

# Social Development



Social assistance continues to form an important part of government's strategy to fight the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

More than half of all households in South Africa benefit from government's social assistance programme.

According to National Treasury, for 22% of households, social grants are the main source of income.

Comprehensive social security alleviates and reduces poverty, vulnerability, social exclusion and inequality through a comprehensive social protection system.

Empowering young and old people, those with disabilities as well as women in particular, helps rebuild families and communities.

Welfare services create and provide social protection to the most vulnerable of society through the delivery of social welfare services via provincial government and non-profit organisation (NPO) structures.

## Budget

A total of R113 billion (93%) of the Department of Social Development's (DSD) R120 billion budget went towards the payment of social grants.

The social assistance budget has increased by an average of 11% a year since 2008/09, in part due to the extension of the child support grant to the age of 18.

## Legislation and frameworks

The department derives its mandate from the following legislation:

- Advisory Board on Social Development Act, 2001 (Act 3 of 2001)
- Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005)
- Children's Amendment Act, 2007 (Act 41 of 2007)
- Fund-Raising Act, 1978 (Act 107 of 1978)
- Mental Healthcare Act, 2002 (Act 17 of 2002)
- National Welfare Act, 1978 (Act 100 of 1978)
- National Development Agency (NDA) Act, 1998 (Act 108 of 1998)
- NPO Act, 1997 (Act 71 of 1997)
- Older Persons Act, 2006 (Act 13 of 2006)
- Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency Act, 1992 (Act 20 of 1992)
- Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act, 2008 (Act 70 of 2008)
- Probation Services Act, 1991 (Act 116 of 1991)
- South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) Act, 2004 (Act 9 of 2004)
- Social Assistance Amendment Act, 2008 (Act 6 of 2008)

- Social Service Professions Act, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978). The Act also provides for the appointment of the Independent Tribunal in a way to be prescribed by regulation, and contains a number of technical amendments and corrections.
- In terms of the Social Assistance Amendment Act, 2010 (Act 5 of 2010), beneficiaries and other applicants may now ask Sassa to reconsider the relevant decision before appealing to the tribunal. All applications for appeal must now show that they have gone through the reconsideration process at Sassa.
- In 2013, government proposed the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill to enforce gender parity across all sectors of society. This demonstrates government's commitment to acting decisively and enforcing change in the workplace and speeding up the process of gender transformation.

The proposed Bill calls for equal participation of women in the economy and for equal representation in decision-making in the private and public sectors. The proposed Bill comes at a time when gender transformation in corporate boardrooms continues at a much slower pace than in government.

## National Family Policy

The DSD is tasked with implementing the National Family Policy and provides training in family-preservation services, marriage preparation and enrichment, parenting/primary care-giving and families in crisis to service providers in the area of family services.

The *Green Paper on Families* emphasises the need for all to build strong families that protect the most vulnerable members of society.

The purpose of the Green Paper is to provide a platform for all South Africans to engage and exchange views on how to build stable families.

It also addresses some of the challenges faced by individuals in families, including the abuse of women and children, the elderly as well as people with disabilities.

## Child care legislation

The Children's Act of 2005 sets out principles relating to the care and protection of children; defines parental responsibilities and rights; and provides for matters such as children's courts, adoption, child abduction and surrogate motherhood.

The Act also:

- gives effect to certain rights of children as contained in the Constitution
- provides for the issuing of contribution orders
- provides for intercountry adoption

- gives effect to the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption
- prohibits child abduction and gives effect to the Hague Convention on International Child Abduction
- recognises new offences relating to children
- provides for matters relating to the trafficking of children and the implementation of the relevant protocol.

The Children's Act of 2005 provides for the establishment of the National Child Protection Register that records all people found unsuitable to work with children.

In terms of this law, child care facilities, including welfare organisations offering foster care and adoption, are able to check prospective employees, foster parents and adoptive parents against the register.

The register is not open to the public and all requests for information must be directed to the DSD.

The Children's Amendment Act of 2007 provides for:

- the partial care of children
- early childhood development (ECD)
- protection of children
- prevention and early-intervention services
- children in alternative care
- foster care
- child and youth care centres, shelters and drop-in centres
- new offences relating to children
- the plight of child-headed households
- respect for parental rights by providing that no person may take or send a South African child out of the country without the consent of the parents or guardian
- the discipline of children.

The national guidelines to protect and care for children include the Constitution, the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act 74 of 1983), as amended, the *White Paper for Social Welfare (1997)* and the Children's Act of 2005, as amended.

Section 137 of the Children's Act of 2005, proposes new protection measures for child-headed households.

