



## National Stokvel Association of South Africa

### Statement on Measures to Prevent COVID-19 Coronavirus Transmission

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18 March 2020

The following statement by the National Stokvel Association of South Africa is in response to the global pandemic, COVID-19, that is starting to impact South Africa. There are roughly 810 000 active Stokvel groups consisting of over 11 million South Africans and collecting an estimated R50 billion annually. To contextualise these figures, nearly 40% of South Africa's adult population belongs to Stokvels and thus fall within our constituency. Typically, Stokvels meet on a monthly, fortnightly or weekly basis with each meeting averaging 20 participants. These instances facilitate an exchange of money, while of equal importance, exist for social interaction.

It is understood that the Coronavirus is an infectious disease that thrives on social proximity. Amongst other prescribed measures, social distancing is essential to managing its spread. Following our assessment, the following measures shall be observed for an initial period of 30 days in order to strengthen the country's ability to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 Coronavirus transmission:

- Stokvel meetings are to be suspended while Stokvel activity continues
  - As such instances are both transactional and social, we encourage groups to continue with the transactional aspect, while avoiding meeting physically
- Groups are to seek alternative group communications mechanisms
  - We encourage the prudent use of available mobile/digital platforms
- Where possible, Stokvel members are to make their contributions electronically
  - Stokvel groups with bank accounts should encourage members to make group contributions via electronic transfer
  - We are aware that some banks don't allow such functionality on their Stokvel accounts, and we encourage group leaders to enquire with their bank of choice
  - NASASA has started engaging with banks around increasing functionality so as to accommodate such transactions
  - Unbanked Stokvels such as Rotational Clubs are to pay the receiving member through available instant payment platforms, or electronically into the receiving member's personal bank account
- NASASA Stokvel Indaba events are to be suspended
  - These national events take place on a monthly basis, each in a different township, and are attended by multiple Stokvel groups
  - Typically, these events attract 1300 members, limited to the capacity of the chosen venue
  - On Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa pronounced that gatherings of over 100 individuals are prohibited
  - As the Stokvel Indabas exceed the prescribed threshold, the events are suspended during this period

Despite these measures, our organisation continues to develop innovative solutions that allow us to continue to interact meaningfully with our constituency.

Social distancing is one of the important preventative measures taken to combat this pandemic. We highlighted this measure as our very essence is social proximity. For further information around the prevention of transmission of COVID-19 Coronavirus, we encourage citizens to call the Corona Virus Outbreak 24-Hour Hotline on 0800 029 999, or visit the website of the Department of Health as well as that of the World Health Organisation. We appeal to our constituency and citizens at large to adhering to what is prescribed above. By so doing, we each make an invaluable contribution towards protecting our country.

