**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TUESDAY, 25 MAY 2021**

**Watch video here:** [**Vote No 19 – Social Development**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYs94LsWPEo)

***PROCEEDINGS OF MINIPLENARY SESSION – NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAMBER***

Members of the mini-plenary session met in the on the virtual platform in the National Assembly Chamber at 10:00.

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T M Joemat-Pettersson) took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T M Joemat-Pettersson): Hon members, before we proceed I would like to remind you that the virtual mini-plenary is deemed to be in the precinct of Parliament and constitutes a meeting of National Assembly for debating purposes only.

In addition to the rules of virtual sittings, the Rules of the National Assembly, including the rules of debate, apply.

Members enjoy the same powers and privileges that apply in a sitting of the National Assembly. Members should equally note that anything said in the virtual platform is deemed to have been said to the House and may be ruled upon.

All members who have logged in shall be considered to be present; and are requested to mute their microphones and only unmute when recognized to speak. This is because the microphones are very sensitive and will pick up noise which can disturb the attention of other members. When recognized to speak, please unmute your microphone and connect your video.

Members may make use of the icons on the bar at the bottom of their screens, which has an option that allows a member to put up his/her hand to raise points of order. The secretariat will assist in alerting the Chairperson to members requesting to speak.

When using the virtual system members are urged to refrain or desist from unnecessary points of order or interjections.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

(Policy debate)

Debate on Vote 19: Social Development:

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Chairperson, a very good morning to you in particular and to all Members of Parliament, and also a good morning to South Africans who are currently watching Parliament channel, Deputy Minister of Social Development, Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, MECs for Social Development joining us on social media platforms, distinguished guests, fellow South Africans, members of the media, and ladies and gentlemen.

*IsiZulu*:

... siyanibingelela nonke ...

*English*:

As we come back to Parliament to present the 2021-22 Budget Vote 17 of the Department of Social Development, we note that today marks one year, two months and 20 days since South Africa’s first positive case of the coronavirus disease of 2020, COVID-19, was confirmed.

Every moment since then has been unfolding of unprecedented and seismic financial and social impacts. This period presented us with difficulties, yes, but also presented us with opportunities: to learn from each other, establish best practices and improve our institutional capacities and systems.

Faced with the unprecedented impact of COVID-19, and as part of government-wide reprioritisation, the department has had to amend the priorities that we presented to this House in 2020. This was done in order to refocus our programmatic support to the government-led response and fight against COVID-19 and its socioeconomic impacts.

Accompanying this was the announcement of government’s five responsive priorities by President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa during the state of the nation address as, we must: defeat the coronavirus pandemic, accelerate our economic recovery, implement economic reforms to create sustainable jobs and drive inclusive growth, and fight corruption and strengthen the capacity of the state; and this, must be at the centre of our work: strengthen the capacity of the state.

Accordingly, and with the heightened appreciation that the delivery of this budget vote constitutes a contract between government and the public, the department’s 2021-22 budget vote is framed within the priorities that the President directed us towards.

In the same light, we expect that citizens also take responsibility by becoming resilient to enable them to acquire the necessary skills which would enable them to contribute towards economic development. The balanced rights and responsibilities approach is indispensable to building a productive, caring and sustainable society.

It is my pleasure to table Budget Vote 17 of the Department of Social Development for the 2021-22 financial year to this House.

The department’s overall allocated budget amounts to just over R205 billion for the 2021-22 financial year. This is a reduction of R6,5 billion from the initial allocation of the 2020-21 Mid-Term Strategic Framework, MTSF, which will culminate into cumulative reduction of R38,5 billion over the

next three years. It is a pain but it’s something that we have

to go through.

From this annual allocation, the department has allocated R195,516 billion towards the monthly payment of 18 million social grants to beneficiaries. This constitutes nearly 95% of the annual budget for the 2021-22 financial year. The remaining 5% goes towards the implementation of all the department’s programmes, including the allocations towards the administration of the South African Social Security Agency, SASSA, and the programmes of the National Development Agency, NDA.

The social assistance programme continues to be South Africa’s largest antipoverty programme, paying more than 18 million grants every month. For its administration, SASSA will receive a total of R7,466 billion to efficiently and effectively manage, administer and pay social assistance in line with the South African Social Security Agency Act 9 of 2004.

To this end, during the current financial year, SASSA has committed its allocation towards four areas, namely: reducing levels of poverty among South Africans; contributing to

economic transformation through the empowerment of individuals and contributing towards the creation of conditions wherein communities can be sustainable; improving beneficiaries’ experiences with SASSA; and lastly, enhancing SASSA’s efficiencies.

Key to SASSA’s programmes will be its investment towards improving its grant application and payments system. Some of SASSA’s key interventions include: implementing a digital transformation programme, business process reengineering, implementing anti-fraud strategies and strengthening SASSA’s capacity to deliver its mandate.

Included in the department’s allocation is a provision for the Early Childhood Development, ECD, programme. In order to increase the accessibility of ECD services in all communities, the department will continue to subsidize children from poor households. To this end, an amount of R1,56 billion has been allocated as part of the ECD conditional grant for the 2021-22 financial year.

The department remains committed to funding non-profit organisations, NPOs, in their role as an extension of delivery

arm of our social development services. Whereas R33 million has been allocated to support NPOs at our level, that means national, the lion’s share of funding for the NPO sector, more than R7 billion, resides with the provinces.

I do want to indicate that I raise the issue of the value far that money that is sent to provinces and the value of that money must be seen in the programmes that are implemented by these NPOs.

These organisations provide, among others, services for the prevention, care and support of victims of gender-based violence and femicide, GBVF, social crime prevention services; the eradication of substance abuse, care and support to older persons, and the protection of children and building cohesive resilience families within communities.

The department has improved its funding model to these NPOs by implementing a three-year contract cycle that has improved efficiencies and created stability in the sector. The new funding cycle started 01 April 2021 and will end on 31 March 2024.

The department and provinces rely on the coalface role and presence of social service professionals in our communities for the implementation of our integrated responses to the wicked problems we are faced with.

On the backdrop of the demanding scope and roles that social service professionals are performing, the department should, as provided in the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978, work towards institutionalising the funding of the SA Council for Social Service Professions, SACSSP, within the budget appropriations framework.

R215,970 million will be transferred to the National Development Agency in the 2021-22 financial year to advance their civil society organisation, CSO, development agenda. In terms of the National Development Agency Act 108 of 1988, the primary objective of the NDA is to contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to CSOs. And I have indicated to the National Development Agency that it is important for it to look for more funding, look at increasing in terms of developmental agenda.

The areas I have just elaborated constitute 99% of the department’s major cost drivers through transfer payments. During this financial year, the department will focus on the amendments that are necessary on the following pieces of legislation:

Firstly, the Children’s Amendment Bill, which is currently at public consultation stage and seeks to strengthen child protection services;

Secondly, the Older Persons Bill, which aims to strengthen the coordination and monitoring mechanisms of the services that are rendered to older persons; and

Thirdly, the Fundraising Amendment Bill, through which we seek to consolidate the various relief funds into one national social development and relief fund. And this, we’re doing also out of experience that we came into this department.

Focus areas for 2021-22:

With the objective of improving the linkages between ECD outcomes with the universe of our educational and human

development outcomes, we will be finalising the migration of the ECD function from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Basic Education an &there is no contradiction, no confusion, in there.

With the intention to contribute towards the development of resilient families and communities, we will be implementing social behaviour change programmes, especially on HIV/AIDS. And we will also use the experience we’ve had during COVID-19 where we focused on behavioural change from a perspective of ensuring that people adhere to the strict conditions of COVID- 19, we looking at expanding that so that we can look at broadly the social behaviour and changes that we need to do, working together with other departments.

We will be taking the Green Paper on Comprehensive Social Security Reforms, the White Paper of Families as well as the White the Paper on Social Development through public consultation processes. And we will be calling on our communities to take time to look at it and make the necessary contributions.

In our continued efforts for social work graduates to be absorbed into the economy, the department will canvass other government departments and the private sector for them to engage their services towards addressing social ills within our communities.

Strengthen the reach of our substance and alcohol abuse prevention programmes through conducting public awareness campaigns and outreach partnerships with educational institutions, in partnership with the Central Drug Authority Board.

Within the context of the National Strategic Plan on Gender- Based Violence and Femicide, we will strengthen our prevention and response mechanisms to reduce the spread of gender-based violence and femicide. This, is what we believe as the Department of Social Development, we need to focus on, prevention, prevention, prevention.

Through promoting and fostering co-ordination among key stakeholders, we will be jointly implement an integrated social crime prevention strategy. And of course, working with all the other relevant departments.

We will be strengthening our child protection services including areas such as adoption, care and protection, foster care and the protection of the rights of children.

We will continue to improve access to NPO registration services through the online registration system which is being enhanced to interface with various systems across the state.

