**Policy Assessment and Recommendations Report of the Select Committee on Health and Social Services on the Annual Performance Plan and Budget of the Department of Social Development – Vote 19, Dated 16 May 2023**

The Select Committee on Health and Social Services (henceforth, the Committee) having considered and deliberated on Budget Vote 19 and the Annual Performance Plan (APP) of the Department of Social Development (henceforth, the Department) on 25 April 2023, reports as follows:

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Section 5(2) of the Constitution of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996) and Section 27(4) of the Public Finance Management Act (No.1 of 1999) set out the role of Parliamentary Committees in conducting oversight over government departments and entities. As part of conducting Parliamentary oversight, Committees have the constitutional mandate to scrutinise and approve the budgets of the Executive. In this regard, the Committee considered the APP and budget allocation of the Department of Social Development.

This report summarises a presentation received from the Department on the APP and Budget for the 2023/24 financial year and allocations over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period. The report entails the deliberations, observations and recommendations made by the Committee relating to Budget Vote 19.

1. **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

**2.1 Vision, Mandate and Mission**

The Department envisions a “*caring and self-reliant society*” and aims to help improve the lives of the poor and vulnerable by fulfilling the following:

* Reducing the levels of poverty, inequality, vulnerability and social ills;
* Empowering individuals, families and communities; and
* Having a functional, efficient and integrated sector.

The mission of the Department is to transform society by building conscious and capable citizens through the provision of comprehensive, integrated and sustainable social development services.

**2.2 Policy Priorities for 2023/24 Financial Year**

The policy priorities of the Department are aligned with Section 27(1)(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The Constitution gives effect to the right of everyone to have access to *sufficient food and water; and social security, including if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance.*

The Department’s Strategic Plan and APP are guided by the long-term vision of the country articulated in the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030, the 2019-2024 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and other overarching international and national policy frameworks, as the leading implementation tools to guide State organs. Guided by the aforementioned strategic frameworks, the Department’s key outcomes for the 2019–2024 MTSF period are as follows:

* Implement the gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) National Strategic Plan (NSP);
* Improve the optimisation of social welfare services;
* Optimise the social security legislative framework and develop appropriate norms and standards for service delivery;
* Strengthen the non-profit organisations (NPOs) legislative framework and thereby contribute to addressing some dimensions of increased monitoring activities that are being conducted by the Financial Action Task Force;
* Promote vibrant and sustainable communities; and
* Improved livelihood strategies and economic participation.

In addition, the policy priorities of the Department are in line with the aspirations of the NDP, MTSF, United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, and 2023 State of the Nation Address (SONA). As shown in Figure 1, these are economic transformation and job creation (Priority 2); education, skills and health (Priority 3); consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality basic services (Priority 4); and social cohesion and safe communities (Priority 6).

 **Figure 1: Selected MTSF 2019-24 priorities related to social development sector**

The Department has a direct responsibility of doing the following:

* Implementing the National Strategic Plan to eradicate Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF).
* Improving the optimisation of social welfare services.
* Optimising the social security legislative framework and develop appropriate norms and standards for service delivery.
* Optimising the NPO legislative framework to promote good governance and accountability.
* Promoting vibrant and sustainable communities.
* Improving household food security.

## BUDGET ANALYSIS FOR 2023/24

## The Social Development sector provides social protection services and leads government efforts to forge partnerships through which vulnerable individuals, groups and communities become capable and self-reliant participants. This mandate is realised through the following five budgeted programmes: Administration (Programme 1); Social Assistance (Programme 2); Social Security Policy and Administration (Programme 3); Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support (Programme 4); and Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery (Programme 5).

* 1. **Financial Assessment**

This budget analysis describes the Department’slinkages between policy priorities, performance outcomes, budget allocations and expenditure trends.

As shown in Table 1, the DSD’s overall budget for 2023/24 is, R263.0 billion[[1]](#footnote-2) compared to R247.9 billion in the previous financial year (2022/23). This represents a nominal increase of 6.1 per cent, and real increase of 1.17 per cent. Over the medium term, the Department’s expenditure is set to decrease to R258.0 billion by 2025/26.