This section defines children from child-headed households, provides for appointing an adult to supervise a child-headed household and allows children in child-headed households to access social grants and other material assistance.

## Role players

### Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities

The then Ministry for Women, Children and People with Disabilities' (DWCPD) mandate

was to advance, develop, promote and protect the rights of women, children and people with disabilities through mainstreaming, lobbying, advocacy, awareness raising, empowerment and monitoring compliance in government and all relevant sectors.

The Eight-Principles Action Plan for Promoting Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality within the Public Service Workplace entails:

- promoting and protecting human dignity and human rights for women, including the rights of women with disabilities
- the full implementation of national policies and guidelines on women's empowerment and gender equality through the departmental and sector-specific guidelines and standard operating procedures
- ensuring women's full participation in decision-making through the employment of 50% women at all levels of senior management in government
- putting in place departmental and sector gender management systems, adequate institutional mechanisms and dedicated gender units
- incorporating gender perspectives into all work of the department
- capacity development for women's advancement and gender equality
- availing adequate human, physical and financial resources for advancing gender equality
- ensuring full responsibility, ownership for and reporting on advancing gender equality within the Public Service.

In March 2013, the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women held its 57th session at the Headquarters in New York, United States of America (USA).

It called for the elimination of violence against women and girls, a global scourge that affects millions around the world.

In countries such as Australia, Canada, Israel, South Africa and the USA, intimate partner violence accounts for 40 to 70% of female murder victims.

South Africa participated in various activities of the session and hosted and coordinated side events on gender-based violence, the economic empowerment of women as well as an event which emphasised strengthening the hand-in-hand approach in the fight against gender-based violence, strategies and approaches for ending violence against women.

The theme for the session was "Equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV and AIDS."

In November 2013, the first ever National Conference on Albinism was held in Boksburg, Gauteng.

Hosted by the then DWCPD in partnership with the Albinism Society of South Africa the conference was attended by 300 delegates, including 90 children with albinism.

High on the conference agenda was the development of positive language associated with albinism in all official languages.

### National Development Agency

The NDA is a public entity, listed under Schedule 3A of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) 1999 (Act 1 of 1999). Its mandates are to:

- contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to civil-society organisations (CSOs)
- implement development projects in poor communities
- strengthen the institutional capacity of CSOs that provide services to poor communities
- promote consultation, dialogue and sharing of development experience between CSOs and relevant organs of State
- debate development policy
- undertake research and publication aimed at providing the basis for development policy.

The NDA supports the work of civil society in key areas of concern.

It is an important partner in the department's efforts to promote ECD by using its grants to strengthen the capacities of ECD community-service organisations, which support the department's efforts to reduce violence against women and children by providing key support to the gender-based violence sector.

NDA programmes include grant funding, capacity-building and research, policy dialogue and impact assessment.

Capacity-building interventions are geared towards ensuring that recipients of grant funding are not only given money to start and run their projects, but that they are empowered with the necessary skills to ensure sustainability.

The NDA has established the Programme Management Unit, which will be responsible for offering project management services to private and public-sector stakeholders who wish to fund poverty-eradication projects.

Particular emphasis will be placed on those in the NDA's primary areas of focus, namely food security, ECD, enterprise development and income generation programmes.

Income generation projects created 906 job opportunities against an annual target of 1 686,

representing a 63% negative variance against the annual target. This is an area that will receive focused attention in the 2013/14 financial year.

## South African Social Security Agency

Sassa's core business is to administer, finance and pay social security transfers. The agency is required to:

- develop and implement policies, programmes, standard operating procedures and systems for an efficient and effective social assistance benefits administration system
- deliver innovative and cost-effective services to beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries through multiple access channels
- pay the right grant to the right person at the right time and place.

Sassa's mandate is to ensure the provision of comprehensive social security services against vulnerability and poverty within the constitutional and legislative framework.

The agency's key functions include the:

- effective management, administration and payment of social assistance
- the processing of applications for social assistance, such as social grants, grant-in-aid and social relief of distress
- the verification and timely approval of grant applications
- the management and reconciliation of grant payments to eligible beneficiaries by contractors
- the marketing of social assistance
- quality service assurance by ensuring compliance with norms and standards, and fraud prevention and detection.

By October 2013, social grant beneficiaries had increased to 16 106 110.

Although the number of beneficiaries has increased, government achieved savings on social grant payments when Sassa cleaned up the beneficiary re-registration process to reduce fraud.

## Advisory Board on Social Development

The Advisory Board on Social Development's key functions include:

- advising the Minister on all matters related to social development
- identifying, promoting, monitoring and evaluating policy, legislation and programmes regarding social development
- facilitating dialogue with and the participation of civil society.