We will not continue to support NPOs that are not registering because as we are supposed to be held accountable, they also have to be held accountable.

We will improve access to food and nutrition through the implementation of the National Household Food and Nutrition Plan.

Towards ensuring inclusive economic participation, we are going to advance our plans to empower co-operatives and social enterprises that are owned by black women, people with disabilities and youth. And this is a programme we would to see, working together with the Department of Small Business Development, so that the strengthening of co-operatives and black-owned businesses are in place.

We will be finalising the Policy on Basic Income Grant for tabling to Cabinet. And at this point I do actually want to thank Members of Parliament from different political parties who have supported us in terms of the Basic Income Grant.

We will usher in the Inspectorate in line with the Social Assistance Act.

We will also strengthen our role in leading international organisations such as the Partners in Population which is aligned to our South-South Cooperation, on that note the Department will host a National Conference on Migration and Urbanization to share information and knowledge of Migration and Urbanisation in South Africa as it relates to social development.

Regarding efficiencies and innovations as responses to budget cuts. This budget took cue from the hon Minister of Finance, Honourable Tito Mboweni, when he said: “Getting our fiscal house in order, continuing on the path of fiscal consolidation and implementing fiscal prudence.”

The reality of budget cuts and government-wide reprioritisation across the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, demands that the department, its entities, provincial departments and the social sector as a whole, should establish new efficiencies which our social services can be improved and made accessible. Among these, we should explore resource- sharing frameworks and inculcate the culture of innovation throughout our sector. This will assist to supplement the capacity of the department during these times of resource constraints.

In doing all the above, we will ensure that we put in place strong control measures to avoid irregular, fruitless and wasteful and eliminate any form of corruption.

With regard to who we servicing. During the 2020-21 financial year, the department and its entities, SASSA, NDA and the SACSSP carried out the implementation of government’s socially-responsive interventions that entail: the provision of food and nutrition for the hungry and needy; the novel

implementation of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress, SRD, grant for the unemployed; increasing all existing grants by R250 per month, except for the child grant and we’ll continue

to fight for this one; increasing the child support grant by R300 per child; introducing the R500 caregiver grant; and rendering a bouquet of welfare services ranging from psychosocial support to social behaviour change programmes.

Through these interventions, in the past year we reached more than 31 million South Africans. Than only representing more than half of South Africa’s population. This figure verifiably represents how the department has attended to the basic necessities of the most vulnerable among us. 88% of the respondents to the department’s study on the implementation and impact of the COVID-19 SRD grant indicated that they pooled their SRD grants together with the rest of their households’ incomes to take care of the needs of everyone in the households.

This analysis has supported by the findings of the National Income Dynamics Surveys, NIDS-CRAM, which estimates that

36 million people benefitted from the CSG caregivers grant and the COVID-19 SRD R350 grant alone. The NIDS-CRAM also found that the CSG caregivers grant and the COVID-19 SRD grant were amongst the largest poverty reduction measures that government implemented during this period.

To support these findings, in March 2020, the SA-Towards Inclusive Economic Development, SA-TIED, established that the number of households that lived below the food poverty line of R561 measures that the department implemented this figure came down to 18,8%. Otherwise, in the absence of these interventions, it would have grown to 32,1%. Over the same period, inequalities were reduced from 0,64 to 0,61.

Whereas South Africa could not register these achievements in more than 25 years, our COVID-19 interventions shifted us into unprecedented grounds and greater future possibilities. And I’m hoping that the department, not only the department but government in general, will take into consideration the lessons that we have learnt here and be able to make the changes that are necessary to make it easy for us to deliver to our people.

Our contributions to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the COVID-19 Vaccination Rollout programme will ensure that we help identify qualifying vaccination candidates from our databases and render the relevant psychosocial support services. We are pleased with the roll-out of the Phase 2 of the Mass Vaccination Programme that is currently underway and

the positive uptake of the vaccines, especially by our elder persons.

*Sesotho:*

Modulasetulo le maloko a hlomphehang, ke rata ho nka sebaka sena ho etsa doipiletso ho Maafrika Borwa ka bophara hore ba re thuse ka ho ngodisa baholo ba rona …

*English*:

... so that they can be able to get the vaccine as quickly as possible.

Today we speak on Africa Day and exactly 58 years ago today in 1963, 32 eminent leaders of our continent gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to chart a new course for Africa and her people. Of course, coming out of colonialism, that has continued to make our lives miserable, even today.

We, as Social development, believe that our work is about the wellbeing of all citizens and the same should be true for citizens of the African continent. It is with shock that we learnt of the humanitarian disaster that has befallen the communities who live near the town of Goma, in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, DRC. We trust that the humanitarians’ response and systems across the continent will be afforded to the affected people of the DRC and at this point in time it’s important for us as South Africans also to mobilise and motivate and see where we can be of assistance to them.

We are celebrating 150 years of the courageous life and pioneering spirit of uMama uCharlotte Maxeke, an intellectual, a qualified social worker, a diplomat and of course, a freedom fighter. It is her who invited us to implement socially- beneficial social development programmes when she said:

This work is not for yourselves. Kill that spirit of ‘self’ and do not live above your people but live with them, and if you can rise, bring someone with you.

In acknowledging her epic role, I am equally paying tribute to

past, present and future generations of South Africa’s women

...

*IsiZulu*:

... ngoba intandane enhle ikhothwa ngunina.

From Sunday 30 May to 6 June 2021, the department will be leading the commemorations of the National Child Protection Week. In so doing, we will be raising awareness of the rights of children as articulated in the Constitution. As we lead this commemorative campaign we do so in collaboration with key government departments and in partnership civil society organisations in the area of child protection. We call upon all South Africans to stop the cycle of neglect, abuse, violence and exploitation that children suffer.

The District-centred Development Model is a model which we hope will be used by us, the Department of Social Development, as well as all other government departments and in particular the provinces will help us in ensuring these District-centred Development Model works.

In view of the growing COVID-19-induced plight among fellow South Africans, the counsel of the United Nations Secretary- General, António Guterres, that said: “It’s clear that some are in superyachts while others are clinging to the floating debris”. Remains relevant because of the soaring levels of hunger, inequalities, poverty and unemployment in our communities. These perennial challenges are demands that we

ought to target and deliver our social development programmes through strengthening intergovernmental relations, IGR, mechanisms.

While we continuously improve our programmes, monitoring and evaluation, we have regularised our programme planning and reporting together with provinces. Consequently, we are very hopeful that the District-centred Development Model approach to deliver service will particularly strengthen the work that we carry out together with provinces in different communities.

In practicalising the District-centred Development Model alongside the people, public, private, civic, academic, multilateral partnerships we are assured that the social development sector will strengthen the capacity of the state and leave no one behind in our communities as we implement our COVID-19 fighting programmes.

*IsiZulu*:

Ama-R350 abexosha ikati eziko.

*English*:

The COVID-19 SRD grant has benefitted 6,5 million unemployed and incomeless individuals. One of the beneficiaries of this grant is Sonto Sithole of Dawn Park in Gauteng. With her monthly R350 grant she started a baking business in her community. When asked what her intentions were in receiving the COVID-19 SRD grant, she responded by saying: “I wanted to create longevity with this grant, and I am glad I started”.

There are several similar reports in different communities throughout the country and their instinctive attitude towards self-sustainability should be promoted. Some people might have thought that the R350 is like change, but for women like Sonto and a whole range of others, they have used the R350 to make money out of the R350 so that they can be able to take care of their families.

The rapid assessment study that we initiated on the implementation and utilisation of the COVID-19 SRD grant monies is nearing completion and its findings and recommendations will be shared with the hon members.

Preliminarily, we expect that these will be relevant for the discussions that we are having on the basic income grant, BIG, in that the study established that the implementation of the

COVID-19 SRD grant did play a major role in the reduction of hunger, poverty and inequalities across our country.

When it comes to the Basic Income Grant itself I know that there’s a lot of discussion, there’s a lot about where’s the money going to come from and what are we going to do about it? The need to introduce the basic income grant has become an urgent consideration for the ANC-led government.

To this end, the department has developed a Basic Income Grant, BIG, discussion document that we have started to consultations on. These consultations are targeted at developing the BIG financing mechanism for the unemployed population group that is between the age of 19 and 59 years.

Meanwhile, the department continues to contribute to a supplementary BIG process by National Economic Development and Labour Council, Nedlac. We thank the various political parties and different formations that have come forth in supporting the reopening of the BIG initiative.

With regard to gender-based violence and femicide – which I did indicate, spoke to earlier on - the department continues

to play a central role towards the eradication of South

Africa’s legacy pandemic, gender-based violence and femicide.

In order to accelerate the work that we are doing in this area we believe that all individuals, house by house, street by street, from community by community and society at large should play their part.

