

# **SOUTH AFRICAN ACTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (SAACSO)**



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The South African Active Civil Society Organisations (SAACSO) is a National multi-sectoral Civil Society Organisation formed in 2007.

### **VISION:**

To create a peaceful, non-racist, non-sexist, democratic Society where all citizens enjoy equal fulfilment of their needs, have equal access to their land and enjoy the wealth of their country equally.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT:**

South Africa comes from the past that created enormous inequalities between the rich and the poor. Failure to bridge the relentlessly increasing gap between the poor and the rich, increasing poverty and a high unemployment rate.

The emergence of 1994 democratic dispensation was hoped to transform historical socio-economic inequalities and injustices that continue to isolate and hamper progress in developing the capacities of poor communities to free themselves from poverty and its related consequences

In spite of energetic efforts of policy innovations by government to better the lives of the majority of the poor, life conditions of poor communities continue to deteriorate to crisis proportions. Post 1994 democratic dispensation has dismally failed to reverse the frontiers of poverty, destitution, unemployment, unmanageable detestable corruption and looting of State funds exacerbating abject poverty and inequality. These and many other related factors to a large extend have created a severe voters' apathy that brought about a situation where over 55% of voters abstained from voting in 2021 local elections.

### **SAACSO BELIEVES:**

This situation poses a serious risk to a desired peaceful democratic future of South Africa, leading to autocratic dictatorial oligarchy that will impact on future generations. It is therefore incumbent to all South Africans, to unite beyond their ethnic, class, colour and religious identities to address this predicament head on by fostering: active civil society activism and effective developmental state, guided by sound democratic values and moral principles and move the country from ethnic based politics to value based politics that recognise merit above colour, ethnicity, religion or creed.

### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

To mobilize and organize individuals and all civil society organizations in South Africa to act together and speak in a unified voice for a creation of South Africa that prioritises broad based human sustainability, based on democratic values and moral principles that cherishes human dignity and respect for human rights.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To promote voters' public education and communities' participation in governance
- To act as an independent national umbrella body to house all non- State actors to amplify their voice for socio-economic transformation.
- To create/maintain enabling climate for civil society, promoting people centred participatory development, influencing national & international policy development and promoting a vibrant democracy.
- To consider, discuss and act on all questions affecting the interests of the most disadvantaged communities and further to encourage communities to identify their wants and needs and work in co - operation to satisfy them.
- To extend, develop, maintain, control and direct the work of various SAACSO branch offices (both those already established and those which may hereafter be established) in the Republic of South Africa.
- To develop and carry on alone or in co-operation or conjunction with other similar or relevant organisations the objects of the organisation.
- To inculcate, foster, organize, direct, maintain and extend in communities, the principles of self-sufficiency and self- determination and to unite and associate the constituents of disadvantaged communities in their efforts and desire to transform their socio-economic material conditions of existence and realise their aspirations in the Republic of South Africa.
- To promote, organise, foster, maintain and direct the moral, mental and physical education and well - being of all communities in the Republic of South Africa and elsewhere.
- To help Civil Society to be aware of its independent identity.
- To enable disadvantaged communities to organise themselves, analyse their own needs and problems, mobilise resources, and develop bottom-up solutions.
- To develop leadership capable of guiding the development of communities.

**SAACSO draws its membership from (CSOs); NGOs); FBO); (CBOs) and individual members of the civil society.**

## **ACTIVITIES:**

- Promote voters' education and Capacitation
- Fosters active Community participation in governance and oversight
- Membership mobilization and Organisational development [OD].
- Resource mobilization.
- Paralegal services.
- Research & advocacy.
- Class legal actions and Consumer rights protection.
- Human Rights awareness and Information dissemination

## WHAT SAACSO IS AND IS NOT.

Saacso is a people's centred Civil Society Organisation concerned with day to day issues of community development and governance, problems affecting communities, how to identify, analyse these problems and develop bottom up solutions. It is Saacso's principle not to be alienated or affiliated to any political party. Saacso acknowledges the fact that civil society by its very nature is a political sphere and its struggles are of a political nature; however Saacso places a distinct dichotomy between party politics and civil society politics in the whole politico, socio-economic space. It is Saacso's held view that Civil Society's politics are the politics of the stomach, the unemployed, the homeless, the landless, the exploited, victims of poor service delivery, lack of clean running water, toilets, affordable electricity, struggles against the high cost of living and the whole spectrum of problems that make life unbearable to the poor who in all respects are in the majority.

In essence Civil Society's politics in their very nature hold accountable political parties politics whose priority is to control state power. Civil Society's politics bridge a gap between intended effects of legal provisions and the real effects in practice. It is therefore important that, Civil Society must avoid as much as possible to meddle in party politics, to form alliance or to maintain partisan political postures in any form with any political party, because that will draw Civil Society into party political battles and stifle its ability to play its fundamental watchdog role over government and mediating role to foster democracy.

### Who can join SAACSO

- All people living in South Africa
- NGOs
- Churches
- Social and economic Societies
- Youth and Women organisations
- Service delivery Social Struggle Movements
- Professionals, Academics and Students Movements

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