

A Bill of Responsibilities for the youth of South Africa

Preamble

I accept the call to responsibility that comes with the many rights and freedoms that I have been privileged to inherit from the sacrifice and suffering of those who came before me. I appreciate that the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa are inseparable from my duties and responsibilities to others. Therefore I accept that with every right comes a set of responsibilities.

This Bill outlines the responsibilities that flow from each of the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to equality

The right to equality places on me the responsibility to:

- * treat every person equally and fairly, and
- * not discriminate unfairly against anyone on the basis of race, gender, religion, national-, ethnic- or social origin, disability, culture, language, status or appearance.

South Africa is a diverse nation, and equality does not mean uniformity, or that we are all the same. Our country's motto: !KE E: /XARRA //KE, meaning "Diverse people unite", calls on all of us to build a common sense of belonging and national pride, celebrating the very diversity which makes us who we are. It also calls on us to extend our friendship and warmth to all nations and all the peoples of the world in our endeavour to build a better world.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to human dignity

The right to human dignity places on me the responsibility to:

- * treat people with reverence, respect and dignity
- * be kind, compassionate and sensitive to every human being, including greeting them warmly and speaking to them courteously.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to life

The right to life places on me the responsibility to:

- * protect and defend the lives of others
- * not endanger the lives of others by carrying dangerous weapons or by acting recklessly or disobeying our rules and laws.
- * live a healthy life, by exercising, eating correctly by not smoking, abusing alcohol, or taking drugs, or indulging in irresponsible behaviour that may result in my being infected or infecting others with communicable diseases such as HIV and AIDS.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to family or parental care

This right expects me to:

- * honour and respect my parents, and to help them,
- * be kind and loyal to my family, to my brothers and sisters, my grandparents and all my relatives.
- * recognise that love means long-term commitment, and the responsibility to establish strong and loving families.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to education

The right to education places on **me** the responsibility to:

- * attend school regularly, to learn, and to work hard,
- * cooperate respectfully with teachers and fellow learners and
- * adhere to the rules and the Code of Conduct of the school.

and concurrently places on my **parents and caregivers** the responsibility to:

- * ensure that I attend school and receive their support

and places on my **teachers** the responsibility to:

- * promote and reflect the culture of learning and teaching in giving effect to this right.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to work

This right carries with it the responsibility for all **learners, parents, caregivers and teachers** to:

- * work hard and do our best in everything we do.
- * recognise that living a good and successful life involves hard work, and that anything worthwhile only comes with effort.
- * This right must never be used to expose children to child labour. (proposed alternative: prevent children being exposed to child labour).

My responsibility in ensuring the right to freedom and security of the person

The right is upheld by my taking responsibility for:

- * not hurting, bullying, or intimidating others, or allowing others to do so, and
- * solving any conflict in a peaceful manner.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to own property

The right to own property places on me the responsibility to:

- * respect the property of others,
- * take pride in and protect both private and public property, and not to take what belongs to others.
- * be honest and fair, and for those who have, to give generously to charity and good causes.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion

The right to freedom of conscience requires me to:

- * allow others to choose and practice the religion of their choice, and to hold their own beliefs and opinions, without fear or prejudice.
- * respect the beliefs and opinions of others, and their right to express these, even when we may strongly disagree with these beliefs and opinions. That is what it means to be a free democracy.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to live in a safe environment

This right assumes the responsibility to:

- * promote sustainable development, and the conservation and preservation of the natural environment.
- * protect animal and plant-life, as well as the responsibility to prevent pollution, to not litter, and to ensure that our homes, schools, streets and other public places are kept neat and tidy.
- * In the context of climate change, we are also obliged to ensure we do not waste scarce resources like water and electricity.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to citizenship

The right to citizenship expects that each of us will be good and loyal South African citizens. This means that we are responsible for:

- * obeying the laws of our country,
- * ensuring that others do so as well, and
- * contributing in every possible way to making South Africa a great country.

My responsibility in ensuring the right to freedom of expression

The right to free expression is not unlimited, and does not allow us to:

- * express views which advocate hatred, or are based on prejudices with regard to race, ethnicity, gender or religion.
- * We must therefore take responsibility to ensure this right is not abused by ourselves or others, to not tell or spread lies, and to ensure others are not insulted or have their feelings hurt.

Conclusion

I accept the call of this Bill of Responsibilities, and commit to taking my rightful place as an active, responsible citizen of South Africa. By assuming these responsibilities I will contribute to building the kind of society, which will make me proud to be a South African.

The national school pledge

We the youth of South Africa,
recognising the injustices of our past,
honour those who suffered and sacrificed for justice and freedom.
We will respect and protect the dignity of each person,
and stand up for justice.

We sincerely declare that we shall uphold the rights and values of
our constitution
and promise to act in accordance with the duties and
responsibilities
that flow from these rights.

! KE E: / XARRA / / KE
Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika.