

# MEDIA BRIEFING PACK

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## SETTING THE SCENE

Essential background on the movement



**SIYABUYA!**

Let's #MakeSAbetter

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# 01/ INTRODUCING THE MOVEMENT



**SIYABUYA!**

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# Introducing the movement

**Siyabuya is a new movement that aims to bring together people across the country who are working for economic recovery and helping others.**

Siyabuya aims to take that fighting spirit that is already emerging and multiply it into energy, enthusiasm and determination to work together across all of our many divides. We can't let the virus defeat us – we must believe we can win, and act together on that belief.

Hence the name. Siyabuya means we are coming back stronger. The word is often used during soccer matches where the fans of a team would chant “Siyabuya!” meaning that our team will come back stronger, focused and determined in the second half to win the match.

There are outstanding examples, every day, where people and organisations are working hard to undo the damage the coronavirus has done to our people and our economy. Siyabuya wants to build a network of those who share the intent that South Africa can emerge stronger from this pandemic if a concerted effort went into building up the social and economic fabric of society.

The movement has three focus areas:

1. **Public health** is first because unless we beat the virus through physical distancing, mask-wearing, sanitising and being vaccinated, our recovery will always be hampered. Siyabuya will also work with collaborators to educate communities on the efficacy of the vaccines and ensure that we share accurate information with the South African public about the vaccines and the importance of attaining herd immunity.
2. The second focus area is **jobs and the economy** because without sustainable livelihoods and a revived economy, any comeback would be hollow. Small businesses are a job-creating engine and they must be supported in order to grow. Siyabuya wants every business to flourish.
3. The third is **food relief and security**. The Covid pandemic is creating a second pandemic in the form of hunger on a scale we have never seen before. We know that millions of children are going hungry, and that means their parents are starving too. There is no reason why anyone should starve in South Africa whether there's a pandemic raging or not. Food security is the basis for a sustainable recovery and a stable nation.

Siyabuya will seek, through action, analysis and public and high-level engagement, to make South Africans determined to overcome the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. It will work closely with all stakeholders who want South Africa to emerge from the pandemic stronger than it was when the crisis started

*There are outstanding examples, every day, where people and organisations are working hard to undo the damage the coronavirus has done to our people and our economy.*

We will know that we are successful when there is a large coalition of supporters across society – from civil society, business, trade unions and in government – for the actions we advocate to facilitate a revival.

Together, we can adopt Siyabuya and act to #MakeSAbetter a reality for South Africa.

# 02/ FURTHER RESOURCES



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# About Siyabuya

**Siyabuya believes South Africa can emerge stronger from the coronavirus pandemic.** It aims to build networks across the country of people who share this belief and are working to achieve it. Those who are helping others, creating jobs and feeding the poor, are setting examples others can emulate.

**Siyabuya! #MakeSAbetter** hopes to instil a common sense of mission, built from the ground up, through ordinary South Africans engaged in active citizenry to improve their fortunes and the lives of those around them.

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*For more information about the movement, visit our website at [siyabuya.org.za](https://siyabuya.org.za)*

# The origins of the movement

## In short

**The COVID pandemic is destroying lives and livelihoods in South Africa.** Every person in the country is affected, particularly people who are poor, people who lose their jobs and people who get infected. Siyabuya is the way out. By working together, we will help South Africa to come back stronger from the pandemic by taking care of each other to defeat the COVID-19 virus and rescue ourselves and others from its destruction.

**This means we must defeat COVID-19 and its enablers and make SA better, with a new culture of being South African;**

taking care of myself, my family and my community by adopting public hygiene habits (mask, sanitise, physical distance), getting immunised, feeding people who need food and creating jobs by letting every business flourish.

**The experts and the evidence prove that if we do this there will be fewer infections from COVID-19, food on every table and more jobs.**

The real hero of Siyabuya is every ordinary person who #MakeSABetter by wearing a mask, using sanitiser, keeping a distance from others, getting vaccinated, who helps to feed a hungry person and who creates a job.

## The journey

In April 2020, as the first Covid-19 pandemic scythe cut through South Africa with an economy-shattering hard lockdown and the first wave of recorded infections exploding, it was clear to the team at the FairPlay Movement that life would be different from then on.

As the virus forged a new normal, the FairPlay Movement cast its attention to the horizon to imagine how South Africa could come back from the ravages of the pandemic.

