

The Department of Social Development aims to ensure the provision of comprehensive, integrated, sustainable and quality social-development services that address vulnerability and poverty, and to create an enabling environment for sustainable development in partnership with those committed to building a caring society.

Legislation

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

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

In 2008/09, the Department of Social Development allocated over R22 million towards the protection of children. To get South Africa ready to implement the Children's Act, 2005, government increased awareness of the legislation and draft regulations while accelerating service delivery to children.

The Older Persons Act, 2006 contains provisions to improve the lives of older South Africans.

The main objectives of the Act are to:

- maintain and promote the status, well-being, safety and security of older persons
- recognise the skills and wisdom of older persons
- encourage older persons' participation in community activities to promote them as people.

Amounts of grants per month as at 1 November 2008

Grant type	Amount
Old-Age Grant	R960
Disability Grant	R960
War-Veterans' Grant	R960
Foster-Care Grant	R650
Care-Dependency Grant	R960
Child-Support Grant	R240
Grant-in-Aid	R210



Payment of social grants

Social-assistance transfers are funded from general revenue and are appropriated on the Vote of the Department of Social Development. Social-assistance cash grants provide targeted income support to those whose livelihoods are most at risk. The available grants are the old-age, disability, child-support, foster-care, care-dependency and war-veterans' grants, and temporary grant-in-aid relief.

In February 2008, the Minister of Finance, Mr Trevor Manuel, announced that the qualifying age for men for old-age pension would be reduced from 65 to 63 in 2008, to 61 in 2009 and to 60 by 2010. More than 23 million older persons receive the Old-Age Grant.

Expenditure on social security increased from R36,9 billion in 2003/04, which was 2,9% of gross domestic product (GDP), to a projected R73 billion in 2009/10, constituting 3,1% of GDP.

By March 2008, about R12,4 million people were receiving social grants. By October 2008, 8,3 million children were receiving the Child-Support Grant, which is provided to children in need up to the age of 15 years from 1 January 2009.

By October 2008, 494 992 children were receiving the Foster-Care Grant. Foster care is a temporary measure until the children reach the age of 18, unless an extension is requested.

By July 2008, 1,4 million people were receiving the Disability Grant.

Social assistance and security fraud

An employment-assistance directorate in the Department of Social Development links social-grant beneficiaries with economic activities and poverty-alleviation strategies, for the possible exit from the social-grants system. In line with this thinking, Cabinet approved, in principle, a proposal to explore possible economic activities and poverty-alleviation strategies for the same purpose.

The department's national facilities to combat fraud and corruption in the social-security system consist of:





- a toll-free national security fraud hotline (0800 60 10 11) that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- an e-mail address (*fraud@socdev.gov.za*).

As part of the Anti-Corruption and Fraud Prevention Strategy, internal-control systems have been improved and forensic and investigating teams deployed in all provinces.

By September 2008, the department had removed 333 233 grants from the system, with an annual value of over R1 billion. It had ensured that 21 189 irregular private beneficiaries and public servants repay illegally obtained grants worth R114 374 million.

War on poverty

In August 2008, government launched the national War on Poverty Campaign to reduce poverty among the country's poorest citizens. The most deprived households identified in the poorest wards were visited periodically during the campaign by a team of professionals and community workers to identify their specific needs and to accelerate access to government services and provide safety nets.

The success of tackling poverty and social exclusion requires that every sector plays its part. "War rooms" that are inclusive of, among other things, government at all levels, business, and voluntary and community organisations have been set up to fight poverty.

Local government departments will intervene in areas such as the provision of free basic services, public works and other indigent measures.

The War on Poverty Campaign's unique approach draws on the experience of other focused and targeted initiatives, such as the urban and rural development strategy, Project Consolidate and izimbizo to bring about maximum impact in identified communities.

South Africa is signatory to various international declarations on the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.





Responding to the impact of HIV and AIDS

The National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections 2007 to 2011 serves as South Africa's primary HIV and AIDS policy document. Recognising the growing need to combat the further spread of the epidemic, the plan hinges on four key priorities, namely:

- prevention
- treatment, care and support
- monitoring, research and surveillance
- human rights and access to justice.

