



**A** better life for all. That is the promise the South African Government has made to the people of the country. On many fronts, in all provinces, in hundreds of cities, towns and communities, that promise is being delivered with varying degrees of success but with a determination to make a difference.

The Department of Social Development is responsible for the development of national policies and legislation, providing implementation support to the provincial departments of social development and monitoring and evaluating the range of social development programmes. Most of the responsibility for delivering social services rests with provincial departments.

In January 2000, the Minister of Social Development identified 10 priorities to be addressed over a five-year period:

- restoring the ethics of care and human development in all welfare programmes. This includes the rebuilding of family, community and social relations to promote social integration.

- developing and implementing an integrated poverty-eradication strategy that provides direct benefits for those who are in need, within a sustainable development approach.
- developing a comprehensive social security system that links contributory and non-contributory schemes, prioritising the most vulnerable households.
- responding to the brutal effects of all forms of violence against women and children, including strategies to deal with perpetrators.
- providing a range of services to support community-based care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS as well as those affected, such as AIDS orphans.
- developing a national strategy to reduce youth criminality and unemployment within the framework of the National Crime Prevention Strategy.
- making social welfare services accessible and available to people in rural, peri-urban and informal settlements, as well as ensuring equity in service provision.
- redesigning services to people with disabilities to promote their human rights and economic development.
- basing welfare work on a commitment to co-operative governance that includes working with different spheres of government and civil society.
- training, educating, redeploying and employing a new category of workers relevant to addressing the development challenges of South Africa.

Recent years have seen significant progress in developing and strengthening the system of social grants (government's key instrument for direct poverty relief), expanding the social safety net, as well as improving administration:

- the administration of social security has been rationalised, with the introduction of assessment panels for disability grants, the simplification of the review of eligibility and the removal of the three-month limitation or arrear payments to beneficiaries
- norms and standards for social-grant delivery have been developed and planning is under way for its

- phased implementation over a three-year period
- government has set aside R2 billion to pay grant beneficiaries who had been disadvantaged by the three-month limitation on the accrual of arrears after registration.

In 2002, two increases in social grants were announced, making a total of R1,5 billion available to the most vulnerable members of society.

From April 2003, pension and disability grants increased by R60 to R70 a month while the child support grant (CSG) rose 14% to R160. In both cases these were above-inflation increases. The 2003 Budget set aside a total of almost R12 billion to facilitate the extension of this grant to more beneficiaries.

Over the next three years, the Department of Social Development will also extend the means-tested CSG to children in need up to their 14th birthday, raising the total number of social assistance beneficiaries to more than eight million by 2005. The Government has set aside about R11 billion for the age extension, resulting in an additional 3,2 million children receiving the CSG, over the next three years.

By the end of March 2003, some 2,6 million children under seven years had been registered for the CSG. This is a significant increase over the mere 60 000 registered in 1999.

A new policy is being drafted on the status of the elderly, as is policy governing child support. Regulations which were found to impede access to social assistance grants are being amended.

When food prices soared in late 2002 and early 2003, government responded by making R400 million available for food parcels and agriculture starter packs.

In March 2003, the Government's Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Programme (IFSNP) was launched. The objectives of the IFSNP are as follows:

- provision of food parcels for three months to the poorest families who do not have any income or cannot afford R200 for food per month
- intensification of the registration for social grants



### Trends in number of grant beneficiaries

Type of grant	April 2001	April 2002	April 2003
Old Age	1,882,188	1,903,085	2,002,320
Disability	631,758	707,920	895,937
Care Dependency	30,269	36,065	56,173
Foster Care	61,268	69,423	133,400
Child Support	1,078,884	1,810,977	2,517,021
Parent Allowance	296	115	–
Child Allowance	153,114	40,842	–
War Veterans	6,062	5,234	3,670
Grant in Aid	9,715	10,442	12,281
Total	3,232,547	3,853,103	5,620,802

Source: Department of Social Development

- acceleration of the school nutrition programme
- provision of agricultural starter packs so that households can provide food for themselves
- the development of sustainable household and community food security.

The Government has set aside R1,2 billion for the Programme over the next three years.

Meanwhile, plans are at an advanced stage to launch the Programme in all the nine provinces. The main beneficiaries of the Programme will be child, granny and woman-headed households and households with HIV/AIDS affected and infected persons.

By 2003, spending on health, education, welfare, housing and other social services accounted for 58,3% of the State's non-interest expenditure, up from 52,9% a decade previously.

Focusing on the delivery of services, the Department of Social Development undertook an audit of the more than 7 000 pension pay-points in the country. Specifications for the new grant payment system have been developed and the design of the system is about to start.

### Poverty relief

In addition to the provision of social assistance, the

Department also manages the Poverty-relief Programme for the provincial social development departments. The aim is to assist communities in a range of developmental projects.

Steady progress is being made with the Programme. In 2001/02, some 365 new poverty-relief projects were established countrywide through a budget of R50 million. These were in addition to projects continuing to receive support from previous years. In the 2002/03 financial year, the poverty-relief allocation increased to R100 million. Most of the projects are located in the three provinces with the highest poverty rates; the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo.

The Poverty-relief Programme targets vulnerable groups, namely women, children, youth, the elderly and people with disabilities. Over a three-year period, it is estimated that 60 000 people will have earned wages generated through poverty-relief projects.

For coming years, the Department has prioritised the areas of food security, centres for engaging older persons in economic activities, support for community-based initiatives in the area of HIV/AIDS, youth skills development in the context of urban renewal, economic empowerment of women, support for initiatives that integrate the capacities of persons with disabilities into the Poverty-relief Programme, and income-generating projects.

## **HIV/AIDS**

The national Department of Social Development has developed a social development framework for an integrated and co-ordinated response to HIV/AIDS. The framework includes sourcing reliable research and information; the provision of social protection to those infected and affected, especially children; protection of children's rights; provision of services; special programmes such as Home-based/Community-based Care; empowerment of women; and empowering officials to deal with HIV/AIDS.



The Department's response to HIV/AIDS is underpinned by working in partnership with other government departments, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, the business sector, volunteers and international agencies.

In 2002/03, the Department significantly expanded the Home-based/Community-based Programme for children and families affected by HIV/AIDS. The provincial departments were allocated a total of R46,5 million for the Programme while the national Department received R1,5 million. This is a significant increase over the R13,4 million allocated in 2001/02. In 2001, about 50 000 vulnerable children benefited from the Programme.

### **Protecting the rights of vulnerable groups**

Child protection is the focus of advocacy activities, and progress is being made with legislation and strategies to protect children against abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Child Protection Register is implemented in all provinces. Public awareness campaigns such as the Child Protection Week, and 16 days of Activism Against Violence on Women and Children were undertaken in collaboration with the Justice Cluster.

Some 120 projects have been registered since the inception of the Victim Empowerment Programme in 1998. Social assistance in the form of Disability Grants was received by 895 937 beneficiaries by April 2003.