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National call to defend the gains our democracy: Preliminary observer outcomes of the 2024 General Election

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National Youth Network, ACTIVATE! Change Drivers wishes to thank young people and communities who heeded the national call to participate in the 2024 General Election. It is the **16 million** turnout that demonstrated South Africa's resolute nature to engage in the gains of its democracy through the process of voting even to the point of standing in the long lines to vote accompanied by their communities, that materialized into the outcomes reflected in the preliminary results.

Since the announcement of the primary results, we have noted the vast outcomes reflected by the results of our democratic process and welcome the position of civil society in the main and the international observer mission that considers the 2024 General Elections free and fair and reflective of the will of the people (noting pending disputes of counting and data capturing).

Youth vote and participation in the 2024 General Election

It must be noted that the process did not begin on the day of voting, it was influenced by the varying inputs of many key role players in civil society, ordinary South Africans, members of the different wings of the state, the governing party, the church council of South Africa, chapter nine institutions, Institutions of Higher learning, political parties, activists, the media, the private sectors, public figures and the international community, including our neighboring countries, paired with the lived experience of ordinary South Africans, that influenced the outcomes of the 2024 General Election.

As a network, we have spent the last decade in communities through varying civic interventions depicted through the; ‘We are voting campaign’, to capacitate communities in their full diversity with civic education, empowering them at the grassroots level with knowledge, tools, skills and a network of active change drivers who did not wait on government or the different sectors of society to save them, but proactively sought to address the lived conditions of their communities and used the available channels afforded to us by our democracy, even when it proved challenging to access them.

Capacity challenges within the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa

This election was not without its challenges, as a network we had over 100 observers present in every corner of the country. Some notable outcomes are projected through the various voting districts (VDs). We must reflect on the information shared by the IEC regarding the changes to the elections process that included Section 24A and the third ballots, and the implications this has had on the voting process. There must be a forward-thinking conversation and steps taken to improve our electoral process to avoid errors and inconsistencies. We encourage members of society to avoid the spread of misinformation and fake news on the democratic process and to use the available channels to report any errors or unethical actions that need to be investigated.

Beyond the 2024 General Election outcomes

As we look toward a new era of governance and politics in this country. While charting a new era, we must learn from the mistakes and gains of previous administrations and the global community familiar with transitions similar to the one we find ourselves in.

While the outcomes may currently highly contested and considered favorable only to some, we must make decisions about the 7th democratic administration that mirror the will of the people.

It is encouraging to note new entrants into the politics of South Africa as depicted by the outcomes received by newly formed parties and independent candidates. As a network we wish to reiterate that it remains our collective responsibility to contribute towards the establishment of a democratic state we are all able to benefit from and contribute to.

Siyashesha Leadership Incubator NPC Reg No 2011/000482/08 | ETDP SETA accreditation N^o: ETDP10912

CEO: Sipehele Chirwa Executive **Directors**: Abueng Tebogo Suping,
Non-Executive **Directors**: Yolande Wright, Janet Jobson, Injairu Kulundu, Nariman Laattoe

This work continues as we endeavour to guard the gains of our democracy by ensuring an inclusive transition into the 7th administration that prioritizes the will of the people. It remains our collective responsibility to ensure that this is done with little to no negative consequence to South Africans.

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About ACTIVATE! Change Drivers

ACTIVATE! Change Drivers is a multisectoral youth development programme with a national network that in the past 12 years, has delivered a leadership development programme to over 4551 young people from across the country, with tools to enable platforms for youth leaders to connect, share ideas and be empowered to become active change drivers in their communities.

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