FairPlay, founded in October 2016 by Francois Baird, a South African-born entrepreneur, had until then focused its attention on building alliances with organisations to promote strategies to defend communities made vulnerable by predatory trade practices.

Baird, a founder of Baird's CMC, an international communications management consultancy, and former Africa chairman of Edelman, the world's largest public relations company, aimed to bring the influence and expertise of global and local networks to bear on solutions that would make a difference to vulnerable communities.

Over the five years of its existence the FairPlay Movement and its panel of expert advisors had built up a weight of experience on how to tackle such challenges and had recorded successes notably in agriculture, tackling large-scale poultry and sugar import dumping and the impact it has had on local producers and jobs.

*As these strategies evolved, they tapped into a network of businesses and civil society organisations who were willing to resource a movement that would mobilise people in South Africa to rescue themselves and their communities.*

The FairPlay team quickly realised that the challenges of Covid-19, however, would be at another level as people succumbed to infection, economic activity plummeted, and millions of jobs were shed in the greatest "black swan" moment in living memory.

So, the FairPlay team applied themselves to consider what strategies they could generate with others to make a comeback from the pandemic.

As these strategies evolved, they tapped into a network of businesses and civil society organisations who were willing to resource a movement that would mobilise people in South Africa to rescue themselves and their communities.

## The idea

As the idea developed so too did the realisation that that this challenge needed to be tackled with its own energy and focus and the idea of the Siyabuya movement took shape and was born. The Siyabuya movement encourages the people to #MakeSAbetter.

#Siyabuya is building a network of those with shared intent and a powerful but simple idea: that South Africa could emerge out of the pandemic better if a concerted effort went into building up the social and economic fabric of society.

Within that observation lies a great challenge. No organisation can singlehandedly rebuild the fabric of society as South Africa's social cohesion and its economy, stressed before the pandemic, were showing even greater strain as the crisis grew.

The golden thread of rebuilding the fabric of the South African society is instilling trust, because we all know that trust is fragile in SA. Since fear drives health communications, as it also does during the pandemic, trust is further eroded. People feel disempowered not knowing where to turn when needs are rising, and while resources are rapidly declining.

Without a sense of a common purpose built from the ground up, without ordinary South Africans engaged in active citizenry, grand top-down plans struggle to get enough traction to make an impactful difference.

How do you solve such a complicated problem? There is no silver bullet, but so much is already happening, quietly and powerfully by ordinary South Africans with good hearts and iron resolve, which could mobilise us all.

What was needed, and what Siyabuya aims to unlock, is the catalytic effect of good examples of active citizenry; connecting the dots of disparate networks in businesses, labour, religion, government and civil society to focus resources and resolve; and to enable a self-help movement of "civicness" of all individuals of goodwill in SA to encourage economic growth.

Let all the active citizens in South Africa adopt Siyabuya and take credit for rescuing themselves and their communities, thereby encouraging everyone to assume the same posture and join in the Siyabuya effort. By convening on the basis of a shared purpose and a common vision, Siyabuya builds trust in the socio-economic fabric of community-based active citizenry and the bonds between civic institutions.

Having consulted with experts about the most urgent lives and livelihood focus areas, Siyabuya decided to focus on a three-pronged approach-

1. **PUBLIC HEALTH:** Because unless we beat the virus through continued physical distancing, mask-wearing, sanitising and being vaccinated, we will not #MakeSAbetter.
2. **JOBS AND THE ECONOMY:** Because without restored livelihoods and a revived economy, any comeback would be hollow.
3. **FOOD RELIEF:** Because if children suffer daily hunger then parents are starving too. There is no reason why anyone should starve in South Africa, because there is enough food for everyone, whether there is a pandemic raging or not.

## Leadership

The pandemic will have a long tail of destruction. We must all do what is right, right now and understand that the future depends on what we do today.

Young people arguably have the biggest stake in a better tomorrow. That is why we turned to the extraordinary talents of Melene Rossouw for leadership.

An attorney with 13 years' experience, founder of the Women Lead Movement and with an impressive list of national and international achievements, Melene is the external leader of Siyabuya teaming up with Ashoek Adhikari, a Cape Town based lawyer and business consultant to manage the operations of Siyabuya.

They are supported by Francois Baird and a team of volunteers and recruits with appropriate skills. There are no salaried staff working on Siyabuya.