*Table 1: Overall 2023/24 budget of the Department by programme*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ProgrammeR million | Budget | Nominal Increase / Decrease in 2023/24 | Real Increase/ Decrease in 2023/24 | Nominal % change in 2023/24 | Real % change in 2023/24 |
| **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| Programme 1  | 513,7 | 426,4 | -87,1 | - 107,0 | -16,96% | -20,83% |
| Programme 2 | 239 132,6 | 253 841,8 | 14 709,2 | 2852,0 | 6,15% | 1,19% |
| Programme 3  | 7532,8 | 8086,5 | 553,7 | 176,0 | 7,35% | 2,34% |
| Programme 4  | 313,5 | 312,8 | -0,7 | - 15,3 | -0,22% | -4,88% |
| Programme 5 | 362,3 | 312,8 | -0,7 | -17,6 | -0,19% | -486% |
| Total | **247 884,9** | **263 029,3** | **15174,4** | **2888,0** | **6,1%** | **1,17%** |

Source: National Treasury (2023)

The Department vote is dominated by the *Social Assistance* programme, which constitutes 96.5 per cent of the overall departmental budget. *Social Assistance* growth from the previous year stays above inflation (6.15 per cent nominal and 1.19 per cent real). In 2023/24, nearly 19 million[[2]](#footnote-3) beneficiaries received social grants. This figure is projected to decrease in the total number of grant beneficiaries from an estimated 26.6 million in 2022/23 to 19.6 million in 2025/26. This is because of the discontinuation of the coronavirus (COVID‐19) Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant after 2023/24.[[3]](#footnote-4)

The following main programmes decline in real terms from the previous financial year:

* Administration (20.8 per cent);
* Social Welfare Policy development and Implementation Support (4.88 per cent); and
* Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery (4.88 per cent).
	1. **Programme Analysis**
		1. ***Programme 1: Administration***

The purpose of this programme is to provide leadership, management and support services to the Department and the sector. Table 2 shows how the budget is allocated in this Programme.

*Table 2: Administration Programme budget allocation*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ProgrammeR million | Budget | Nominal change in 2023/24(Rand value) | Real change in 2023/24(Rand value) | Nominal % change in 2023/24 | Real % change in 2023/24 |
| **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| Ministry |  44,4 |  44,0 | - 0,4 | - 2,5 | -0,90% | -5,53% |
| Department Management |  74,8 |  74,1 |  -0,7 |  -4,2 | -0,94% | -5,56% |
| Corporate Management |  170,9 |  169,5 |  -1,4 | - 9,3 | -0,82% | -5,45% |
| Finance |  160,4 |  76,0 |  -84,4 |  -88,0 | -52,62% | -54,83% |
| Internal Audit |  17,0 |  16,7 |  -0,3 | - 1,1 | -1,76% | -6,35% |
| Office Accommodation |  46,1 |  46,3 |  0,2 |  -2,0 | 0,43% | -4,26% |
| Total |  **513,7** |  **426,6** |  **-87,1** | **- 107,0** | **-17,0%** | **-20,83%** |

*Source: National Treasury (2023)*

The Administration programme voted allocation for 2023/24 totals R426.6 million, as compared to R513.7 million in the previous year (2022/23). This reflects a 17.0 per cent nominal decrease, and when taking into account the inflationary effect the programme budget declines in real term with –20.83 per cent. The Ministry sub-programme declines both in nominal and real terms from the previous year.

The goods and services allocation has decreased from R 290.7 million in 2022/23 to R207.8 million in 2023/24 financial year. Programme 1 increased its allocation of *machinery and equipment* from R2.7 million in the previous financial year to R2.8 million. In terms of audit costs, the external allocation has also increased from R17.7 to R17.8 million.

*Personnel expenditure*

The compensation of employees’ allocation decreased from R217.2 million (2022/23) to R212.9 million (2023/24). Approximately 15.8 million will be allocated in 2023/24 for cost-of-living salary adjustments. This figure will increase to R16.0 million in 2024/25 and R16.2 million in 2025/26, respectively.

* + 1. ***Programme 2: Social Assistance***

Social Assistance transfers provide for the payment of social assistance grants to beneficiaries who qualify for social assistance in terms of the Social Security Act (No. 13 of 2004). It provides only funding related to payments to social assistance grant beneficiaries by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), and does not include salaries to staff. Table 3 depicts the budget for all grant types, including the SRD.

*Table 3: Social Assistance Programme budget allocation*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ProgrammeR million | Budget | Nominal change in 2023/24(Rand value) | Real change in 2023/24(Rand value) | Nominal % change in 2023/24 | Real % change in 2023/24 |
| **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| Old Age | 92 145,8 | 99 104,0 | 6 958,2 | 2 328,9 | 7,55% | 2,53% |
| War Veterans | 1,0 | 0,4 | - 0,6 | - 0,6 | -60,00% | -61,87% |
| Disability | 24 703,9 | 26 800,8 | -2 096,9 | 845,0 | 8,49% | 3,42% |
| Foster Care | 4 057,1 | 3 791,1 | -266,0 | - 443,1 | -6,56% | -10,92% |
| Care Dependency | 3 874,8 | 4 091,7 | 216,9 | 25,8 | 5,60% | 0,67% |
| Child Support | 77 224,4 | 81 877,6 | 4 653,2 | 828,6 | 6,03% | 1,07% |
| Grant-in-Aid | 1 900,9 | 2 106,6 | 205,7 | 107,3 | 10,82% | 5,64% |
| SRD | 35 224,8 | 36 069,7 | 844,9 | - 840,0 | 2,40% | -2,38% |
| Total | **239 132,6** | **253 841,8** | **14 709,2** |  **2 852,0** | **6,2%** | **1,19%** |

*Source: National Treasury (2023)*

Social Assistance increases from R239.1 billion in 2022/23, reaching R253.8 billion currently. The focus is on providing income support to socially vulnerable groups such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, and caregivers of children. The 2023/24 allocation to the programme stays above inflation, representing a real increase of 1.19 per cent.

Expenditure under this programme is dominated by the *Old Age* and *Child Support* grants, which are allocated R99.1 billion and R81.9 billion, respectively. Both grant-types record above-inflation increases – that is, 2.53 per cent and 2.02 per cent real growth, respectively. The strongest growth in expenditure is projected for the *Grant-in-Aid* (i.e. 5.64 per cent real growth). *Grant-in-Aid* is an additional grant to recipients of the Old Age, Disability or War Veterans grants, who require regular care from another person due to their physical or mental status. In the year under review, the disability grant allocation increases by 8.49 in nominal terms and 3.42 in real terms. While Care dependency grant increases by 5.60 in nominal terms and 0.67 in real terms. The SRD grant provides temporary income support (R350), food parcels and other forms of relief to people experiencing undue hardship.

Most of the social grants experience above-inflation increases for 2023/24, with the exception of the following:

* War Veterans (61.87 per cent);
* Foster Care (10.92 per cent); and
* *SRD* (2.38 per cent).

The below inflation changes indicated for the three grants types listed above, is linked to projected numbers for the 2023/24 financial year.

* + 1. ***Social Security Policy and Administration***

The purpose of this programme is to provide for social security policy development, administrative justice, administration of social grants and the reduction of incorrect benefits payments.

*Table 4: Social Security Policy and Administration Programme budget allocation*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ProgrammeR million | Budget | Nominal change in 2023/24(Rand value) | Real change in 2023/24(Rand value) | Nominal % change in 2023/24 | Real % changein 2023/24 |
| **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| Social Security Policy Development |  70,2 |  69,4 | -0,8 |  -4,0 | -1,14% | -5,76% |
| Appeals Adjudication |  41,4 |  41,1 | -0,3 |  -2,2 | -0,72% | -5,36% |
| Social Grants Administration |  7 343,6 |  7 898,0 | 554,4 | 185,5 | 7,55% | -2,53% |
| Social Grants Fraud Investigations |  72,0 |  72,3 | 0,3 |  -3,1 | 0,42% | -4,27% |
| Programme Management |  5,7 |  5,6 | -0,1 |  -0,4 | -1,75% | -6,34% |
| Total |  **7 532,8** |  **8 086,5** | **553,7** | **176,0** | **7,4%** | **2,34%** |

Source: National Treasury (2023)

*Social Security Policy and Administration* programme increased from R7.5 billion in 2022/23 to R8.1 billion in 2023/24 financial year. This represents an increase from the previous year both in nominal (7.4 per cent) and real terms (2.34 per cent). In this voted allocation of this programme, the *Social Grants Administration* sub-programme, increased in nominal terms (7.55 per cent), but decreased in real terms (2.53 per cent) in 2023/24 financial year. Appeals and Adjudication sub-programmes show a nominal decrease of R03 million and a real decrease of R2.2 million in the 2023/24 financial year.

* + 1. ***Programme 4: Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support***

This programme creates an enabling environment for the delivery of equitable developmental welfare services through the formulation of policies, norms and standards, and best practices.

*Table 5: Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support Programme budget allocation*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ProgrammeR million | Budget | Nominal change in 2023/24(Rand value) | Real change in 2023/24(Rand value) | Nominal % change in 2023/24 | Real % changein2023/24 |
| **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| Service Standards |  31,5 |  31.2 |  -0.3 | - 1.8 | -0.95% | -5.58% |
| Substance Abuse |  20.9 |  20.8 | - 0.1 | - 1.1 | -0.48% | -5.13% |
| Older Persons |  19.3 |  19.2 |  -0,1 | - 1.0 |  -0.52 % | -5.17% |
| People with Disabilities |  13.7 |  13.7 |  0.0 | - 0,6 | 0.00% |  -4.6 % |
| Children |  80.1 |  79.2 |  -0.9 |  -4.6 | -1.12% | -5.74% |
| Families |  10.7 |  10.6 | 0.1  |  -0.6 | -0.93% | -5.56% |
| Social Crime Prevention & Victim Empowerment |  76.6 |  69,6 |  -0.7 |  -2.9 | 0.91% | -3.80% |
| Youth | 12.7 |  77.3 | - 0,1 | - 0.7 | -0.79% | -5.42% |
| HIV and AIDS |  43.1 | 12.6  |  0.3 |  -1.7 | 0.70% | -4.01% |
| Social Worker Scholarships |  0.0 | 43.4  | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0% | 0.0-% |
| Programme Management |  4.8 |  0.0 |  0,0 |  -0.2 | 0.00% | -4.67% |
| Total |  **313.5** |  **312.8** | **- 0.7** | **- 15.3** | **-0.2%** | **-4.88%** |

Source: National Treasury (2023)

The voted allocation for Programme 4 decreases from R313.5 billion in 2022/23 to R312.8 billion in 2023/24, which denotes a nominal decrease of 2.0 per cent, and a real decrease of 4.88 per cent. This decline is driven by reductions in allocations to the *Project Management* and *HIV and AIDS* sub-programmes; these declines in real terms with 4.67 per cent and 4.01 per cent, respectively. The voted allocations to the Older Persons and People with Disabilities sub-programmes are both below inflation. That is, they are declining by 5.17 per cent and 4.6 per cent, respectively. Over the medium term, the programme’s budget shows declines by average rate of 1.1 per cent.

* + 1. ***Programme 5: Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery***

This programme provides support to community development and promotes evidence-based policy-making in the Department and the social development sector.

*Table 6: Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery Programme budget allocation*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ProgrammeR million | Budget | Nominal change in 2023/34(Rand value) | Real change in 2023/24(Rand value) | Nominal % change in 2023/24 | Real % change in 2023/24 |
| **2022/23** | **2023/24** |
| Social Policy Research & Development |  6.7 |  6.6 |  -0.1 |  -0.4 | -1.49% | -6.09% |
| Special Projects & Innovation |  12.5 |  12.4 |  -0.1 |  -0.7 | -0.80% | -5.43% |
| Population Policy Promotion |  39.5 |  39.1 |  -0.4 |  -2.2 | -1.01% | -5.64% |
| Registration & Monitoring of NPOs |  42.8 |  42.3 |  -0.5 |  -2.5 | -1.17% | -5.78% |
| Substance Abuse Advisory Services & Oversight |  7.1 |  7.1 |  0.0 | -0.3  | 0.00% | -4.67% |
| Community Development |  30.4 |  30.1 |  -0.3 | - 0.7 | -0.99% | -5.61% |
| NDA |  219.3 |  220.1 |  0.8 | - 9.5 | 0.36% | -4.32% |
| Programme Management |  4.0 |  3.9 |  -0.1 |  -0.3 | -2.50% | -7.05% |
| Total  |  **362.3** |  **361.6** |  **-0.7** |  **-17.6** |  **-0.2%** | **-4.86%** |

Source: National Treasury, (2023)

The allocation for Programme 5 decreases from R362.3 million to R361.6 million, denoting a nominal decrease of 0.2 per cent translating to a 4.86 per cent real decrease. The National Development Agency (NDA), an entity of the Department, is located within this programme. The NDA sub-programme budget has increased by under R1 million in this programme, transfer to the NDA are from R219.3 million in 2022/23, to R 220.1 million in 2023/24 financial year. This shows a nominal increase of 0.36 per cent, but a 4.32 per cent in real terms. Over the medium term, the programme’s budget shows an average growth rate of 3.1 per cent.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Concerning *strengthening community participation,* the *Community Development* sub-programme allocation decreased from R30.4 million (2022/23) to R30.1 million in 2023/24 financial year.[[5]](#footnote-6) This shows a nominal decrease of 0.99 per cent and 5.61 in real terms in the 2023/24 financial year.

With regards to *registration and monitoring of NPOs,* a total amount of R42.3 million (2023/24) as compared to R42.8 million in 2022/23 financial year has been allocated to the *Registration and Monitoring* sub-programme, resulting in the nominal decrease of 1.17 per cent and a real decrease of 5.78 per cent.

# MEASURING SERVICE DELIVERY AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Key to realising service delivery is prioritising human resources, in line with the NDP. Thus, there should be adequate social workers and welfare practitioners, who are qualified and well capacitated to provide quality care to the most vulnerable. Currently, there are 18,300 social welfare practitioners in the system. The Department recognises that approximately 55,000 social welfare practitioners are needed. However, the target for this MTSF period is only 31,744.

## 4.1 Overall Performance Targets

The Minister’s executive performance agreement (EPA) comprises of 41 targets as shown in Table 6. There are 35 targets in the Department’s APP, 1 in the NDA APP and 5 in the SASSA APP.

Generally, there is alignment between targets of the DSD APP 2023/24, the National Annual Strategic Plan (NASP) and the MTSF. However, only 6 of the 7 NASP targets are met. The NASP indicators have been reduced from 8 to 7. The NASP indicator on the number of social professionals including the indicator for the Compensation Fund were dropped.

*Table 6: Overall performance targets*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Department Programme | P 1 | P 2 | P 3 | P 4 | P 5 | Sub-Total | NDA | SASSA | DSD Portfolio |
| APP 2022/23 | 14 | 1 | 8 | 22 | 22 | 67 |  |  |  |
| APP 2023/24 | 10 | 1 | 7 | 23 | 20 | 61 | 17 | 36 | 115 |
| APP % Contribution | 16 | 2 | 11 | 38 | 33 | 100 |  |  | 100 |
| EPA Targets | 6 |  | 2 | 14 | 13 | 35 | 1 | 5 | 41 |
| NASP Targets |  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 (of 7) |  |  | 6 |
| MTSF Targets | 3 |  | 3 | 13 | 9 | 28 | 1 | 3 | 32 |
| ERRP[[6]](#footnote-7) Targets | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 |  |  |  |  |
| BRRR[[7]](#footnote-8) | Aligned |  |  |  |  |

As of 1 April 2022, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) function moved to the Department of Basic Education (DBE). However, the EPA targets on ECD need to be reassigned to the Minister of Basic Education by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) formally.

The Department reported as follows:

* Indicators for food security have been expanded with an indicator on the number of learners benefitting from school feeding schemes at public schools.
* The EPA target on the percentage of eligible applicants in receipt of COVID-19 SRD grant of R350 per month is not an APP target.
* The SASSA APP makes provision for processing of COVID-19 SRD applications with a target of 95%.

Overall, the Department set itself 61 annual performance targets for the 2023/24 financial year. Compared to the previous financial year, the Department reduced its targets from 67 in 2022/23 financial year. Targets of APP's   DSD, SASSA and the NDA represent a collective count to illustrative scope of oversight.

## 4.2 Legislation

In respect of legislation, the Department reported the following to the Committee:

Following the processing of the Children’s Amendment Bill in Parliament in 2022/23, the Department will finalise the Children’s Act and develop regulations. The Older Persons Amendment Bill and the White Paper on Social Development are underway.

In 2023/24, the Department intends to submit three Bills to Cabinet and subsequently to Parliament. These are the draft SASSA Amendment Bill, Victim Support Services Bill and NDA Amendment Bill. In addition, the Department plans to draft a White Paper on Comprehensive Social Security in the 2023/24 financial year.

1. **COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS**

Having considered the APP and the budget of the Department, this section summarises the Committee deliberations.

* The Committee wanted to know how the Department will deal with the declining budget.

*The Department stated that there was a decrease in the Social Assistance Programme; and that the SRD will be excluded from the next financial year. The Department indicated that it even though it has been underfunded historically; it has always managed to do a lot with very little money. The allocation is inadequate for all the responsibilities the Department has. However, there are no drastic cuts from National Treasury in this financial year. The Department stated that it is important to note that there is better co-operation between itself, SASSA and NDA to assist with this by creating a stronger impact with the small budget. In addition, the Department has strategies in place to deal with the reduction in funds. It was stated that the shift of the ECD function to the DBE might be partially attributed to the reduction in funding.*

* Is there a database of payments made to military veterans?

*The Department stated that military veterans that it deals with are those who served in the Korean War and World War II. These veterans are phasing out, and are different from the ones dealt with by the Department of Military Veterans.*

* The Committee noted with concern, the crisis of the renewal of expired SASSA cards, the lack of communication around the issue, load shedding as well as the challenges faced by the South African Post Office (SAPO), issues around the Post Bank and whether a card less system is envisaged.

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*The Department and SASSA are seeking solutions to the crises regarding the issues stated. There is continuous engagement with the Post Bank who unfortunately inherited a bad banking system.*

* Is there a way to assist the social workers to get permanent positions?

*The Department stated that funding was secured to deal with social workers on a contract basis for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022 – thus, not as permanent employees. Some provinces contracted them within their budgets. The Department’s engagement with National Treasury is ongoing, in this regard.*

* The Committee asked about the period and process of reapplication for the R350 grant. In addition, the Committee wanted to know about the impact will it have on poor and vulnerable communities, how the grant serves the unemployed but doesn’t compare to the standard of living and when the basic income support grant will be made effective

*The Department clarified that the new R350 grant application requirement stems from the new legislation. Monthly checks are done and if a given account’s threshold increases the grant is stopped. The grant is predominantly accessed by active adults (job seekers). More details will be communicated to the public directly. It is clear that the R350 SRD grant is insufficient. Research has shown that R663 is the least amount of money that could possibly be spent per month- the poverty line. Orphans have been given an increase. Unfortunately, is value of the R350 SDR grant has not been approved to increase. There is however continuous conversation with treasury around this issue, as the grant amounts to R9 a day which is a clear problem.*

* The Committee wanted to know how the community-based programmes will be rolled out. Whether there was co-operation between other government departments relating to issues around GVB, HIV and AIDS the achievements and challenges

*The Department stared that good work is being done by the various departments in this regard as well as SAPS. The Committee will be given access to reports on these matters. Integration and collaboration is imperative, and an accountability structure. There are programmes in place – there is a package of services (from the Department of Health, DBE and others). The implementation of an integration model will assist with the intervention model.*

* The Committee was concerned about pending legislation and if will be finalised within the sixth parliament.

*The Department informed the Committee that the Fund Raising Amendment Bill has been referred to the Select Committee. The Portfolio Committee is dealing with the Older Persons Bill, and the Children’s Bill will be introduced in the current financial year.*

* The Committee wanted to know what the plan is for combatting corruption.

*The Department stated that investigating is ongoing, which will to binding consequences.*

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Having considered the budget and the APP of the Department the Committee makes the following recommendations:

* *Expand the SRD grant*: The Minister should continue to engage with National Treasury regarding increasing the SRD grant to help combat poverty. An update report should be submitted to the Committee in the next quarter.
* *Strengthen human resources*: The Minister should ensure that there is a viable strategy to address the challenge of social work services in the country. The strategy should be tabled in Parliament in the 2023 calendar year and implemented subsequently.
* *Improve policies*: The Minister should also ensure that SASSA strengthens its human resource policies on vetting and implement academic clearance of its employees as one of the measures to prevent fraud and corruption, and hold management accountable.
* *Fill vacant positions*: The Minister should ensure that the Department fills vacant positions, particularly those at Executive-level such as the Director-General and Deputy Director-General within the 2023 calendar year. In addition, the Minister should ensure that acting positions do not last more than six months in the Department and entities. An update should be provided to the Committee at the beginning of every briefing meeting.
* *Strengthen collaboration*: The Minister should ensure that the Department and entities work closely with other departments in the social cluster, civil society and community members. In this regard, clear and realistic indicators that spell-out the programmes that are planned or implemented collaboratively should be set and reported to the Committee every six months. In addition, the Department should facilitate stakeholder workshops to address key issues such as food insecurity and preparedness for future pandemics, substance abuse, and a review of the role the social development sector has played in alleviating poverty.
* *Be innovative*: The Department (and entities) should find innovative and sustainable ways of providing social services whilst working towards realising its vision. A clear plan with milestones and timeframes should be presented to the Committee within the 2023/24 financial year.
* *Strengthen internal controls*: The Department should ensure that there are systems in place to prevent irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure (within the Department and its entities). In addition, the Department should strengthen its monitoring systems and submit reports to the Committee (in this regard) every six months.

**7. CONCLUSION**

The Committee commends the hard work of the Ministry and the entire social development sector in implementing programmes that are geared at reducing the levels of inequality and vulnerability in the country. The Committee encourages the Department to strengthen its systems so that its services are not compromised and reach the intended beneficiaries. In addition, the Department is encouraged to set realistic goals, collaborate with relevant stakeholders and find innovative and sustainable ways of realising its vision of a caring and self-reliant society.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Department of Social Development should respond to the Committee’s recommendations in three months from the day the report is adopted by the House.

The Select Committee on Health and Social Services supports Budget Vote 19.

**Report to be considered.**

1. ENE. (2023). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. SASSA. (2023). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. ENE (2023:361). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. *The Department aims to strengthen community engagements in 34 districts through implementing the community mobilisation and empowerment framework, which promotes the use of household and community profiling to inform service and support provision. It also aims to link 2 per cent of grant recipients with sustainable livelihood opportunities, including through the Expanded Public Works Programme.* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. ERRP refers to the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. BRRR refers to the Budget Review and Recommendations Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)