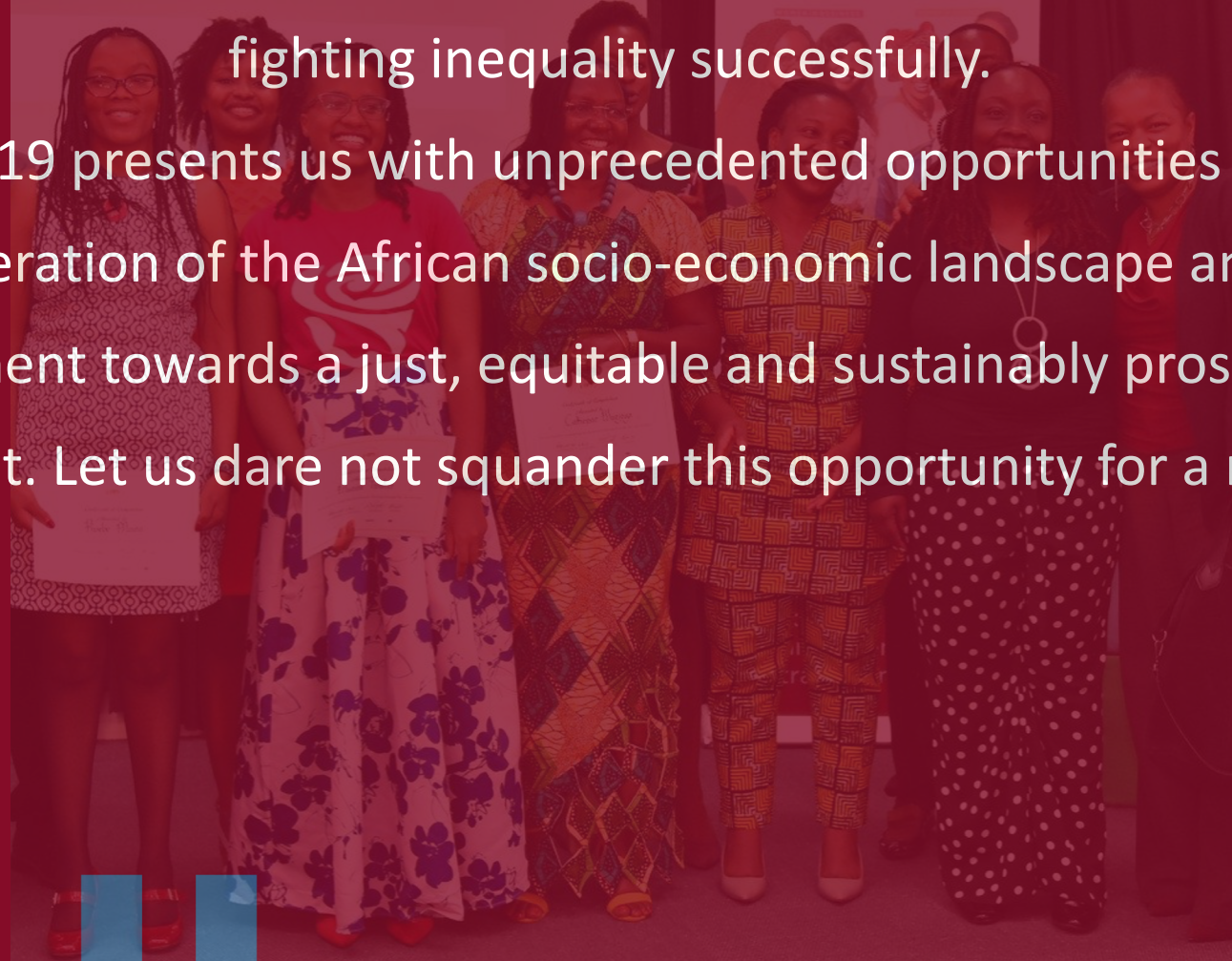
Provide equal pay for equal work.

Strengthen health systems, gradually implement Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and prioritize mental health services.

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"Women's leadership at all levels, a fundamental requirement to fighting inequality successfully.

COVID-19 presents us with unprecedented opportunities for the regeneration of the African socio-economic landscape and the movement towards a just, equitable and sustainably prosperous continent. Let us dare not squander this opportunity for a rebirth."





Korkor Cudjoe – Women social and economic advisor

The Ilizwi Team

Moderators:

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Project Team:

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