

# Statement of commitment to sustainable investment practice that benefits people and planet during COVID-19 crisis

The global and the South African financial eco-system finds itself faced with unprecedented challenges and uncertainties. In recent months, private and public sector stakeholder groups – including the organisations coming together to issue this statement – have been visibly hard at work with contingency planning and reshaping of organisational strategies and operations in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Whilst emergency-orientated survival strategies take centre stage at present, the coalition of industry bodies represented below would like to take a moment to encourage South African market players to ensure that during this period of singular focus, all material ESG issues continue to play a fundamental role in investment decision making.

We are calling on our financial and corporate sector to continue to report on and manage for long term environmental, social and governance outcomes during the survival and recovery phases of this crisis. This is important for a number of reasons:

- To enable us to enter the recovery phase with a clear view of the financial and non-financial baseline from which to start rebuilding
- To ensure the optimal protection of human, natural and capital resources which will enable faster growth during recovery phase
- To prevent and mitigate the effects of other social and environmental crises that may emerge post COVID19

Now is the time for South Africa to embrace decisive, collective action. It's time to demonstrate that this market can respond to the immediate crisis while simultaneously setting in place a recovery plan which prioritises social and environmental sustainability. Let us not allow the current circumstance to distract us from the ultimate objective of a sustainable, inclusive economy and resultant prosperous society. Indeed, it is a once in a generation opportunity providing an inflection point to orientate capital flows to sustainable development. The decisions we make and actions we take now, may well define the nature of the lives that South Africans are able to lead not only over the next few months, but for years, even decades to come.

For further information on this statement or for advice on how to commence or improve your measurement and management practice then please contact Susan de Witt ([susan.dewitt@gsb.uct.ac.za](mailto:susan.dewitt@gsb.uct.ac.za)) or Nicole Martens ([nicole.martens@unpri.org](mailto:nicole.martens@unpri.org))



An investor initiative in partnership with UNEP Finance Initiative and UN Global Compact