During this financial year we will be asking Cabinet to approve the gazetting of the Victim Support Service Bill. This Bill specifically addresses the lack of legislation that regulates the victim empowerment services. I wish to also thank, at this point in time, all the organization that have gone out there to support us with regard to this fight.

We also have another programme, the nutrition and food provision; 8,4 million people benefited from the distribution of our nutrition and food parcels during the 2020-21 financial year.

Also with regard to the non-profit organisations, I think I’ve make the indication that the need for dynamic society-wide partnerships is evident in the fact that during the past

financial year the department received a significantly high number of applications, with regard to NPOs.

With regard to youth, I believe that the future belongs to young people and I don’t think we should use this as a way of just talking, we should use it for real and empower young people.

With regard to partnerships, I believe that precisely because our economic recovery is lagging behind those of other comparable countries, we are advised that our economy is unlikely to attain the 2019 output levels before 2023. For this reason, we reiterate our call for the mobilisation of dynamic people-public partnership so that we can then be able to service our people.

Lastly, I am pleased to announce the publication of our second Social Budget Bulletin, which is a tool pioneered by the International Labour Organisation to provide an on-going statistical reporting mechanism for all social expenditure and revenue sources explicit and transparent.

In this publication, we provide a comprehensive assessment of the quality and performance of our social security expenditure and revenue over a period 10 years in order to inform future policymaking and budget allocations.

The second Bulletin, together with the inaugural bulletin, can be accessed on the Departments website at [www.dsd.gov.za](http://www.dsd.gov.za/) under

New Documents.

As I conclude please allow me to thank Deputy Minister, Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, for the positive working relationship with which we continue to strengthen the delivery of the social development mandate.

I also thank the Acting Director-General, Linton Mchunu, and his management team; the Chief Executive Officers of SASSA and the NDA, Totsie Memela-Khambula and Thamo Mzobe, respectively, and their Management teams; the Registrar of the SA Council for Social Service Professions, Langi Malamba; the Ministry team; our social partners; and, importantly, all the social service professionals throughout the country.

I also wish to thank my family, where they are, for the support that they continue to give me despite all the challenges that we face. I know I get out of the house and they looking at me and thinking ‘there she goes; she’s going to bring back the covid because she’s almost everywhere’.

A special thank goes to the ANC, my organization, that has enabled me to go this far and be able to make the presentation I’m making today. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. Thank you very much, people at home. [Applause.]

Mr M GUNGUBELE: Hon House Chair, Minister and Deputy Minister, Members of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development, Members of Parliament, of the public, all protocol observed. I also want to take this opportunity to welcome such a well enriched speech and the presentation by the Minister. Hon House Chairperson, it will reminisce of me not to as per usual refer and anchor my speech on the backdrop which the lays the foundation that characterises the relationship that we have with the Social Development Portfolio. This backdrop is founded on our commitment or social transformation, our task to reduce poverty and promote social integration.

Our partnership and Batho Pele principles of service delivery. Our action based on solidarity and promoting self-reliance and commitment to human development.

Hon members, the ANC 2019 National Election Manifesto made a firm commitment to advance social transformation and in our

... [Inaudible.] ... maintain and expand social security system, to protect the vulnerable and reduce poverty. To achieve this the committee has adopted a scientific approach to its oversight responsibility. Where we have a productive relationship with the department. This means that work of the Social Development Portfolio must be based on evidence and the theory of change.

Through this portfolio we must be able to see tangible change in the lives of the people, communities and sector, that it is serving. This change must be underpinned by the indicators that form the backdrop of our relationship.

Hon House Chairperson, when we talk about evidence based theory and the theory of change, we aren’t talking about foreign issues, we are talking about how this portfolio is able to drive its mandate, through the vote. There must

alignment in the work that they do and the changes that we see in the life of those that are beneficiaries of this mandate.

The portfolio is central to the advancement of human development. This is why we are advancing a developmental social welfare is key to advancing social transformation. We will hon House Chair, continuously assess the impact that developmental social welfare is making to human development and unlocking human capabilities.

Hon House Chair, hon members, the department’s budget and annual performance plan is tabled against a continued financial ailing economy and the COVID-19 has not made these things easy. As a result, the entire portfolio has been in the frontline and has ensured that there is provision of social and economic support, to those that have been severely affected by the pandemic. It uses its resources through reprioritisation and adjustments to find this support.

The portfolio has through various commendable intervention enable to put a social safety nets for the poor and the vulnerable which include those that have been tremendously impacted by COVID-19. One of these interventions has been

through disbursement of additional social grants for COVID-19 pandemic. An additional R32,8 billion was allocated for this intervention for 2020-21 financial year.

Noteworthy, hon House Chair, is the additional R2,8 billion which was allocated for 2021 to accommodate for extension of social COVID-19, Social Relief of Distress, SRD grant. As the SRD grant has come to an end, we commend the efforts of the department to encourage Treasury for its extension, we will be keeping a keen eye on the development on this engagement.

An impact study conducted by the department revealed has that SRD grant has had a significant impact on the lives of our people. This impact study was additionally supported by the work of academic researchers, National Treasury and other government departments, which revealed similar outcomes. The has strengthen the motivation for the extension of this grant.

We’ve had ongoing discussion with department on the possibilities of implementing food vouchers. The department has indicated that it has engaged provinces and agreed to implement food vouchers. Two provinces have already

implemented this voucher system. We will monitor this implementation during this current year, hon House Chair.

The Social grant administration and social grant fraud investigations subprogramme budget allocations have declined. This is a concern because this will affect the budget transfer to the South African Social Security Agency, SASSA. This could make a challenge for SASSA to optimal perform its duties.

However, hon House Chair, there’s an increase to the appeals adjudication sub programmes which is commendable. This is because the department plans to reduce the... [Inaudible.] ... take for SASSA affairs. My apology hon House Chair, my gadget is messing me up.

This is not withstanding the increasing level of poverty and hunger which are increasingly visible in child malnutrition and ... [Inaudible.]

Hon members, the ANC-led government has emphasized the significance of early childhood development, ECD for human socioeconomic development. It has committed to ensuring that there is migration of ECD services from Social Development to the Department of Basic Education. The ECD grant is the only

grant that is allocated to the department. This is to support government reprioritisation of ECD as envisioned by the National Development Plan.

The grant aims improve poor children’s access to ECD programmes and ensure that the ECD centres have adequate infrastructure. We are not only concern about the lack of visibility of the Development Agency, MDA but also on the annual decline of its budget. The mandate of the MDA is significant to the life and operation of the civil society organisation. It provides grants to civil society organisation to implement sustainable community driven projects that address food security and creates employment and income opportunities.

We applaud the work that is been done to clear the backlog on the issuing of Non-profit Organisation Registration Certification. We are the same time concern about the impact of budget reduction on the funding of the NGOs. The department will be conducting an impact assessment of the budget reduction and there after identify interventions that will need to be implemented.

We also ask that they investigate non-payment, late payment of cars or subsidy cars to the NGOs who provide vital services on behalf of the state and give us an implementation report.

Hon House Chair, the committee has noted that even though the performance of the department has improved, the Auditor General, AG’s report on the status of controls for 2019-20 has revealed different trend. We find this to be concerning, the department has indicated that it has engaged the office of the AG, particularly focusing on the area of oversight. It also has indicated that it has strengthen its entity oversight. It has also taken a number of measures to address the AG’s findings, including factoring the performance. It has also committed to significantly reduce fruitless expenditure.

We have also reiterated our concern over the escalating fraud and corruption in the payments of social grants, particularly fraudulent activities, in the SAPO SASSA card system. SASSA has confirmed that, there going to be a reissuing of SASSA cards in collaboration with South African Reserve Bank. SASSA has further committed to recovering of all the monies paid to government employees. It is also still conducting investigation. SASSA is also engaging the department of

Science and Technology DST, action should be taken against those implicated. We will engage with government officials to explored disciplinary action to be taken.

The Minister should ensure that during the current financial year, the department addresses the AG’s findings on the status of controls. The Minister should also ensure that within the current financial year the department conducts and prioritises impact study on the implementation and impact of budget reduction over the medium term period and development and interventions. Particular focus should be on ensuring that service delivery and social assistance programme are adversely affected.

SASSA must strengthen its system monitoring system in the payment of social grant, to ensure that, there is a preventative mechanism that will give early warnings of ineligible beneficiaries receiving grants. This includes, implementation of domestic system of biometric system and efficient and speedy validation process of Identity, ID Numbers, from the South African Post Office, SAPO, payment file.

Hon members, we reaffirm our confidence in the entire portfolio ability to progressively address and respond to the Treasury issues that we have raised. The work that we are putting will progressively translate into measurable and tangible output that will qualitatively improve the lives of our people. This has been done through the turnaround measures that we are putting in place, that ensure that the department applies everything base and results based approach. We ensure that it advances social transformation through maintaining and expanding the social security system. We therefore ask the House to adopt Budget Vote 19. Thank you, House Chair.