# The work of Siyabuya

Therefore, Siyabuya is a call to action for jobs and restoration of livelihoods; for food relief and security; and for taking care of our health. To live, despite the pandemic. For pragmatism over ideology.

Through Siyabuya we aim to:

- Reframe the public narrative from fear to living sensibly with Covid-19 risks;
- Support, coordinate and where appropriate, initiate actions that will save and create jobs – and let all business flourish; and
- Bring people and organisations together to support those who need help to #MakeSAbetter during and after the pandemic.

The initiative will focus on specific actions that should be taken to facilitate in making SA better through action motivated by an enhanced sense of community amongst all South Africans.

We will know that we are successful:

- When there is a large coalition of supporters across society – from civil society, business, trade unions and in government – for the actions we advocate to facilitate Siyabuya;
- When key influencers adopt Siyabuya proposals to make SA better as their ideas and as a public meme;
- When the focus on unemployment and jobs begins to override the focus on political control; and

- When there is evidence that private individuals adopt public behaviours that limit pandemic risks.

We will be working closely with all stakeholders who intend South Africa to emerge more successfully from the pandemic than it entered.

**Together, we can adopt Siyabuya and act to #MakeSAbetter as a reality for South Africa.**

# Biography: Melene Rossouw

**Melene Rossouw is an internationally recognised gender and human rights activist, global award winner, public speaker, moderator, facilitator, strategist and consultant.**

In the last few years she has received a string of local and international awards and has been named one of Africa's most influential women.

She is an attorney by profession with 13 years' experience in the private, governmental and non-governmental sectors. Melene graduated from the University of the Western Cape with a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) and Master of Laws (LL.M) specialising in the area of Public and Constitutional Law.

Melene has served in respected offices such as the Constitutional Court of South Africa, Western Cape High Court, the Presidency of South Africa and two national government ministries.

Her accolades include being selected by the prestigious Obama Foundation as an Obama Leader in Africa (2018) and as a Mandela Washington Fellow by the US Department of State in 2019.

In October 2020, she was selected as one of the 100 Most Influential Young Africans and made the Top Ten list of Most Influential Young Africans by Africa Youth Awards. She was also recently named as one of the 100 Most Influential South Africans.

In 2021, Melene was appointed as a Play Your Part Ambassador by Official Brand South Africa responsible for promoting a positive and compelling brand image for South Africa.

She has a strong focus on gender equality and women's rights. In 2017, she co-founded Women Lead Movement and currently serves as the Executive Director of the organisation. In 2019, she was selected as one of 11 Spokeswomen in Africa for the Global Campaign on Gender Equality by the US based ONE Global Campaign. She has subsequently participated in three more global campaigns such as #YoursInPower and #PassTheMic that respectively reached more than 750 000 and 250 million people globally.

Melene is also a member of the African Women Leadership Network, which is a movement supported by UN Women and the African Union as well as the Public Speaking Association of Southern Africa.

In 2020, Melene was selected by Junior Chamber International (JCI) as one of the Top Ten Outstanding Young Persons of the World honourees in the category for World Peace/Human Rights. She was selected by JCI South Africa as a Top Outstanding Young Person in South Africa and by Avance Media as one of the 100 Most Influential Women in Africa 2020.

Through her work she has initiated and led educational and advocacy programmes and interventions online and in communities reaching thousands of people in South Africa alone.

*Melene has served in respected offices such as the Constitutional Court of South Africa, Western Cape High Court, the Presidency of South Africa and two national government ministries... Her accolades include being selected by the prestigious Obama Foundation as an Obama Leader in Africa (2018) and as a Mandela Washington Fellow by the US Department of State in 2019.*

Melene has led highly complex public engagement processes on pertinent issues affecting the country and communities.

She is often called upon to participate in engagements and share her expertise on issues relating to democracy, governance, active citizenry, and gender equality on national, regional and international platforms.

# Image & logo downloads

## Melene Rossouw images



**Studio portrait (vertical)**  
(1343 x 2015 pixels)



**Speaking portrait (horizontal)**  
(940 x 640 pixels)



**On-stage portrait (horizontal)**  
(1280 x 853 pixels)



## Movement logo



**Logo (various options)**  
(Available as high-res jpeg, png and PDF)



# Media enquiries

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