## South African Council of Social Service Professionals

The South African Council of Social Service Professionals is a statutory body that promotes and ensures ethical behaviour and attitudes on the part of all social service professionals.

These include all social workers, social auxiliary workers, community development workers and practitioners, probation officers, assistant probation officers, child and youth care workers, youth workers, ECD practitioners and care workers, including community-based personal care workers.

The council's business is conducted within the framework of the following principles:

- promoting and maintaining a high standard of professional ethics
- promoting efficient, economic and effective use of resources
- being development oriented
- providing services impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias
- responding to people's needs and encouraging participation in its policy making
- being accountable
- fostering transparency by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information
- good human resource management
- being broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel
- employing management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve representation.

## National Action Committee for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS

The National Committee for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS is a multisectoral structure made up of government departments, CSOs, development agencies and donor organisations.

It is a formal structure used for collaborative planning and decision-making concerning issues pertaining to orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS.

It has a steering committee initiated through consultations between government departments, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and is currently composed of representatives of government and civil society.

The committee is chaired by the DSD, and co-chaired by a nominated member from civil society.



## Relief boards

Four relief fund boards were established in terms of Section 16 of the Fund-Raising Act of 1978.

- Board of the Disaster Relief Fund: The key functions of the board are to assist people, organisations and bodies that suffer damage or loss as a result of a disaster.
- Board of the Refugee Relief Fund: The key functions are to assist refugees as the board may deem fair and reasonable.
- Board of the State President's Fund: This board's functions are to assist victims of any act of terrorism in respect of their medical treatment and rehabilitation, and assist such victims and their dependants during any financial hardship or financial distress caused directly or indirectly by any act of terrorism.
- Board of the Social Relief Fund: The key functions of the board are to make funds available to organisations capable of assisting people with psychosocial challenges, and rendering such social distress relief to victims of violence.

## Non-profit organisations

The NPO Directorate of the DSD administers the Register of NPOs in South Africa.

It is a voluntary registration facility that enhances the credibility of the registered NPO as it reports to a public office.

Registration promotes effective, efficient and accountable management within the sector.

To strengthen the capacity of NPOs, the department will continue to build their capacity and monitor their compliance to legislation.

One of the functions of the department is to monitor all registered NPOs in terms of their compliance with the NPO Act of 1997.

The compliance rate has improved by 26%.

Training was provided to 1 200 NPOs and community-based organisations (CBOs).

Plans to strengthen the sector include:

- increasing the number of staff in the department who deal with registrations
- increasing the number of road shows to provide information and listen to challenges faced by the sector.

## Programmes and projects

### 16 Days of Activism of No Violence Against Women and Children

The 16 Days of Activism of No Violence Against Women and Children is an annual awareness campaign observed globally.

It seeks to address policy and legal issues and to call for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence.

In 2013, government launched the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign in Mahikeng, North West.

The opening ceremony took the form of an interactive session with community members.

The campaign runs from 25 November, which was officially recognised by the UN in 1999 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

South Africa has added children to the campaign, as there is growing concern about the increasing violence against children.

The campaign ends on 10 December – International Human Rights Day.

Other important days commemorated annually during this 16-day period include World AIDS Day on 1 December and the International Day for Persons with Disabilities on 3 December.

## Project Mikondzo

In September 2013, the Minister of Social Development launched a project to expand social services to 1 300 of the country's poorest wards and called on community members to lend their support to the department and its agencies.

Project Mikondzo (which means "footprint" in Xitsonga) will compel office-bound officials from the department, the NDA and the Sassa to join frontline officials to interact with communities in a bid to tackle social problems such as poverty, malnutrition, violence against women and child-headed households.

The 1 300 wards form part of 23 district municipalities from seven provinces, which Cabinet has prioritised for additional support.

The project includes an audit of ECD centres and the setting up of a command centre with a toll-free hotline open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It also includes a current substance abuse awareness campaign targeting sports and music events, the targeting of gender-based violence and the strengthening of NPOs.

The introduction would for example help government reach the about two million children who qualify for CSGs but who have not registered with Sassa to receive grants.

The project will be funded by Sassa and the department.

The audit of ECD centres, which covered 19 971 registered and unregistered centres, aims to establish, among other things, the kind of services these centres offer and the quality of infrastructure and resources available to them.

About 1 000 unemployed youths had been recruited and trained to carry out the audit.

The department began training caregivers to improve assistance to child and youth-headed households.

The department was also auditing 92 000 child-headed households that are in the Statistics South Africa database to ensure compliance with the Children's Act of 2005 definition of a child-headed household.

