

# STATEMENT ON THE CLOSURE OF THE SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVE (SPI)

*Celebrating Our Journey, Honouring Our Mission, and sharing our Legacy Challenge for the introduction of a Universal Basic Income.*

It is with mixed emotions that we announce the closure of the Social Policy Initiative (SPI) in December 2024, due to ongoing funding constraints. After 18 years of tireless work in promoting social justice, economic equity, and policy advocacy, SPI's history will come to a close.

Since our founding in 2007, SPI has dedicated itself to addressing the structural inequalities in South Africa. Through groundbreaking research, thought leadership, and innovative partnerships, we have elevated critical issues such as poverty alleviation, social protection, and economic rights. We have consistently called for policies that uphold the dignity and rights of the most vulnerable in society.

## **We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved over the years:**

- The comprehensive research on social security, poverty and a Decent Standard of Living and broader calls for the meaningful realisation of socio-economic justice, which has influenced national debates and policy frameworks.
- Our role in advocating for social protection measures, including the extension of social grants and the advancing the call for a decent a Universal Basic Income.
- Meaningful collaborations with grassroots movements, academics, and policymakers, fostering dialogue and action around issues of poverty, human rights and budget advocacy.
- Being integral in the establishment of a number of key platforms and organisations both nationally and on the continent to broaden domestic voices in the call for universal Social Protection, and
- Successful partnerships and the support of international and local donors who believed in our vision and mission.

None of this would have been possible without the commitment of our board members, who have steered the organization with wisdom and guidance; our dedicated staff, who have worked with passion and resilience; our generous donors, whose support has enabled us to make a lasting impact; and our broader stakeholders, whose collaboration and engagement have amplified our work.

SPI's research will be archived in the historic UWC archive, and the Black Sash will carry a portal link to the SPI Collection on their website to share with activists looking for our research and data to support future campaigns.

As we close this chapter, we reflect not just on our victories but on the work that remains. SPI has long championed the cause of a Universal Basic Income (UBI) for all South Africans as a necessary step towards a Decent Standard of Living and socio-economic justice. Today, we renew that call and urge the government to implement a UBI as a means to ensure a dignified life for every citizen, free from the debilitating impacts of poverty and inequality.

We believe that legislating a truly universal, decent UBI would be a fitting and lasting legacy for the work of SPI. It would embody the values of equity, social protection, and dignity that have been central to our mission. As we transition from this moment, we hope that policymakers and the public will rally behind this transformative policy to ensure that no one is left behind.

Though SPI's doors will close, our mission will live on through the many individuals, organizations, and movements who continue the fight for social and economic justice. We thank you all for walking this journey with us and for your unwavering belief in a more just and equitable South Africa.

In solidarity,



Sisa Njikelana, Chair of the Board  
October 2024



Isobel Frye, Executive Director