**African Christian Democratic Party**

**9 May 2023**

**ACDP Parliament  
Debate on Vote 18: Health  
Speech by Marie Sukers MP**

**ACDP says hunger is the disease South Africa needs to cure**

“Honourable Chairperson,

The ACDP addressed a number of issues during the health budget deliberation: Firstly, the need for an urgent response to malnutrition by this department, we called for a report on the R7.4 billion loan for Covid vaccines, we called out the state of emergency services and availability of ambulances in the Northern Cape and the need for the upscaling of the Richmond hospital as an emergency unit to cover the N1 national road.

It is our contention that the budget presentation does not address the health care crisis we are in. It is an inadequate response to issues raised by committee members who are faced on a daily basis with the reality of a health department that metaphorically is a sick patient on life support!

The Department of Health has not responded to the ACDP’s call for a response on severe malnutrition. A pandemic that is growing in our nation.

Die droom van ons land, Suid-Afrika, is aan sterwe, in die honger oe van 'n kind wat suiker water en brood eet as 'n maaltyd. 20.4% van ons gesinne beleef voedsel onsekerheid - en jy hoef net te ry uit die Kaap, deur die Karoo, om die toename in honger te sien. Ons het meer en meer kinders wat die simptome van wanvoeding toon, en vertraagde kognitiewe ontwikkeling. Die navorsing dui daarop aan dat ons dringend intervensie moet neem en dit nou ons pandemie is!

Die impak van honger op die gesondheid van kinders in die langtermyn is permanent, veral in die delikate fase van kognitiewe ontwikkeling en honger het 'n negatiewe impak op die geestelike gesondheid van mense, nieteenstaande ouderdom.

The ACDP sees the impact of child hunger in the projects we are involved in, and the need for an effective and urgent intervention in communities where unemployment is high. It requires an interdepartmental response between health, social development, and basic education. And not at the glacial pace unique to the public sector - we need an urgent response!

Food insecurity remains a major health threat in South Africa. Hunger increases the risk of drug addiction in children as young as six, and vulnerable children sniff glue to combat hunger.

We need urgent intervention in provinces like the Northern Cape, the Eastern Cape, and in the Karoo.

Nationally the increase in food prices is having major impact on the health and wellness of families in the lower, and lower-middle-class categories.

A call has been made from the NGO sector, for food retailers to forego their markup on essential food items like eggs, and for those essential nutrient items to be reduced in price. Today, the ACDP wants to reiterate our support for this call, and we join the call for government to provide a legal framework to ensure food products that are rich in nutrients are reduced in price to combat the growing crisis of hunger, and the health threat it poses to vulnerable groups.

Hunger is the disease we can cure!  
  
Dankie.”  
  
**-ENDS-**