

16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## **STATEMENT TO THE MOVEMENT LEADERSHIP ON COVID-19**

As the YMCA movement, serving young people and communities of this country, while being part of a global ecumenical family, we hold very high the ideal of ensuring spiritual, physical and emotional wellness of humanity.

In this regard, the SAYMCA presents this statement to its National Movement, which is in line with the South African government stipulations and regulations regarding the national response plan to the coronavirus and the declared national disaster.

Guided by the National Executive Committee, the National Office has taken precautionary measures and supports the decisions and action by local associations to curb the spread of COVID-19 within the regions and areas in which we have presence.

These recommendations are in consultation with the Africa Alliance of YMCAs to align to the continental and global YMCA response to COVID -19.

The National Office will relay information within the YMCA network timeously and communicate relevant developments within the SAYMCA movement.

Measures are detailed below.

### **1. TRAVEL**

- **International travel**

All planned and/or possible International travel by National staff has been cancelled until further notice.

All international youth exchanges coordinated by the SAYMCA will stop with immediate effect. The National Office will urgently put measures in place to ensure the safety of those youth already in other countries, including bilateral agreements and family arrangements.

We recommend that Local Associations who have individual international exchanges work in consultation with the National Office to ensure a consistent approach.

- The National Office will cease all domestic travel via public transport, whether road or air. We recommend that where at all possible, local associations do the same.
- **Programmes**  
It is recommended that all programme activities involving physical contact are put on hold, until after Easter in April. Programme work will continue via central YMCA offices and through online communication, taking into account any necessary reorganisation based on COVID -19 considerations.
- **Public engagement**  
Core work involving stakeholders and duty bearers is to continue at this stage, as long as sanitation, social distancing and South African national directives are adhered to.

We further emphasise the government requirement to suspend large gatherings involving 100 people and more. We support all decisions regarding suspension of small group gatherings where health safety cannot be controlled.

- **Facilities**  
The National Office will remain open at this stage. It is recommended that Local Associations suspend all activities that take place within their facilities, until further notice. We encourage Local Associations to make decisions on office arrangements, as well as public facilities based on local realities and safety.

We call for all places of work within the movement to be equipped with sufficient sanitation, in particular soap and hand sanitiser, and to remove hand towels and similar communal equipment.

We further call on Local YMCAs, wherever possible, to position their facilities within their community as a place of safety for people requiring assistance, both physical and emotional. This will require proper signage, adequate supplies of sanitizer, soap and other essential supplies in order to serve our communities over this stressful time. We stress that all known precautions should be taken by YMCA staff and volunteers to prevent any spread of the virus during this time.

- **Containing possible exposure**



We ask that all Local YMCAs communicate with the National Office, should there be any possible exposure.

We support Local YMCAs to set up systems of containment specific to local conditions, based on current methods of self-isolation, testing and tracking of those in contact with risk situations.

We call upon the YMCA family to be united in prayer, asking that our God will heal our world, its nations and its people, that wisdom and strength be granted to decision makers and all professionals as they seek solutions to this global health crisis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Siphso Sokhela', is written over a horizontal line.

---

**Siphso Sokhela**  
**National General Secretary**  
**SA YMCA**