



## **Oral Statement at the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**

### **Item 3: General Debate**

**Date: 8 March, 2021**

**Delivered by: Mr. IGNATIUS THANDUXOLO FRANCE**

Madame President

VIVAT International, Edmund Rice International and The Justice Desk recognise that South Africa, through ratification of international instruments and its Constitution<sup>1</sup>, has guaranteed the right to education to all children in the country.

Before COVID-19, South Africa faced problems in securing quality education for all. In urban areas, 47.4% of individuals aged 19 to 24 completed secondary school, while only 32.3% and 29.3% of children in traditional and farming areas did so. Within schools, discrepancies exist with 80.29% of schools lacking laboratories, 74.18% lacking libraries and 79.2% lacking internet connectivity for learning.<sup>2</sup>

Remote learning due to COVID-19 has exacerbated these inequalities. Children in public schools (31.7%) and private schools (16.5%) experience lack of access at different levels.<sup>3</sup> Overall, 65.4% of learners have access to interactive learning and 39.6% of learners do not have access to sufficient data to complete their schoolwork remotely.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 as understood in *Governing Body of JumaMusjid Primary School and Others v Essay NO and Others 2011 (8) BCLR 761 (CC)* para 37.

<sup>2</sup> Education Series Volume IV: Education and Labour Outcomes 2018 Report No. 92-01-06, Statistics South Africa.

<sup>2</sup> National Education Infrastructure Management System Standard Report 2019, Department of Basic Education.

<sup>3</sup> Social Impact of COVID-19 Report No. 00-80-04, Statistics South Africa.

<sup>4</sup> SIC Report.

South Africa must address inequalities in education and adapt its education strategy to accommodate learners who have missed out on crucial aspects of their education so that more children are not left behind.

Thank you.