## Anti-Substance Abuse Programme of Action

In March 2013, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Substance Abuse met to review progress regarding the Anti-Substance Abuse Programme of Action. One of the key focus areas contained in the Programme of Action is the introduction of legislation to ban alcohol advertising.

To this end, the Department of Health has developed a Draft Control of Marketing of Alcohol Beverages Bill.

The objectives of this Bill are to provide for the:

- restriction of the promotion of alcoholic beverages
- prohibition of sponsorship associated with alcohol
- prohibition of free distribution and reward, with the aim of contributing to the reduction of alcohol-related harm and the protection of public health and community well-being.

In the same month the Central Drug Authority Board was inaugurated and regulations for the Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act of 2008, were developed.

The Act complements both the National Drug Master Plan (2013 – 2017) and the Anti-Substance Abuse Programme.

The Act provides for a comprehensive national response for combating substance abuse in South Africa through:

- mechanisms aimed at reducing demand and harm in relation to substance abuse through prevention, early intervention, treatment and re-integration programmes
- registration and establishment of treatment centres and halfway houses
- the committal of persons to and from treatment centres and for their treatment.

## Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

The EPWP is a nationwide programme under the auspices of government and state-owned enterprises.

The programme provides an important avenue for labour absorption and income transfers to poor households in the short to medium term. It is also a deliberate attempt by public sector bodies to use expenditure on

goods and services to create job opportunities for the unemployed.

EPWP projects employ workers on a temporary or ongoing basis either by government, by contractors, or by NGOs under the Ministerial Conditions of Employment for the EPWP or learnership employment conditions.

## Early Childhood Development

Government has identified ECD as a key focus area in its effort to improve the quality of basic education and care for children.

In 2013, more than 836 000 children benefitted from ECD services in South Africa.

The department recognises that one of the ways of breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty is investment in children to aid their development, especially from the ages of 0 – 4.

Providing ECD services, therefore, remains at the top of the department's agenda.

In 2013, the ECD programme started the implementation of the information communication and technology strategy, targeting 40 ECD sites in rural areas.

Childcare and protection measures were also improved, where the department was able to place 157 024 children in foster care, while the number of children accessing drop-in centres increased by 450%.

There are plans in place to ensure that all ECD centres are registered and early childhood practitioners appropriately trained. Programmes for parental training are also in the pipeline.

## War on Poverty Campaign

During the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the DSD, Sassa and the NDA launched the Cooperative Shop Project.

The initiative is aimed at combating poverty by linking social grant beneficiaries (particularly the caregivers of children receiving CSGs) and other vulnerable groups to meaningful socio-economic opportunities. The department and its entities will identify cooperatives that need support, with the intention of developing the skills of the cooperative members to ensure they are able to produce goods of quality.

The project is in line with the developmental agenda of government and could be seen as an addition to the grants that are provided. The primary intention is not to take people out of the grant system but to provide opportunities for grant beneficiaries to supplement their income.

If the project is a success, the members of the cooperatives may well earn enough to support themselves and their families and thus move out of the social-security system.

### Food for All Programme

The department is tasked with facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Food for All Programme.

To this end, distressed households were being provided with food through the department and Food Bank South Africa programme.

While social relief of distress provides short-term relief for poor households, government recognises that longer-term solutions are needed.

Government is committed to improving its efforts at ensuring food security for all in the country, starting with vulnerable households and communities.

To this end, households have been assisted in establishing food gardens to produce their own food, thus participating in their own development.

### Social security and assistance

By putting money directly into the hands of the poor, government has improved the lives of South African children in matters such as nutrition, better education outcomes, healthcare and job-seeking behaviour.

Since 1994, the social grants system has expanded from 2,7 million to over 16 million beneficiaries.

Independent research results showed in November 2013 that the provision of social protection in the form of social grants had sustained many vulnerable households, particularly against the global financial crisis.

As from 1 October 2013, government has increased the monetary value of social grants. These included:

- the disability grant and care dependency grant, which increased to R1 270;
- the older persons grant for ages 75 and older, and the war veterans grant increased to R1 290;
- the CSG and the grant-in-aid increased to R300; and the foster child grant to R800.

In May 2013, the UN Children's Fund commended the South African Government on the impressive progress it had made in making essential services available to vulnerable children and youngsters, and supporting their parents and caregivers.

The country's progressive legal and policy framework created an enabling environment for the protection of children and young people, and guaranteed their rights to social services.

At the Conference on Orphans, Children and Youth made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS, which took place in May 2013 in Durban, delegates heard that improved financial stability, facilitated by social grants, improved children's school attendance.

