

## **DRAFT MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **For Immediate Release**

Section 22 Ad Hoc Committee for the Christian Sector

CRL Rights Commission

### **Launch of the National Consultation on the Draft Self-Regulatory Framework for the Christian Sector in South Africa**

#### **Opening Statement**

Good day, members of the media, respected faith leaders, and fellow South Africans.

We stand before you today not as regulators, but as servants. We are the Section 22 Ad Hoc Committee, appointed by the CRL Rights Commission, and we are comprised of your brothers and sisters from across the broad spectrum of the Christian faith in South Africa. We are pastors, theologians, administrators, and lay leaders. We are, first and foremost, part of the flock we seek to serve.

Our mission is born from a deep love for the Church and a profound respect for the Constitution that protects our freedom of religion. It is also born from a place of collective pain and unwavering hope.

We have witnessed the devastating reports of exploitation, where the vulnerable have been fed false promises and harmful substances. We have seen the pain of financial abuse and the scandal of moral failure in places meant to offer sanctuary. We have heard the cries of those hurt within our own walls. These actions have cast a shadow, not only on the institutions involved but on the glorious name of Christ we all proclaim.

This cannot be our story. This will not be our legacy.

Today, we are publishing a Draft Self-Regulatory Framework for the Christian Sector for national consultation. Let us be clear on what this is, and what it is not.

This is not a framework for state control. The Constitution of South Africa in Sections 15 and 31 guarantees our freedom of belief and practice. That freedom is sacred and non-negotiable.

This is, instead, a framework for freedom with responsibility. It is a proactive, voluntary initiative by the Church, for the Church. It is our collective answer to the call in 1 Peter 5:2-3, to be shepherds who serve willingly, eagerly, and by example, not for dishonest gain, but for the good of the flock entrusted to us.

**This draft framework is built on three pillars of light:**

1. **Internal Governance and Accountability:** Calling for transparency, clarity in our leadership, and integrity in our operations.
2. **A Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct:** Affirming our commitment to act with compassion, to protect the vulnerable, to maintain boundaries, and to uphold the highest moral standards.
3. **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** Encouraging churches to fulfill their existing civic duties, from proper registration to child protection policies, because good citizenship is a biblical mandate.

To champion this vision, the framework proposes the creation of an independent Christian Practice Council for Ethics and Accountability (CPCEA). This council, composed of respected leaders and experts from across our diverse community, will support, guide, and certify organisations that commit to these standards. It will provide a “Seal of Good Standing”—a public symbol of an organisation’s dedication to accountability, helping believers and donors to make informed decisions.

This is about restoring and strengthening public trust. It is about ensuring that when we speak of faith, hope, and love, our actions loudly echo our words. It is about protecting the integrity of the Gospel from being tarnished by the failures of its messengers.

**The Path Ahead: A Nation in Conversation**

This draft is not a final document. It is the beginning of a vital, nationwide conversation. For the next few months, we will embark on an extensive consultation process. We will meet with umbrella bodies, denominational leaders, fraternalists, abuse survivors, theologians, legal experts, government departments, and the general public. We will listen, we will learn, and we will refine this framework together.

We invite every Christian, every leader, every congregation to engage with this document. Read it. Debate it. Improve it. This is your framework.

Our goal is not to create a club for the perfect, but a fellowship of the willing—those willing to strive for excellence, accountability, and above all, Christ-like service.

We believe the South African Church is poised for a new chapter. A chapter defined not by scandal, but by sacred trust. Not by division, but by a common commitment to integrity. Not by fear of regulation, but by a courageous embrace of our responsibility to self-govern in a manner worthy of our calling.

Let us build a Church that is a beacon of light, a safe haven for the broken, and a powerful, unified force for good in our nation.

We now welcome your questions.

End.

Issued by: The Section 22 Ad Hoc Committee for the Christian Sector, CRL Rights Commission

Date: 19 December 2025

Contact: [Media Contact Details]