The sustained national response is beginning to pay some dividends as data indicates that the infection rate among women younger than 20 has decreased significantly, while the average national HIV prevalence among young pregnant women has shown signs of stabilisation since 2006.

Home- and community-based care (HCBC)

HCBC is based on the premise that vulnerable children and their families are better protected and supported within the context of their communities. As a result, this programme informs one of the main development strategies currently implemented by

From the beginning of June 2008, the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) is accepting social-grant applications from eligible applicants who are having trouble getting official identity documents and birth certificates.



As stipulated in the regulations of 2005, Sassa accepts sworn affidavits deposited before a commissioner of oaths testifying to, among other details, the names, age, and parentage of the child and any other applicant.

Although this policy shift was initially designed to accommodate applicants for the Child-Support Grant, the Department of Social Development has decided to extend its implementation to all grant types.

The benefit will be for people who apply and meet the eligibility and means-test criteria.





the Department of Social Development to enable communities and people affected by HIV and AIDS to access social-development services. Norms and standards for the implementation of HCBC and support have been developed to ensure good quality of services and to provide a minimum package of services to be rendered. The norms and standards were based on the evaluation of costs and process indicators for HCBC undertaken in three provinces.

Services to orphans made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS

The Department of Social Development provides care and support to orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS and other circumstances. Childcare forums work hand-in-hand with social workers, welfare organisations and other structures in the community to ensure that the identified children get access to appropriate services.

The objective of government's social-cohesion initiative is to provide a material basis for social cohesion and social justice.



By July 2008, the following areas were receiving attention: poverty, unemployment, deprivation, lack of access to basic services and opportunities and the elimination of racism, sexism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance.

The draft National Family Policy had been developed to provide guidelines for integrated services to promote the functionality of families.

A policy for people with disabilities had been drafted to enhance the integration and mainstreaming of the disabled and to ensure that they receive adequate services and support.

A draft framework for moral regeneration was being finalised.

A progress report on the reform of social security and retirement was handed to the interministerial committee that had been created to deal with this issue. The tasks of the committee included: the review of the social-assistance grants; the design of a contributory retirement system; a social-security governance and system framework; the co-ordination of administrative agencies; national health insurance; and the regulation of complementary social-insurance reforms.



The department has established a number of community-based drop-in centres where children are provided with meals and lunch boxes before they go to school. Caregivers at the drop-in centres also assist children from child-headed households with homework and involve them in lifeskills programmes.

The Department of Social Development is developing a national database of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), which will include child-headed households. The programmes to assist OVC include access to treatment, food, skills training and psychosocial support.

By May 2008, some 237 000 vulnerable children had benefited from the department's OVC programmes, which encourage children from households headed by children to remain within and participate in the communities of their birth. This contributes to integrated community-based care which is in the best interests of the children concerned.

Each community should have a childcare forum that works with social workers, welfare organisations and other community structures to ensure that identified OVC receive appropriate services.

National councils

The Department of Social Development strives to strengthen the capacity of civil society to actively engage in social and economic development, by supporting the following national councils:

- National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities
- Deaf Federation of South Africa
- South African National Epilepsy League
- South African Federation for Mental Health
- Cancer Association of South Africa.

Statutory bodies include the National Development Agency (NDA), relief boards and the Central Drug Authority.

National Development Agency

The NDA is a statutory funding agency that aims to contribute to the alleviation of poverty, address its causes, and strengthen the capacity of civil-society organisations to combat poverty.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The key strategic objectives of the NDA are, among other things, to grant funds to civil-society organisations to meet the development needs of poor communities; proactively strengthen organisations' institutional capacity for long-term sustainability; source funds for the NDA; and promote consultation, dialogue and the sharing of development experiences.

Non-profit organisations (NPOs)

The NPO Act, 1997 mandates the Department of Social Development to contribute towards creating an enabling environment within which NPOs can flourish. The Directorate: NPOs was established in terms of this legislation to manage the registration facility and increase public access to information on registered organisations. The legal mandate requires that the directorate registers organisations within two months after receipt of a complete application and that it provides support for organisations to register and meet reporting requirements.

The registration and reporting of organisations has increased substantially since the inception of the Act in 1998. By mid-2007, 44 062 organisations had registered.