Ms B S MASANGO: Thank you, hon Chairperson, today’s debate is about the difference between the presentations from the Department of Social Development and its entities that we listened to during the portfolio committee meeting and this dark reality faced by millions on the ground. Those whose livelihoods are at the bottom of the pile of both government and the Department of Social Development’s priorities.

We hear of 91% grants paid, but read reports and messages from the civil society and the public that tells a completely different story. We watch harrowing scenes of people

stampeding at post offices and South African Social Security Agency, Sassa, offices from 5am, only to be told that they won’t be served because only 45 people will be served on that day. This has been a daily reality for thousands, who have no choice but to subject themselves to this demeaning and inhumane treatment just to put food on their tables.

One of Parliament’s duties is to ensure that laws it makes, are implemented. Last year, the Portfolio Committee on Social Development processed the Social Assistance Amendment Bill, which was subsequently signed into law by the President and was a part response to the North Gauteng High Court order calling for the comprehensive legal solution to the foster care crisis 10 years ago.

Everyone welcomed this piece of legislation. We looked forward to offering some reprieve for hoping children would be given a top-up grant through the child support grant. Little did we know that the department and Treasury would effectively decide to deny further access to the foster care grant for relatives caring for orphans in anticipation of the new child support grant top up, replacing the use of foster care grant for this category of children.

Yet, they have not the child support grant top up in place. This is regressive action for a very vulnerable group of children and its constitutionally not permissible. These decisions are bizarre at best and morally defensible at worst. They are punitive to the very children were are supposed to protect and those who care for them.

We demand that Treasury amends this budget to address these challenges, as the backlog in the foster care saga is far worse than anyone can imagine and set to continue. Children remains in the receiving end of an uncaring government that takes decisions that do not have their best interest at heart.

Children’s rights are enshrined in our Constitution and in law. If we treat children with disdain, how can we possibly believe that future generation will be well-balanced, well- developed and well-rounded? It just isn’t possible.

Chairperson, it will be interesting to see how South Africa responds to the latest requirement from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. They have called on government to provide information on measures taken to increase the child support grant in view of growing

unemployment and poverty. They further called for measures to ensure children without birth certificates can also access the grants.

The ANC will have to provide a response to these questions in its next report to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNCRC, which is due by February 2022. Even the pressure to increase the value of the child support grant, it will be hard for government to justify its failure to the UNCRC, let alone explain the real decline in the value of the grant. The world will be watching.

Chairperson, with reference to 6 million SID grant recipients, who have no way of feeding their families because of persistent high level of unemployment, I repeat my recent comment, it is ludicrous that this ANC government has decided to pay monthly cash bonuses to civil servants but refuses to prioritise protecting the most vulnerable citizens during a pandemic. Starving South Africans have had an uphill battle to get their grants since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The R350 grant is no exception to this.

The Department of Social Development need foresight and determination to plan ahead or this spiralling crisis of poverty and hopelessness will be its legacy. As the DA, we will not waver in our fight for the poor and the vulnerable. That is what responsible governments are supposed to do. Thank you, Chair.

Ms L H ARRIES: Thank you, Chairperson, the EFF rejects the proposed Budget Vote 19 of Social Development. On the 28 May, activists will embark on a programme to raise awareness on hunger all over the world. In south Africa there is no need to raise hunger challenges, on the 28 May, everywhere we look, there is hunger. There is no effort to eradicate hunger, it’s sad. Hunger is made permanent in South Africa.

More than 70% of households in informal settlements are skipping meals or eating one meal per day because they cannot afford food. About 14 million people in South Africa go to bed hungry, and there is no practical or believable plan by the ruling party to bring this catastrophic tragedy to an end.

The Department of Social Development is the embodiment of collapse of social services made to be the buffer for our poor

people. This is made worse by National Treasury’s austerity policy that is implemented without scientific guidance. This misguided austerities and mismanagement of social assistance programmes, threatens the livelihood of 4,1 million elderly people; more than 900 000 people living with disabilities; 13,8 million children; 167 000 living with disability, and more than 220 000 children who depends on these grants.

The 55,8 billion budget cut is crime against humanity. And, the Social Relief of Distress Grant, SID, is another crime. This money was the difference between going to bed hungry and a meal for millions of South Africans.

Today, we stand here to make it explicitly clear, that only practical way forward for South Africa is the introduction of a basic income grant for all who qualifies. This is long overdue. This is humane. And, this is the only way to ensure that everyone has basic needs to survive. This is why we cannot introduce a basic income grant of R350. It must be introduced by R1 500. This is the only way we could have food on the table for all our people.

The queues we see at post offices and Sassa offices around the country is shameful, and we subject our people to such inhumane conditions to access services. Our people have to wake up in the middle of the night to access their grants.

Women and children who are raped and violated queueing for grants. This is very shameful. The fraud and corruption of food parcels during COVID-19 by members of the ruling party is a shame, but a true reflection of the ill-intentions towards the poor.

The fraud and corruption in the payment of South African Social Security Agency, Sassa, and the post office in the card system, escalated without any plan or response. The reality is that Sassa cards are in the wrong hands. We are told that the cleaning tender of R45,8 million of Sassa office in the Eastern Cape, is nothing but the ruling party’s fund raising strategy and to create jobs for pals.

Chairperson, we must say that the level of malnutrition has increased and many of our children who used to benefit from meals at Every Child Belongs, ECB, centres, that were forced to close during lockdown, are left without no option. While

some ECB centres have opened, many could not open without assistance.

People living with disabilities in this country continues to be shamed as if a disability is optional. When they protest and go to apply for grants, the government responds in violence and water cannons. This is disgraceful.

Lastly, it shameful that more than 8 800 social workers’ graduates remain unemployed while South Africa is troubled with many social ills. We should be employing these graduates to schools, informal settlements, rural areas and all townships.

The fact that the only consideration for the decision as to whether the government will employ the unemployed social workers’ graduates, is when Treasury says there is money or not, is the reason why the country is facing many challenges. It is disgraceful that we are made to decide between the wellbeing of our people and austerities. The EFF rejects this Budget Vote. I thank you.

Ms L L VAN DER MERWE: Thank you very much House Chair and the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development. The plans and funds we are debating today is a lifeline to millions of South Africans. It is a lifeline to many poor children surviving on a school meal alone. It is a lifeline to grandmothers providing for their families, and it is a lifeline to many non-governmental organisations, NGOs assisting the vulnerable. On 5 May 2020, *The Mercury* newspaper led with the following headline and I quote, “KZNs poor starve, food hampers sold, stolen by officials”.

As South Africa found itself in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a story that repeated itself in almost all provinces. Now, a year later***,*** we have yet to see any ruling party official doing hard time in jail for stealing food parcels, or any official being held to account for unlawfully collecting the R350 Social Relief of Distress Grant.

Considering that this department’s funds stand between life and death for many, this is simply unforgivable.

Chair, the reality is that when this Department fails, there are dire consequences for the most vulnerable. These dire consequences were seen in my Constituency recently, when a

family lost their grandmother due to COVID-19. Their sole source of income disappeared overnight. The children were left with a family member, an uncle who abused them. The family could not access a social worker.

While a war rages against the most vulnerable in our communities, 5 000 social workers trained by the state are sitting at home. This, despite a 2018 Cabinet Resolution that instructed government Ministers to employ these trained social workers. We must ask ourselves why a so-called caring government would not act on its own commitment? Knowing that these 5 000 social workers could have stood in defence of the children on the killing fields of gangster-ridden Cape Flats. These social workers are needed in the fight against substance abuse, and they are needed to protect the many women and children affected by abuse and gender-based violence.

Substance abuse, gender-based violence and gangsterism are critical areas of focus this department is making little to zero progress on.

Chair, the dire consequences of the department’s failures can be seen in an early childhood development, ECD sector, which is on the verge of collapse. It can be seen in the foster care

crisis, which is coupled with an adoption crisis. It can be seen in acute malnutrition, which is now a leading cause of death amongst South Africa’s children. It can be seen in the painfully long SA Social Security Agency, Sassa ques where the elderly and vulnerable are forced to sleep on the cove pavements, waiting for the little bit of government help. It can be seen in the budget cuts that are paralysing, NGOs. It is seen in the desperation of the eyes of those who cannot now access a disability grant, they once relied on although still waiting to be paid the R350 Social Relief of Distress Grant.

Hon Minister, the IFP acknowledges that your department has many hardworking individuals. We wish to thank you, together with your Deputy Minister, the Acting Director-General, ADG, and every official who seeks to serve our people. I wish to thank my colleagues from the portfolio committee, because together I believe we speak in one voice for the vulnerable. However, hon Minister, we need you to do more in defence of the poor.

Firstly, resolve the nonpayment, late payment and subsidy cuts to nonprofit organisations, NPOs and non NGOs who provide vital services on behalf of the state. Stop playing with lives

of the vulnerable and finalise a budget allocation with Treasury for the Child Support Top-Up Grant and for reinstating the R350 Social Relief of Distress Grant. We need you Minister to act urgently, to ensure that the 2018 Cabinet Resolution on the employment of social workers is implemented without delay. Minister, you must clamp down on fraud and corruption, especially by its own officials and especially at Sassa. Those officials must rot in jail.

We need food vouchers to be implemented without delay. Shelters which are vital in the fight against gender-based violence, remain underfunded and your department must therefore finalise the intersectoral policy without further delay. Officials that discourage or wilfully delay adoption processes within your department, must be held to account.

Chair, for the most vulnerable, our country is an unforgiving place to live in. South Africa is now a welfare state where 18,3 million South Africans have had their hopes and dreams replaced by a Sassa grant alone. For them, for the vulnerable, we must therefore support this Budget Vote. I thank you.

Mrs H DENNER: Thank you House Chair. Chair, this department and its entities has had sky amount of ... [Inaudible] ... during this past year only, we are all aware of that. We are a developing country with many challenges, challenges that have led to several frustrations with all this department has had to deliver. We also believe that, there are good people within this department and its entities. These good, honest, hardworking people are often left to fend for themselves, overworked, picking up slap because others are not doing what they are supposed to.

We also understand that, the good that these people try to do cannot filter down the ranks by their sheer willpower alone. We commend these people and their efforts. You are seen and appreciated. My colleague hon Breedt has relied heavily on you, as I am sure other colleagues have also done during this time. This does not however give this department and its entities, a get out of jail free card for all the mistakes, Auditor-General’s findings and worries South Africans have had to deal with when it comes to social development in South Africa.

Our acknowledgement and successes this department and its entities has had, should in no way be seen as an agreement with the way the ANC-led government chooses to run the department, by refusing to listen to some logic and address the real issues of poverty and hunger within the country. We do not agree that, South Africa should be a welfare state as it currently is. It is unsustainable to have more than

25 million South Africans reliant on some sort of government grant. Grants are not the answer to South Africa’s poverty problems.

The Minister herself has recently said, should the Social Relief of Distress Grant, SRD which is paid until the end of April be made permanent or even extended, it will be unsustainable because there is no money left to pay for more extensions. She is correct, because if we don’t grow the economy and encourage employment creation, where will we get the money to pay for these grants.

She also said that, if we do not extend the grant, people will riot and South Africa will not be able tom recover from that. But, who drove people to riot? Who taught people that by burning and breaking, success can be achieved? Who taught the

people that, success is to be solved through violence? Was it not former President Nelson Mandela in 1993, at the Cosatu Conference said:

If the ANC does to you what the apartheid government did to you, then you must do to the ANC what you did to the apartheid government.

This ANC government are now dumbstruck by these acts of violence. This ANC government has proven that it is not a responsible government. You should take action rather that hiding behind the past. Take action against the entities that do not perform. Rather than blaming the past, take action against cadres, comrades and families that are found guilty of fraud, corruption, double-dipping and all the other charges.

Chair, the piloting of Sassa’s electronic application system for most grants, and the online portal to book a doctor’s appointment for the disability grant, should be made mention of. It is something that is on paper, a step in the right direction towards cutting the queues at Sassa offices. This will also hopefully cut out ... [Interjections]

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T M Joemat-Pettersson): Hon member, your time has expired.

Mrs H DENNER: Chair, I have five minutes.

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T M Joemat-Pettersson): Oh my apologies, continue I will give you your extra time.

Mrs H DENNER: Thank you Chair. This will also hopefully cut out visits to those offices such as the Pretoria Church Street Office, where people are treated without dignity and respect, and sent back three, four, five up to eight time because for an example, the bank statement did not have that specific day’s date stamp on, but the previous day’s. These are real examples and there are many, many more.

That being said, the South African reality is somewhat more challenging for this system. South Africa’s literacy rate has dropped 7% according to the last known statistics. The majority of South Africa is quite rural and access to internet is poor. Many people still do not have access to internet, be it a smartphone, home computer or even an internet café. Our Sassa grant holders are unfortunately those that are impacted

most by these factors. Sassa has promised to train staff in assisting people with the online system. The reality is that, Sassa is already short-staffed and a series of other questions arise.

The National Development Agency, NDA will probably be thrown into the ring as an option, but its assistance to date has been nonexistent and questions arise about this system and its feasibility. Chair, I have not even schemed surface of the questions and issues we are faced with on a daily basis, but I conclude with this remark: Because of cadre deployment, corruption and skewed priorities, the Department of Social Development, Sassa and the National Development Agency, are not currently effecting the change that is necessary to create a better future in our country. I thank you Chair.

Ms M E SUKERS: Hon Chairperson, the ACDP rises in this budget debate in solidarity with our communities on the Cape Flats that has experienced an escalated wave of gang violence in the ongoing turf wars making our streets unsafe for our women, youth and our children.

I would like to invite Minister of Social Development hon Lindiwe Zulu to accompany me to the gang cabbage communities of Hill View and Bishop Lewis where the body count week on week resembles allowing intensity of civil war.

The ACDP is deeply concerned by the low budgeting and expenditure on the sub programme, social crime prevention and victim empowerment over the last three years.

We need to work with the department to develop programmes that specifically targets the crisis in our communities on the Cape Flats. There is a crucial need for us to seriously evaluate the impact of the social protection programmes how effective they are in spending money where they can be tangible result. What is given priority in the budget given the fact that we have serious violence crimes specifically affecting our children in the Western Cape.

We have received countless calls for help, Minister, this week. Please come with me and witness the damage being done to the psyche of our women, youth and children.

Over the last year, the ACDP have been working with child activists and communities at large. We have repeatedly called for a unified approach to the issues facing children.

Poverty has increased, food insecurity, malnutrition and the safety of our children. We need an update on when the office of the rights of the child will be moved to the Presidency. Second to that, we need an update on the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial committee responsible to ensure children’s rights prioritise across the departments.

It is our view that there is a focus on writing laws but no really focus on ensuring that the mechanisms are in place to facilitate the wellbeing of our children. This department must and can’t be the champion on developing a pathway for healthier children, physically, emotionally and mentally.

There has to be in depth engagement with all interest groups over the rest of this term to promote children’s wellbeing, Chairperson, because we are facing a crisis.

At this current rate our children are going to be parents trapped in another cycle of generational poverty and all the evils that come with that.

The department must provide Parliament with a clear plan on how they will change the manner the office function without risk children. Without this department will become part of the dysfunction that threatens the wellbeing of children.

Something I really do not want to see happening.

The Department of Social Development is experiencing budget cut across all its programmes. Efficiency in monitoring and evaluation expenditure is critical for this department to regain credibility and we cannot afford failure ... Thank you, House Chairperson. [Time expired.]

Ms A L A ABRAHAMS: House Chairperson, unisex three main challenges for a South African child are: firstly, more than half the children in South Africa live below the poverty line. Secondly, one third of girls experience some former violence before the age of 18. Thirdly, two third of children eligible for early child development programmes do not have access to them. This concerns of the left reality for the vast majority

of children in South Africa. It is unfortunate, Chair, that this concerns are not shared by the Department of Social Development or the ruling government for that matter.

If it were budget cut for the Department of Social Development would be protected at all cost. If it was a concern budget cut to sub-programme 5, 2, children and 7, social crime prevention and victim empowerment would not see a cut of 27, 12% and 53,8% respectively.

The DA has long been advocating for the child support grant had no meaningful result and to be in line with poverty food line of R585 per month despite academic research outlining the value of investing and that the children support grants contribute 63% to the capita income and for the poorest 30% of households. The ANC has cut the child support grant budget by R14,5 billion. In 2018-19 some 806 children died in public hospital than clinics from sever acute malnutrition. In other words, children are literally starving today. In 1999 South Africa starving rate were 25%, 20 years on and the rate is now 27%, a clear indicator that the ANC government has made no effect at all, suffer little children.

Programme 4 welfare services has seen the biggest cut of 8,77%. I would like to remind this House that it is within this programme, sub programme 7 as mentioned earlier we find in for gender-based violence, GBV, victims located, remembering that one third of girl’s experience violence before the age of 18.

The Minister and the department cannot resolve itself from obligations to ensure protection for victim by delegating services to NGOs without funding them properly especially since the department transfers subsidies to NGOs is cut by R8,9 million this financial year, suffer little children.

The Early Childhood Development, ECD, sector face many red tape of obstacles with the latest being the late or non- payment of the Presidential Employment for Stimulus Fund ECD Practitioners which was meant to be paid by 31 March. Well, the Provincial Social Development Department into disburse stampede. The Minister has not obligation and duty as Minister to ensure the MECs comply.

It is reported that only 8% of ECD practitioners has been paid. Is this true, Minister? What is the number look like?

The ECD sector has been engaging the Minister on 8 April and I too I am waiting for a response to written questions. For many that relief for the children excessing an ECD be part of the growing two third majority, suffer little children.

In conclusion Chair, ensuring children do not starve is not a case of financial ability but a matter of political will and there is no better investment for South Africa than in our children. If you chose not to as the ANC has done for the last

27 years, you will know the child potential and economic prospects which drive into generational cycle of poverty and a huge cost and the South Africans economy as we see today, suffer little children. Thank you, Chairperson.

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T M Joemat-Pettersson): Thank you, hon member. I shall now call on the hon Mahlaule to continue charring the debate on Vote No 19 – Social Development. Hon Mahlaule I hand over to you now. I thank you.

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Thank you very much, hon Chair. We shall proceed. We now call upon, hon Bilankulu from the ANC.

*Xitsonga*:

Man N K BILANKULU: Eka Mutshamaxitulu, vachaviseki hinkwenu, vaakatiko va Afrika-Dzonga hinkwenu lava mi tshikeke mitirho ya n’wina ku ta tshama emahlweni ka thelevhixini ku ta yingisela minjhekanjhekisano leyi yi yaka emahlweni ya mikavelo ya timali ku ya hi ku hambanahambana ka tindzawulo. Ndza mi losa. Avuxeni.

*English*:

The ANC rises in support of Budget Vote 19. We do so because the ANC continues to advance the social policy that is fundamental to ensuring that all South Africans enjoy a decent standard of living. Our core approach in this regards is to improve human capabilities and ensure equal opportunities.

This is aligned to program of development outlined in the ANC social welfare policy. The ANC, through its policies, continues to argue and advocate for a developmental approach to the country’s social welfare program. This development social welfare program advocates for the attainment of basic social welfare rights for all South Africans through a just an effective social delivery system that redresses the past imbalances and advocate for the empowerment of individuals, families and communities.

Central to the developmental social welfare approach, it is called for the integration of social and economic development of our people. This is what the agency is advocating and we will ensure that we continue to support the portfolio approach of developing our people out of the social assistance system into self-reliant and empowerment. This means that we are collectively working to ensure that there is a fundamental shift in the wake of the department from being social welfare orientated to one that empowers our people and communities out of poverty to be self-reliant and economically empowered. Hon Chairperson, we are concerned about the adjustment in the budget. This downwards adjustment affects programs and subprograms in the votes that are meant to facilitate the advancement of developmental social welfare. It is also a challenge because it hampers service delivery, the ability of the portfolio to address inequality, income deprivation, the lack of skills and economic opportunities among the majority.

This will also have an impact on the full realisation and the effective implementation of government social policy because of lack of resources. This also impacts the ability of the social expenditure of this budget to advance economic development and social policy which must be aligned to

economic development. A central part of delivering a developmental social welfare is a contingent of capacitated and capable social workers working in a conducive environment that enables them to thrive. The reduction in the budget of the department has significantly affected Program 4 on welfare service policy development and implementation support. The decrease is from R1,8 billion in 2020-21 to R1,3 billion in the 2021-22 financial year. This decline is driven by the reduction in allocation to, among other social workers’ scholarship stop programs. This is concern because it affects key deliverables, such as increasing the number of social workers.

Equally, we are deeply concerned about the high rate of unemployed social workers. Moreover, there has not been an allocation to the social worker employment grant from 2020 until 2024. There is also a tremendous decline in the allocation of social worker scholarships. The functions of scholarships have been redirected to provinces as per the agreement with National Treasury. Furthermore, we note with deep concern at the low absorption rates of social worker graduates and this happens against the background of our unhappiness of there being no budget to permanently employ

social worker graduates. We affirm our support to the committee's recommendation, which requires the Minister to ensure a prioritisation of an impact study on the implications and impact of budget reduction over the medium term period and develop necessary interventions. This impact study are necessary integrations are particularly significant as they have an impact on resource allocation to the social programs. This is of particular interest because we must be able to measure this allocation against yielding social investment that enhance the economic participation of the poor and vulnerable.

The National Development Agency continues to assist co- operatives with access to markets through the Department of SA Social Security Agency, SASSA. This assistance is a tool for job creation and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods. We welcome the steps that are going to be taken by the National Development Agency, NDA, to improve program implementation by incidentally instituting monitoring mechanism to enable economic evaluation of the growth and impact of co-operatives. We are extremely concerned about the annual decline of the budget on of NDA, which is like likely due to the program of community security organisation, CSO, development. This

concern is raised because the NDA has and continues to invest significantly resources in income generating projects that seek to create an alternative or complementary income streams and employment for poor households.

This vote indicates the measures that are going to be implemented in the provision of support to beneficiaries of the social protection system. This will be in the form of linking beneficiaries with employment opportunities, skills development, bursaries, internship programs and entrepreneurial programs such as helping them to form co- operatives and small businesses. All poor communities will be targeted with a specific focus on the poorest areas in the country. One of the implementing agent will, through the District Development Model that is headed by the President.

The ANC urges all beneficiaries of social protection to embrace the programs, plans an initiative meant to link them with sustainable livelihood opportunities. We will closely monitor the development and progress if implementation of an exit strategy for public employment programs. These are meant to ensure that the poor, marginalised and vulnerable are linked to public employment opportunities.

We also welcome the conductive of the evaluation of existing sustainable livelihood opportunities to determine the extent of impact. The SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, continues to provide developmental opportunities to beneficiaries focusing primarily government assistance. This includes linking social grants beneficiaries to developmental opportunities through existing relationships between the department and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. Chairperson, departments are also required to develop, implement, support and monitor programs for equitable job creation, representation and ownership by women, youth and persons with disabilities. They must also expand access to finance incentives and opportunities for women, youth and persons with disabilities including those in the informal sector.

In this case, the department towards these deliverables is by increasing the absorption of social workers and expand social services professionals, paying social grants, give graduated economic opportunities and continue to support nonprofit organisation, NPOs, and co-operatives. As a social protection safety net for the poor and vulnerable, the expanded public works continues to create meaningful opportunities. In this current financial year, 26 400 expanded public works

opportunities will be created through the exit programs. Furthermore, 20 000 social protection benefits are linked to livelihood opportunities. Hon members, we welcome the renewed interest in the basic income grants as another avenue to drive employment opportunities and sustainable livelihoods.

We have to raise the standard of living and the quality of life of all South Africans. The developmental social welfare approach that seeks to progressively move the millions of South Africans out of the welfare into the economy is a bold yet significant step. We have to find positive, productive and sustainable ways to ensure that our people are employed or are employers. Alternative, proactive and sustainable ways must be explored and implemented to facilitate this. The path that we have taken to link beneficiaries to the economic opportunities and sustainable livelihood will ensure that we empower beneficiaries to lift themselves out of poverty while creating an adequate social net to protect the most vulnerable in our society. The ANC support Budget Votes 19. Happy Africa Day to all viewers. I thank you.

Mr C H M SIBISI: Chair, can I speak without my video?

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Yes.

Mr C H M SIBISI: Hon Chair, the Department of Social Development remains one of the critical departments in assisting our problem from the albatross imposed on our people by COVID-19. Earlier this year, President Ramaphosa announced a three-month extension of the much contested R350 COVID-19 grant per month for the unemployed who do not receive any social grant or unemployment benefits. There is no doubt that this grant has assisted many of our people but we need to ascertain to what extent it has made an impact. It would be in the best interest of government to conduct an analysis to identify the shortcomings that our people were still experiencing as beneficiaries of the R350 grant.

More than 4 million people received the Social Relief of Distress grant over the past year. Up to 2,2 million approved grants are yet to be paid. A further 1,4 million approved on appeal are also yet to be disbursed. Given the constrained budget of the department, has the department made any concessions regarding the outstanding 3,6 million payments to be paid out for the R350 grant?

We will be doing our people an injustice if we did not mention the incapacity of the Department of Social Development through the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, and the Minister’s lack of action against it. Our people had to be subjected to inhumane conditions, standing in line waiting for the

R350 grants to be paid out. Why do our people always have to be subjected to the incapacity of government officials and departments on the promises that this government has made? We can accept the R25,5 billion downward adjustment of the budget. However, poverty is most likely going to increase without the relief grant.

Recently, government bowed to trade union pressures and tabled a salary adjustment and cash bonus for public servants. Public servants have their trade unions bargaining and fighting on their behalf to achieve this, but who is fighting and bargaining for the poor, hon Chair? Who is collectively bargaining for the poor in this disastrous economy, where over 42% of the people are unemployed, if we include discouraged workseekers?

It takes the threat of a strike for government to give in to the demands of wage increments. Meanwhile, hunger strikes

daily for many of our people. We can all agree that the R350 relief grant was a joke, but it made a difference to

some, and we cannot dispute this. The question which we should be asking government is the following. Is government not exacerbating inequality and poverty by somehow finding funds to increase public servants’ wages and by giving them a cash bonus of R978 accompanied by a 1,5% wage increment, but only gives ... [Inaudible.] Chair, we support Budget Vote No 9.

Thank you. [Time expired.]

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Apologies for the video, hon Chairman. Hon Chair, Al Jama-ah supports this budget because under the leadership of the Minister, we have seen that the promise made by President Ramaphosa in his first state of the nation address, where he said that everyone will have a warm plate of food, is coming to light and many people now have a warm plate of food because of the innovation and creativity of the Minister.

However, the Minister cannot do everything on her own and that’s why we are very happy that the departments of Labour and Basic Education, and some other departments are helping,

in one way or another, to put a warm plate of food on

everyone’s table.

However, we would like to ask the Minister to develop a much stronger relationship with nongovernmental organisations, NGOs, and also with religious communities like the Jewish communities, Muslim communities, Christian communities, Hindu communities, that go out of their way to feed the poor. There needs to be some research done as well as co-ordination, so that the footprint of the Minister can be increased, to feed the poor and to feed poor children.

Al Jama-ah therefore supports this budget but also asks the Minister to, maybe, capacitate the 400 constituency offices of the Members of Parliament where they take Parliament to the streets, and obviously, when they take Parliament to the streets they can see the need for feeding. So, the Minister needs to do all that co-ordination. We wish her everything of the best for the next year and ... to keep up the hard work of putting a warm plate of food on every South African’s table where it is needed. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

*Afrikaans*:

Mev G OPPERMAN: Agb Voorsitter, hierdie virtualiteit laat ons soms ver verwyderd van die realiteit en die harde werklikheid op die grond. Die mense van Honderklipbaai**,** Loeriesfontein, Lepelsfontein en Klipfontein het nie Sassa kantore of betaalpunte nie. Dit kos die Sassa-begunstigde R1 200 vir vervoer Springbok toe of R700 Garies toe om daardie karige pensioen te kan trek. Spoegrivier se mense moet R800 spoeg, want motorkarre loop mos nie op water nie. Soebatsfontein se mense moet soebat vir ’n geleë na Kleinzee want ook daar is nie Sassa betaalpunte nie.

Maak jou somme. R1 890 minus R1 200 vir vervoer, krag, klerasie, kos, die doodgenootskap, data en munisipale dienste. ’n Gebrek aan Sassa dienste belas die weerlose slegs meer en hou hulle in ’n ewewige wurggreep van armoede, hongerte en swaarkry. Waar is, Ons bring dienste nader aan die mense, nou? ’n Dertig rand verhoging in die toelae van bejaardes en diegene wie met gestremdhede lewe beteken R1 per dag by die toelae. Tien rand by die kindertoelae is 33 sent per dag. Waar is die enigste party nou wat kamtig vir die armes omgee? Ken jy die hartseer van die R460 kindertoelae? Voor jy dit nog in jou hande het, is dit minder. In Loeriesfontein trek jy geld

by die enigste *outomatiese* tellermasjien, OTM, in die dorp. Standard Bank vat R30 vir bankkoste en jy het net R430.

Die DA pleit vir beskerming van staatstoelae. Hoekom kan daar nie kwytskelding op bankkoste op Sassa toelae wees nie? ’n Verdere 15% BTW word by die winkels aan kos, klere en elektrisiteit afgestaan. So, in werklikhied kry Sassa- begunstigdes nooit die volle waarde van hul toelae nie. Al hoe meer mense staan deesdae in die welsynslyn en statistieke bereken dat ons teen Maart volgende jaar meer as 18,8 miljoen Sassa-begunstigdes sal hê, terwyl 31% van die bevolking reeds op maatskaplike ondersteuning is.

Laat ek dit pertinent stel. Die DA is *onapologeties* gekant teen die snoei van maatskaplike ondersteuningsprogramme en 100% vir inflasie-gebonde verhogings van maatskaplike toelaes, nie die onverdedigbaar en onverskoonbare 1% verhoging wat die ANC tans gee nie. Die DA se alternatiewe begroting sou ’n totale verhoging van R30,1 miljard vir maatskaplike toelaes oor drie jaar begroot het.

Die realiteit is dat tensy nuwe werksgeleenthede nie geskep word en ekonomiese groei nie plaasvind nie, word die toelae-

sisteem soos dit huidiglik daar uitsien, onvolhoubaar, en volg besnoeiings. Ons probleem tans is te min groei en te veel skuld. Hoe meer staatskuld ons het, hoe minder geld is daar vir pro-arm programme soos Sassa ... [Onhoorbaar.] ...

Ontwikkelingsagentskap. Dit beteken minder spandering op maatskaplike ondersteuningsprogramme. Die pynvolle realiteit is dat die hoeveelheid wat ons tans spandeer op staatskuld is meer as die Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling en Gesondheidsbegroting saam. Lyk ’n regering wat omgee so?

Die Nasionale Ontwikkelingsagentskap se primêre doel is die vermindering van armoede, werkloosheid en ongelykheid. Waar is die agentskap, as amper twee in vier mense nie werk het nie, 55,5% van alle Suid-Afrikaners onder die broodlyn lewe en

12 miljoen mense nie toegang het ... [Onhoorbaar.] [Tyd verstreke.]

Mr D M STOCK: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister, Deputy Minister, members of the portfolio committee, members of Parliament, South Africa at large and all protocols observed, the ANC rises in support of this Budget Vote. But I think first and foremost, I need to put into perspective one issue as a point of departure in my participation in today’s debate.

I think hon members came to the fore from different political perspectives and it looks like they want to blame the ANC cadre development policy for part of and most of the problems that persist at the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, the National Development Agency, NDA, and so forth. So, I want to characterise such an approach in today’s debate as a mere desperation by the highest order and as political posturing. To a large extent I also want to characterise such an approach to play in the gallery.

I am raising this because I am of the view and as the ANC also in the portfolio committee, we have been consistent and we are on record as highlighting the problems that persist at Sassa – whether it’s from the performance of the department with regard to the Auditor-generals report, the fraudulent activities that happens at Sassa, payments of grants and some officials who are actually part of the problems that persist at Sassa. As the ANC we have been on record in condemning the department and also walking hand-in-hand with the department to find an amicable solution to resolve the problems that are there.

We have not taken an approach as the ANC to stand by the side or across the road to blame it alone on the department without providing a solution to the department. The ANC cadre development policy, in particular, the Department of Social Development ... I want to bring just one issue to the fore into this debate. As the Department of Social Development as well as the entities also at Sassa are led by a credible women and also at the NDA, Mme Thamo Mzobe - a very credible female we hold in high regard of course. The department is led by a female Minister, a female Deputy Minister, as well by an acting Director-General, in the name of Linton Mchunu, who is very energetic, very qualified and a seasoned bureaucrat.

So, I don’t see – in terms of my own view – where we can blame it on the ANC cadre development policy. My advice as I move forward in this debate is to advice all hon members who participated in today’s debate that they should join us or walk together with us as the ANC, or as the department, the Minister and the Deputy Minister as a team to resolve the problems that exist at Sassa. We are not shying away as the ANC trying to create an impression that everything is well at the department. There are a number of problems, so we are calling upon the hon members to join us as we will be

resolving the problems that are there. We do so because as the ANC we have undertaken to build a socially inclusive society.

We are also fulfilling an undertaking to ensure that most of the challenges that are facing our ordinary people on the ground in terms of challenges of poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment are actually being resolved. This portfolio committee is central to the advancement of human development and progress as it underpins the centrality of our people as a fundamental resource to the development of the economy and the nation. The ANC has argued that to arrive at the United Nations principle in keeping up with the advancement of an egalitarian society. The dictum that the poor will always be with us should be rejected as poverty is created by society and it can therefore be eliminated by society.

In advancing our transformation programme, human development and addressing the triple challenges of our society since the advent of our democracy, the ANC-led government has continued to put in measures that provide a social safety net for most of our vulnerable people. It has also put in measures that ensure that households are able to access opportunities thorough the outcome of sustainable livelihoods and

eradication of absolute poverty. In continuing to address this and create pathways of development and transformation in this current administration - which is the sixth administration - we have committed to advance the social transformation through the maintenance and expansion of our social security system to protect the vulnerable and reduce poverty.

Over the last financial year, the social development portfolio committee has been able to progressively advance the commitment through socioeconomic relief measures, to protect those that were severely impacted by COVID-19. This has resulted in an expected degreed in the social grant budget, following the cessation of the social assistance for the

COVID-19 pandemic in the 2020-21 financial year, wherein an additional R32 billion was allocated.

Furthermore, the extension of the R350,00 grant till the end of April led to a further allocation of R2,8 billion which has actually been reprioritised. This reprioritisation contributed to Cabinet approved reduced funding of the social grants budget. The provision of social income support to poor and vulnerable is central to addressing poverty, underdevelopment, inequality and unemployment. Grant beneficiaries are expected

to increase from R18,2 million in 2020-21 to R19,3 million in 2023-24. This means that annually there would be approximately

300 000 additional beneficiaries, which are going to be dependent on grants. This must be understood against the background of Cabinet-approved productions. This situation is unsustainable as it will lead to grant amounts being reduced to cover the growing number of beneficiaries of which only a portion of the growing number will be covered.

We therefore call upon the entire portfolio committee to ensure this is progressively implemented and the programmes that link social grants beneficiaries’ development are actually bearing fruit in terms of economic opportunities to our people. The developmental social welfare pathway must start transitioning beneficiaries out of the dependants of the welfare system into the economy, and also urge the department to revert back to the community on the planned timeframe that will be needed to conduct an impact assessment of the budget adjustment and therefore also at a later stage be able to identify the interventions that need to be implemented.

In order to ensure that we systematically advance the social delivery system to be effective, equitable and just, we

welcome the progress that is being done by the committee to provide a comprehensive legal solution to the foster care grant system. We are also busy with the amendment on the Children’s Amendment Act. A second part of this legal solution is also under consideration by the portfolio committee. We are learning of other approaches and we also appreciate the input of South Africans in the Bills as well as having the courage to share their different views, experiences and at times, hard wrenching lived experiences with us as the portfolio committee.

We are concerned that the budget to implement the first legal solution, which is actually the Social Amendment Bill has been reprioritised. The Bill is important and it will be able to enable a top up to be given over and above the current child support grant of orphans, families and children in the child

... [Interjections.] ... on a social delivery system that is effective, equitable and just.

Through the application of the theory of change that is underpinned by evidence-based and result-based methodologies, we will get to the stage where this portfolio committee, at a visibly huge rate tangibly and qualitatively improves the

standard of living of the majority of South Africans. The ANC supports Vote No 19 of Social Development. I thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

*Sepedi:*

Ke a leboga.

*English:*

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon members, I am advised that the Minister saved two minutes of the time allocated to the executive – it therefore means that the Minister has 12 minutes. I now call upon the hon the Minister of Social Development. Hon Minister?

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, Chairperson. I wish to sincerely thank all members who have supported this budget and of course even those who did not support it. We are in this together. You like, you don’t like it, we have to work together. And then of course hon Chair, the politics will play itself from time to time. I think that this is the South Africa that we are building. This is the South Africa that we want. I am pleased that we work in the manner in which we do and particularly in the committee.

I am really grateful for the relation that we have and I am very happy that the committee in particular keeps a hoax eye on the work that we do. I am also thankful and grateful to the chairperson’s leadership in steering that this relationship between ourselves as a department and the National Task Team, NTT, as well as the portfolio committee.

I also wish to thank them for the level of inside and continues guidance and stand oversight on this committee. You have done quite well as a portfolio taking consideration the wisdom of this committee and I hope that we will continue in the same way that we have been working but of course, ensuring that we respond to the issues that are raised by the portfolio committee not only today but respond to the issue that are raised to the portfolio committee every time we are called upon by the portfolio committee.

Hon Gungubele, we agree completely with you on the evidence- based approach and the need to continuously develop theories of change throughout our work. To this effect, we are developing a digital monitoring and evaluation system which will assist us with the reparable and real time data to make evidence-based decisions and policies that speaks to the fair

needs of our people. We are also hoping, hon Gungubele, that what we are doing at National level we are also find itself at national level, we are also doing it in provincial and local level.

Hon Mahlangu, with regard to increase or top up of the Child Support Grant, we are at advance stage is moving with this matter with the National Treasury. We are confident that this matter will be addressed either in the adjusted budget or in the incoming financial year. We agree that this is an important initiative that will indeed enables us to reduce the burden on the foster care system. Here I really would like to thank the department for the push that they have been making in ensuring that the debate with the Treasury also are continuous.

On foster care, we are working on addressing the issues around the backlog in addressing the comprehensive social legal solutions and the committee is working with us in this regard.

Hon Arries, hon member would recall that we contributed substantively to addressing poverty in particular hunger and malnutrition. Since the start of the pandemic, we provided

over R11,6 million poor people and well over a R1 billion and this just a data we gathered.

We know there is much more through our civic society and private sector partners. We even had to go to the National Treasury for additional funding in which regard. I know hon members there will always be issues around food parcel, corruption in local level and all that.

I can assure you that we are doing our best to change where we need to in terms of the system that we use to make sure that nothing is lost in between.

The ANC President allocated to unprecedented R500 billion towards social and economic measures against to Covid-19. This has never been done in our history and we are now working on the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan and of course in the issues of the long queues, I get pains myself when I had to see people standing in those long queues for a very long time. But I am sure the hon members are aware of the presentation that we have made all the time in looking for better solution.

We even started our campaign called #lets end queues which we piloted in the Western Cape and as of yesterday this campaign went national.

We will eventually end the queues so that we address the issues of dignity for our people. Since 11 May 2020,

10 million poor people applied for the Social Relief of Distress, SRD, grant without needing to stand in queues. We will use this experience and learning to automate and digitised our services.

Well over R22 billion has already been paid to people who have as a researcher has indicted whose basic essential such as food and hon Van der Merwe is always a pleasure to hear you.

We have made the issue of payment of the back payment of None Profit Organisations, NPOs, a top priority and our engagement with provinces. We know the main issues remains to governance to comply matters and we are strengthening capacity to do an additional campaign in this regard working with all challenges and the National Development Agency, NDA.

With regard to strengthening child protection services,

members are aware of the amendment of the Children’s Bill

which is currently being consulted through the public and I did indicate this already in my speech.

With regard to substance abuse, we are ushering in the Drug Authority Board. In the next few days we are confident that the leadership with their expertise will assist us in fighting this war

We are also implementing the Anti-Gangsterism Strategy to which we have already change all provinces. Hon Sukers, I accept your invitation and I will be taking the new Central Drug Authority, CDA, board members with to the areas we mentioned not only in Cape Town but across the Republic.

Indeed, this is a challenge that is affecting our young people and need all society to work together in addressing the scourge especially amongst our young people.

I am also raised this with the MEC wish the department of social development. Ewe ned all our society to work together in the scourge especially among our young people

I also wish the MECs for Social Development to deal with this head on. I just really believe that the lessons that we learned during Covid-19 and the things that we were able to do to propel ourselves next to better service delivery, we are going to be able to use that opportunity.

For me it is a question of did we learned something? And if we have learned something what are we going to do about it? I am hoping that not only the portfolio committee or Members of Parliament will be looking at what we are doing to fight but the public itself will have to hold us accountable because we are the ones that are saying that we use that opportunity to make the changes.

I also Chairperson, would like to wish everyone, all members these citizens of ours above country South Africa and the continent a Happy Africa Day and we say to all of you alutha continua.

*IsiZulu:*

Nani enihleli lapho eNhlazatshe, nani enihleli lapho kude kude enihleli khona siyacela ukuthi nigubhe i-Africa Day. I-Afrika Day yilanga lokuthi sizikhumbuze singabantu abamnyama

ikakhulukazi ukuthi sivelaphi, siyaphi futhi sisebenze kanjani.

Ngicela ukubonga abantu basekhaya eNhlazatshe. Ngicela ukubonga omkhulu nogogo ukuthi bayebazama ukuthi basibekezelele nathi esikhathini esiningi ngoba asibonakali asizeli. Siyasebenza bantu bakithi asilali ubusuku nemini sisebenzela ukuthi izimpilo zenu zibe ngcono. Siphinde sinicele kodwa ukuthi noma thina sisebenza kangaka, siyacela ukuthi nani nibonisane emakhaya ukuthi ningasebenza kangakanani nibe nezingadi zenu, izakhiwo zenu, namabhizinisi wenu amancane. Sikhona siwuMnyango Wokuthuthukisa Komphakathi ngoba into esicabanga ukuthi imqoka kakhulu ukuthi nikwazi ukuzimela ningabantu. Mina nje ngila ngazikahle ukuthi abantu abaningi ekhaya balindeli ukukhongozela kuhulumeni. Balinde ukuthi uhulumeni adale endawo ebavumela ukuthi basebenze bakwazi ukuzikhulisa nabo.

*Sesotho:*

Ke a leboha.

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Thank you, hon Minister. Hon members, you are reminded that the debate on

Justice and Constitutional Development Budget Vote, Water and Sanitation Budget Vote and Small Business Development Budget Vote will take place at 14:00 on the virtual platform.

Debate concluded.

The mini-plenary session rose at 11:54