Poor children who receive grants tend to stay at school for longer and perform better compared to poor children who get no financial support at all.

In 2013, government started implementing the new biometric-based payment solution for social grants.

The system forms part of government's commitment to strengthening, modernising and improving the integrity of the social-security system and eliminating all forms of fraud and corruption.

The re-registration deadline was extended by a month to the end of April 2013.

However, those who have not re-registered any type of grant and are not in possession of the new card have to present themselves and their children who receive child grants.

### Social security reform

With effect from March 2013, tax-free interest-income annual thresholds were increased from R33 000 to R34 500 for individuals 65 years and over, and from R22 800 to R23 800 for individuals under the age of 65.

Other initiatives include making it compulsory for retirement funds to identify appropriate preservation funds for exiting members when changing jobs.

Retirement funds will also be required to guide their members through the process of converting savings into a regular income after retirement and to choose annuity products that meet appropriate principles and standards.

The tax treatments of pension, provident and retirement annuity funds will also be simplified and harmonised.

Governance reforms of retirement funds will also be implemented and measures will be put in place to ensure that trustees of retirement funds are trained once they have been appointed.

Tax deductions of pension and retirement annuity funds, as well as contributions to provident funds and employer contributions that will constitute fringe benefits, will be increased to 27,5% of remuneration or taxable income – whichever the greater may be.

This will simplify the way deductions for retirement annuities, fringe benefits and pension funds are calculated. An annual cap on deductible contributions of R350 000 will be applied.

### Job creation and alleviating poverty National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)

Government recognises that the youth have a completely different struggle, which is that of substance abuse over and the fight for economic

emancipation, access to quality education, unemployment and HIV and AIDS.

Government hosted a number of public participation sessions around the country during the Imbizo Focus Week which took place in June 2013.

The izimbizo also focused on the fight against substance abuse.

The focus on youth development is still high on the Government and NYDA's agenda.

The Youth Employment Accord was signed in 2013. It is a viable and meaningful approach to addressing the challenge of youth unemployment.

As part of the Youth Employment Accord, the Economic Development Department committed R3 billion in support of the growth of young entrepreneurs over the next five years, through the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and Small Enterprise Finance Agency (Sefa), which will go a long way towards facilitating the growth and development of young entrepreneurs in South Africa.

The Commonwealth Conference on Education and Training of Youth Workers was hosted by the South African Government in partnership with the Commonwealth Africa Regional Centre, University of South Africa (Unisa) and the NYDA during March 2013.

It was geared towards sharing experiences and lessons learnt to advance the agenda of professionalising the field of youth work.

Held under the theme "Towards the professionalisation of Youth Work", the conference was based on the foundation that youth development practice is a profession like any other and therefore must be streamlined to meet the standards required for any profession.

Over the last 40 years the Commonwealth Youth Programme has liaised with member governments and academic institutions to provide education and training of youth workers.

This is evidenced by their widely offered Diploma in Youth Development Work as well as short courses and the Degree in Youth Development Work offered in Asia and the Pacific. In South Africa, Unisa offers a Commonwealth Diploma in Youth Development Work.

The universities of Venda in Limpopo and Stellenbosch in the Western Cape also offer youth work qualifications.

Great progress was made across the country during 2013:

- 606 unemployed graduates were appointed by provincial government departments across North West in internship programmes for them to gain much-needed workplace experiential learning

- 170 bursaries were awarded to needy and deserving students
- R11,9 million was budgeted for provincial bursary schemes for the 2013/14 financial year.

## Food banks

Spending on community development increased in 2013 owing to an additional allocation of R120 million to FoodBank South Africa, aimed at strengthening the Food for All Programme.

The programme is meant to feed three million people by 2015/16.

The Food Banks Programme, which is part of the Zero Hunger Strategy, is an important channel through which vulnerable people access food.

The department also developed a training and mentoring programme for CBOs.

## HIV and AIDS support

The National Strategic Plan on HIV, AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Tuberculosis (TB) 2012 – 2016, which addresses the social drivers and social impact of HIV and AIDS, is a key component of the department's fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS.

In 2013, free antiretroviral treatment reached 1,8 million adults.

Government also provided antiretroviral treatment to 150 000 children – up from 4 200 children in 2004.

## HIV and AIDS Youth Programme

Most funds continued to be disbursed to loveLife, enabling it to increase and extend its HIV and AIDS awareness programmes, and scholarships for social work students.

By 2015/16, the number of students benefiting from these scholarships is expected to be 4 248.

Consistent with the department's commitment to keeping children in their families and communities, 3 150 child and youth-care workers from local communities were recruited and started with the training programme for the implementation of the Isibindi Model at 260 sites throughout the country.

