



## The National Early Learning and Development Programme Support Fund during COVID-19 in the Republic of the South Africa

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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**EMBARGO:** Immediate release

### NATIONAL ECD COVID-19 SUPPORT FUND KICKS OFF ON A HIGH NOTE

15 June 2020: Today, the *Independent Oversight Committee* of the *ECD-support-fund* held its first meeting, which also marked the official constitution of this important Committee. The function of this *Independent Oversight Committee* is to manage and oversee this Fund, and to ensure that it is administered in a fair, unbiased and just manner as set out in the *Founding Document* of the *ECD-support-fund*.

The *Independent Oversight Committee* consists of the following esteemed members nominated in accordance with the *Founding Document*: *Ms Rene King*, Chairperson of the National Early Childhood Development Alliance (NECDA); *Mr Leonard Saul*, CEO of the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development; *Ms Ruby Motaung*, representing the NECDA membership; *Mr Lunga Schoeman* from Shoprite and *Ms Queen Mgobhozi* from Unilever as representatives from South African based businesses or corporates; *Ms Johannita McLeod* from FNB, *Dr Vuyelwa Nhlapo* from the Assupol Community Trust and *Deepa Patel* from the Grindrod Family Centenary Trust as representatives of the early childhood development donor community; *Ms Isabella Sekawana* representing the Department of Social Development; *Dr Janeli Kotze*, representing the Department of Basic Education; *Ms Marie-Louise Samuels*, *Ms Giuliana Bland* and *Ms Lizette Berry* as independent individuals with extensive knowledge and experience of the early childhood development sector in South Africa; and *Mr Andre Viviers* from UNICEF and *Ms Kerry Kassen* from the LEGO Foundation as representatives of international organisations operating in South Africa, who are knowledgeable in the field of early childhood development.

During the first meeting *Ms Queen Mgobhozi* was elected as chairperson and *Ms Giuliana Bland* as deputy chairperson. *Mr André Viviers* and *Mr Lunga Schoeman* were elected as secretary and treasurer of the *Independent Oversight Committee* respectively.

The *Independent Oversight Committee* noted with appreciation that since the announcement of the ECD-support-fund R40,000 has been paid into the fund by individuals and organisations.

“The *Independent Oversight Committee* appreciates the initiative and leadership by the National Early Childhood Development Alliance (NECDA) and the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development” says **Queen Mgobhozi**, newly elected chairperson of the Committee. “It is important that the *Independent Oversight Committee* takes over the baton and gets this ECD-support-fund going to the benefit of this important sector and its work with the country’s youngest citizens”.

“The first critical tasks of the *Independent Oversight Committee* are to finalise the terms and conditions for the disbursement of the funds from the ECD-support-fund, establish the procedures to be followed in relation to applications for support through the ECD-support-fund as well as the procedures for the allocation and

disbursement of funds and to implement a strategy for facilitating contributions to the ECD-support-fund” says Giuliana Bland, elected deputy chairperson of the Committee.

“We are delighted that the *Independent Oversight Committee* had its inaugural meeting on Monday, 15 June 2020 and has officially commenced its responsibility to manage and oversee the ECD-support-fund which appropriately coincides with celebrating Youth Day and Youth Month in South Africa.” says Rene King, Chairperson of NECDA.

The *ECD-support-fund* was set up as a result of the sudden onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of ECD facilities due to national government lockdown measures. “This is a key moment in the history of early childhood development in South Africa and demonstrates the role of strategic leadership and collaboration between business, donors, government, non-governmental organisations, international partners and experts who are working together to make a real and immediate difference” says Leonard Saul, CEO of the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development.

The *ECD-support-fund's* primary and strategic focus is on early childhood development programmes that have been registered or conditionally registered in terms of in sections 97 and 98 of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 for a period of twelve months or more and operate on not-for-profit principles (is registered as an NPO under the Non-Profit Organisations Act 71 of 1997 and/or a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO), if it meets the requirements of the Income Tax Act 58 of 1962).

“On behalf of the Independent Oversight Committee, I wish to invite individuals, donors, businesses, and other interested parties to join us in this historic event and make a generous contribution to the ECD-support-fund”, says Queen Mgobhozi. “Every contribution, no matter its size, will enable us to better support early childhood development services during these difficult and uncertain times”, she concluded.

Anyone interested in contributing to the ECD-support-fund can make a payment into the designated Fund account. The details of which are: <https://www.ecdalliance.org/ecd-support-fund-contributors-banking-details/>. Please use the reference **SF-** and the name of the contributor when a deposit is made. Alternatively, send an email to [ecdfund@necda.org.za](mailto:ecdfund@necda.org.za) for more information. The Founding Document of the ECD-support-fund is available on the NECDA website or on this link: <https://www.ecdalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ECD-COVID-19-Founding-Document-Final-for-Publication.pdf>

**ISSUED BY:** Independent Oversight Committee

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**ABOUT THE ECD-SUPPORT-FUND**

The National Early Learning and Development Programme Support Fund during COVID-19 in the Republic of the South Africa (ECD-support-fund) was established by the National Early Childhood Development Alliance (NECDA), in collaboration with the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development, to address the serious situation in the early childhood development sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the *ECD-support-fund* is to receive funds from individuals, donors, organisations, corporate companies, private family foundations and other entities for the purpose of providing bridging support, through cash disbursements, to not-for-profit early childhood development programmes that have been affected by the closure of ECD programmes due to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. These programmes must meet the criteria as set out in the ECD-support-fund’s Founding Document. The ECD-support-fund is an independent fund that is managed and overseen by an *Independent Oversight Committee* to ensure that it is administered in a fair, unbiased and just manner. For more information on the ECD-support-fund visit <https://www.ecdalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ECD-COVID-19-Founding-Document-Final-for-Publication.pdf>

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For more information on how to make a contribution to the fund visit <https://www.ecdalliance.org/ecd-support-fund-contributors-banking-details/>

## **ABOUT THE FOUNDING ORGANISATIONS**

### **About the National Early Childhood Development Alliance**

The National Early Childhood Development Alliance (NECDA) is an early childhood development (ECD) focused network, comprising of ECD NPO's and sector experts, located throughout South Africa. It was formed in 2005 in response to a need to strengthen the ECD sector, with a view of building a better future for children by promoting children's rights to early childhood development, strengthening NPO's and advocating for ECD. Members are united in their objective of providing capacity building, high quality training and resourcing to the ECD sector. NECDA currently represents and serves 103-member organisations (across all nine provinces) who together employ around 3,000 staff members. Collectively NECDA members train around 45,000 ECD practitioners per year, impacting on about 2 million children, and contribute an estimated R375 million to the country's GDP.

### **About the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development**

The South African Congress for Early Childhood Development is the representative national mass-based, non-governmental early childhood development (ECD) organisation in South Africa. The organisation represents the interest of over 6 million young children (birth to six years old) through its membership of more than 15,000 ECD practitioners (including managers) and 21,000 individual early childhood development (ECD) centres. The organisation operates from a national office based in Pretoria and is represented by nine Provincial Executive Committees (PECs) in the provinces. The organisation was launched at a national conference during 23-25 March 1994 in Port Elizabeth. Our *vision* is access to a high quality, intersectoral, holistic and integrated ECD system for all children from birth to six years. Our *mission* is the promotion of a conducive ECD environment through participating in policy development, monitoring implementation, ensuring quality early childhood development practices, mobilizing resources, disseminating information and lobbying and advocacy.