The aim is to recruit 10 000 child and youth-care workers over the next five years. It is expected that the recruitment and deployment of this cadre of social service professionals will go a long way towards upholding government's constitutional obligation to protect and provide care and support for orphans, vulnerable children and youths affected by HIV and AIDS in South Africa.



## HIV and AIDS advocacy, awareness and outreach programme

Achieving a meaningful and clear understanding of the scientific facts about HIV and AIDS will lead to individual self-management regarding the risk of HIV infection.

The awareness programme has the following main pillars:

- disclosure
- communication
- rights
- facilitation.

The programme also deals with the physical and emotional consequences of HIV and AIDS.

It addresses the following challenges:

- the lack of accurate and current information on HIV and AIDS
- the lack of access to care, support, treatment and new healthcare developments
- discrimination against the infected and affected.

The programme aims to involve people living with HIV and AIDS in initiatives that directly help affected and infected people to alleviate stigmatisation.

## Care and support partnerships

The DSD developed a new National Action Plan for orphans, vulnerable children and youth affected by HIV and AIDS (2012 – 2016), which is aligned with the National Strategic Plan on HIV, STIs and TB (2012 – 2016).

The action plan calls for meaningful involvement and participation by all stakeholders in the national response to orphans, vulnerable children and youths affected by HIV and AIDS.

## Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP)

From 2009/10 to 2012/13, expenditure on social crime prevention and victim empowerment increased significantly to provide for the implementation of the Child Justice Act, 2008 (Act 75 of 2008).

South Africa's Victim Empowerment Policy is based upon the concept of restorative justice.

Victim empowerment is a means of facilitating access to a range of services for all people who have individually or collectively suffered harm, trauma and/or material loss through violence, crime, natural disaster, human accident and/or through socio-economic conditions.

It is the process of promoting the resourcefulness of victims of crime and violence by providing opportunities to access services available to them, as well as to use and build their own capacity and support networks and to act on their own choices.

Hence, empowerment may be defined as having or taking control, having a say, being

In September 2013, Cabinet approved the submission to the United Nation (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child and African Union (AU) Expert Committee the three reports relating to the progress made in securing the rights and wellbeing of children. The reports provide a transparent and critical opportunity for South Africa to assess the progress it has made in these areas:

- Country Report on the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
- the combined second, third and fourth report on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: First Country report to the AU Expert Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

listened to, being recognised and respected as an individual and having the choices one makes respected by others by changing from a victim to a survivor.

## National Directory on Services for Victims of Violence and Crime

The National Directory on Services for Victims of Violence and Crime is updated annually in collaboration with the provincial VEP managers or coordinators and their provincial counterparts.

## Prevention and treatment of substance and drug abuse

In September 2013, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry opened the third annual Sobriety Week, a national campaign aimed at creating awareness among the general South African public, particularly the youth, women and pregnant women about the adverse effects of liquor abuse.

Sobriety Week incorporates the International Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) Day, which is observed internationally on 9 September every year to highlight the irreversible damage caused to unborn babies when their mothers consume alcohol during pregnancy.

Government recognises challenges such as unemployment, which result in people using and abusing liquor.

## Children and youth

In May 2013, government reaffirmed its commitment to continue its efforts to address violence against women and children through partnerships and the effective implementation of relevant policies and programmes during Child Protection Week.

The Home Community-Based Care (HCBC) programme is the centrepiece of government's interventions to build a protective and caring environment for vulnerable children.

Most services to orphans and vulnerable children are rendered through the HCBC programme and include early identification of

vulnerable children and their families, referrals, training of community caregivers and psycho-social support and material assistance.

This approach is geared towards keeping children within their families and communities. It is aimed at providing comprehensive care and support, which is complemented by proactive action at community level.

This includes linking families with poverty alleviation projects and other services in the community, such as food security initiatives and ECD services.

## Child Labour Programme of Action (CLPA) Report

The CLPA is South Africa's roadmap to the prevention, reduction and eventual elimination of child labour, which affects an estimated one million children in the country.

It serves to focus and guide the efforts of an array of government departments and civil society groups, including business organisations, labour federations and organisations serving the interests of children.

The key elements of the CLPA include targeting the implementation of government and other stakeholders' programmes and policies on poverty, employment, labour and social matters more effectively in areas where the work children do has serious negative effects on them.

The CLPA will also promote new legislative measures against the worst forms of child labour and strengthen national capacity to enforce legislative measures.

It is aimed at increasing public awareness and social mobilisation.

## Childline South Africa

Childline offers a 24-hour toll-free crisis line (08000 55 555) to children and families across South Africa. It provides immediate assistance to children and families in crisis who need counselling and information.

Childline is an NPO that works to protect children from all forms of violence and create a culture of respect for children's rights.

Programmes delivered through the provincial offices include:

- a crisis line
- child rights and education
- training and education of volunteers
- training of other professionals who work with child protection and children
- therapy for abused and traumatised children and their families
- court preparation of child witnesses
- networking and coordination
- lobbying and advocacy
- analysis of law and policy.

## People with disabilities

South Africa acknowledges the importance of international cooperation in support of national efforts towards the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and its optional protocol to improve the living conditions of people with disabilities, particularly in developing countries.

South Africa has acceded to, or ratified, most of the African regional and international human-rights instruments in the area of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

The Constitution requires that particular attention be given to relevant international laws and comparable international standards and experiences. There is increased representation of people with disabilities in Parliament, provincial legislatures and in local government.

People with disabilities are also represented in institutions such as the Human Rights Commission, the Commission on Gender Equality and the NYDA. Government departments and provinces are setting up disability policies and targets for mainstreaming service delivery to people with disabilities.

South Africa has also made strides in improving access to health and social services for people with disabilities. The free healthcare policy for people with disabilities includes the provision of assistive devices.

Welfare services are also being streamlined to reach people with disabilities wherever they are through HCBC, rehabilitation and family-support programmes.

Skills development and employment opportunities for people with disabilities are also priorities.

The target is for at least 4% of skills development expenditure to be used to train people with disabilities, and for 2% of the workforce in the public and private sector to be people with disabilities.

In line with its mandate of mainstreaming and oversight, the then DWCPD ensured that each government department committed to clear milestones towards the attainment of 2% employment equity for people with disabilities and be held accountable for this target.

The IDC, in partnership with the then DWCPD, through its Transformation and Entrepreneur Scheme, committed over R200 million towards the women empowerment fund and R50 million for people with disabilities.

Government also encourages the private sector to continue employing people with disabilities, using the skills-development programmes to invest in training people with disabilities.

Transport remains a major barrier limiting the participation of people with disabilities in social, educational and economic activities.

The then DWCPD and the Department of Transport were working together to ensure that the Public Transport Strategy and initiatives respond to the transport needs of people with disabilities and integrate disability considerations.

The department also focuses on improving access to education for learners with disabilities through the promotion of the Inclusive Education Policy.

Government is promoting the integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools while acknowledging that children with severe disabilities still need special schools.

### Blind SA

Blind SA is an organisation for the blind, and is governed by the blind. Situated in Johannesburg, it is aligned with other member organisations throughout South Africa.

Blind SA's main focus is to improve the quality of life of all South Africa's visually impaired people by empowering them through education.

Its objectives are to protect and promote the interests of people with visual impairment and enable all visually impaired people to achieve their optimal potential through independence; and by providing development care for and protecting the rights of those who, owing to circumstances beyond their control, are unable to do so themselves.

Orientation, mobility and skills development to blind and newly blinded people is an important aspect of the work undertaken by Blind SA.

The organisation provides, among other things, study bursaries for visually impaired students for further education, Braille publications in all of South Africa's official languages, Braille training that entails writing and reading, and orientation and mobility training.

### South African Braille Authority (Saba)

Saba was established in May 2012 as an NGO. Its purpose is to set and maintain standards for Braille in all 11 official languages of South Africa.

These standards relate to the development and maintenance of Braille codes; production of quality Braille; the teaching of, access to and promotion of Braille; Braille examinations; and many other Braille-related matters.

Through Saba, South Africa is a member country of the International Council on English Braille (ICEB).

ICEB membership enables South Africa to stay abreast of and participate in international Braille-related matters.

Many individuals belonging to Saba constituencies play important roles in ICEB structures.

### South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB)

The SANCB is the coordinating body for over 100 member organisations throughout the country.

These organisations span the full spectrum of services offered for and to blind and partially sighted people.

The SANCB comprises four core business areas, namely Social Development, the Bureau for the Prevention of Blindness, Education and lastly fund-raising and public relations.

To combat as much as 80% of avoidable blindness, the council regularly undertakes tours with its mobile eye care clinics to rural areas for eye screening, referrals and to perform cataract removal operations.

The SANCB provides entrepreneurial training, adult basic education and training, and facilitates skills training such as computer literacy and call centre programmes through its Optima College.

### Support for the deaf

South Africa's national organisation for the deaf is the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA), formerly the South African National Council for the Deaf, which was established in 1929. DeafSA has nine provincial chapters throughout South Africa.

Two other national organisations for the deaf are Deafblind South Africa and SHHH South Africa, the South African organisation for the hard of hearing.

An estimated 500 000 to 600 000 South Africans use South African Sign Language. As sign language has grown in South Africa – particularly baby sign language – an NPO, Sign Language Education and Development, has been formed to promote sign language.

Signing with hearing babies and children is being promoted through the Signsational Kids website.

South Africa has a long-established deaf education system.

Statistics indicate that there are more than 40 schools for the deaf in South Africa. They include:

- De la Bat School (run by the Institute for the Deaf)
- Fulton School for the Deaf
- Kutlwanong School for the Deaf (Rustenburg)
- Kwa Thintwa School for the Hearing Impaired
- St Vincent's School for the Deaf (Johannesburg)
- Vuleka School for the Blind and Deaf

The Institute for the Deaf in Worcester operates Deaf College South Africa, which trains deaf people for jobs.

South Africa has declared the first Saturday of November every year as National Children's Day. National Children's Day took place on 2 November 2013 under the theme: "Sireletsa Bana: Creating a Caring Society." (Translation: Protect the children).

In addition, the Bible College for the Deaf in Gauteng trains people to work in deaf ministry.

The University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg has a Centre for Deaf Studies.

The centre offers programmes in deaf education and focuses on teaching, research and community service.

Among other services, the National Institute for the Deaf provides services for multiple disabled deaf, runs two deaf churches and provides audiological and mental health services.

A Deaf Child Centre at the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of Cape Town, provides pre-school education and community services. This centre also focuses on deafness research.

The Carel du Toit Centre, based in Cape Town, provides early childhood auditory-oral education.

In addition to providing auditory-education services, the centre also engages in community outreaches, helping families with hearing-related needs and more practical needs such as food.

A similar centre is the Eduplex in Pretoria. It provides auditory-oral pre-school and primary school educational services, teaching hearing and deaf children together and provides training to prospective teachers, audiologists and therapists.

## Older people

Older Persons Week celebrated in October every year, is aimed at promoting respect for the rights of older people.

In its efforts to create an enabling environment for protecting and promoting the rights of older persons, the department registered 104 community-based care and support services for older persons in 2013.

Also in 2013, a further 180 residential care facilities were registered.

The number of older persons benefiting from community-based care and support services increased to 35 197.

The Global AgeWatch Index Report, released on 30 September 2013, ranks South Africa second in Africa in terms of programmes implemented to secure the wellbeing of older persons.

The Global AgeWatch Index is a global study conducted by the UN and an elder rights group, the Help Age.

The Golden Games are held during Social Development Month in October.

The theme of the 2013 Golden Games was, "Building a caring society for all ages."

The games encourage older persons to live healthy lifestyles by participating in sport and other social activities.

The Golden Games are also a way to encourage all South Africans to provide support to older persons by helping them live healthier lives.

The old-age grant means test would be phased out by 2016, accompanied by offsetting revisions to the secondary and tertiary rebates.

All citizens over a designated age will be eligible for the grant, which will simplify its administration and address the disincentive to save that arises from the present means test.

## Training and skills development Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers

In August 2013, the DSD invited unemployed social workers to register on a new database aimed at keeping a record of all unemployed qualified social workers in the country.

The database will be used to lobby for funds to create social work posts that are required within the public service.

There are 9 456 social workers in the employ of government.

The Unemployed Social Workers Database will also inform the department about the number of unemployed social workers who have studied outside the DSD scholarship programme.

This is in response to the issue raised by communities and the media that there are qualified social workers who are unemployed.

The Draft Scarce Skills and Policy Framework of 2003 recognised social work as a scarce skill.

Government mandated the development of strategies to facilitate the recruitment and retention of such scarce skills.

The DSD has been the main driver in the implementation of this social policy.

In addition, the National Development Plan indicates that 60 000 social workers will be needed by 2030 to serve the population.

## Professionalising community development

The Council for Social Service Professions was established in terms of the Social Service Professions Act of 1978.

The key functions are:

- protecting and promoting the interests of the professions, in respect of which professional boards have been or are to be established and to deal with any matter relating to such interests



- advising the Minister on matters affecting the professions in respect of which professional boards have been established
- controlling and exercising authority regarding all financial matters relating to the council and the professional boards
- assisting in the promotion of social services.

### Social work scholarships

As part of its efforts to develop skills and empower the youth, the DSD invited Grade 12 learners to apply for scholarships.

While recruiting, preference is given to deserving learners in rural areas, including those from child-headed households, those living in places of safety, dependants of war veterans and learners in no-fee schools.





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