**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TUESDAY, 30 MAY 2023**

**VOTE NO 19 – SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

***PROCEEDINGS OF HYBRID MINIPLENARY – COMMITTEE ROOM M46***

Members of the mini-plenary session met at Committee Room M46 at 10:00.

House Chairperson Ms M G Boroto took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

Debate on Vote No 19: Social Development:

*IsiZulu:*

UNGQONGQOSHE WEZOKUTHUTHUKISWA KOMPHAKATHI: Yazi

sengizofundiswa kepha kulungile.

*English:*

Hon Chairperson, thank you so much for this opportunity on a cold day in Cape Town and as we are here, our hearts and minds must also go to the people who are homeless, sitting on the streets and have absolutely nothing. May I also indicate that the Department of Social Development, DSD, has now developed a document that is going to help us look into what needs to be done with the homeless. We need that policy position.

My colleague the Deputy Minister of Social Development hon Hendrieta Bogopane-Zulu, Ministers, and Deputy Ministers present, I know that some are on the virtual platform, hon Chairperson and members of the portfolio committee, the DSD family and portfolio, the acting director-general Mr Linto Mchunu, the Sassa chief executive officer, CEO, Ms Memela Totsi Khambule, National Development Agency representative, Mr Xolile Brukwe, chairperson of the NDA board, by the way ...

*IsiZulu:*

... Usihlalo wethu manje nguRuth Bhengu. Ngiyethemba niyamazi nonke.

*English:*

And members of the board, chairperson of the Central Drug Authority board, Ms Nandi Mayethula Khoza, hon members of the National Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, South Africans ...

*IsiZulu:*

... nonke niphelele la nilalele khona.

*English:*

Hon Chairperson of the session, thank you for this opportunity to present the 2023/24 Budget Vote for the Department of Social Development under the theme DSD@Work: *Leaving No One Behind*. As we consolidate the work and commitments that we have made in this 6th Administration particularly, in terms of the investments we have made in people through our various interventions to ensure that we improve their quality of life, focusing primarily on protecting the poor and vulnerable from poverty and inequality.

We present this Budget Vote to you during the National Child Protection Week that we launched under the theme, *Protection of Children during and after COVID-19 and beyond,* in recognition of the need for resilience where children are affected by shocks and disasters.

In the same breath, the matter of new-born babies that were recently reported to have been placed in cardboard boxes instead of incubators or crib beds in the neo-natal ward of the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital is among the harmful instances that warrants our collective wisdom and solutions so that they do not recur.

This annual commemoration serves as a reminder that our country’s children are the embodiment of the future of our society. Consequently, when every member of our families and communities actively invests her-/himself in ensuring that no child suffers any form of neglect, abuse, violence, or exploitation, we will each be investing in a safer, more productive, and prosperous South Africa.

Hon Chairperson, for this reason, we should continuously strive to improve the prospects of patriotic and productive future South Africans today. Among others, the Child Protection Week highlights the fact that the success of all child protection efforts lies in integrating this responsibility into everyday life throughout the year and over one’s life.

We also bring you this budget during the Africa Month, the month during which our collective as South Africans are joining fellow Africans throughout the world in commemorating the founding and predecessor of the African Union, AU, namely the Organisation of African Unity, in 1963.

Whereas South Africans believe that as Africans we have solutions to the challenges that we are encountering, they also stand firmly behind the promotion and achievement of all the aspects of Agenda 2063, *The Africa We Want*.

Hon Chairperson and members, we note that we are presenting this Budget Vote on the backdrop of yawning inequalities between South Africans; the rising cost of living; record high unemployment rate of 32,9%; a stagnating economic growth; and shrinking fiscal space. A case in point is the increase of the rate of lending money to a 14-year high of 11,75% last Thursday.

Compounding these dim economic prospects are the health, social and climate shocks, and disasters that South Africans continued to endure throughout the 6th Administration.

Consequently, this Budget Vote adds to our concerted push back

against the elements, shocks and disasters that are an affront on the people.

Hon Chair, as we are tabling the 2023/24 Budget Vote, we reiterate our most pressing concern is that the Social Development budget allocation has not kept pace with our growing population and the complexity of their social development needs.

Equally concerning are the rising costs of unfunded and under- funded mandates which this portfolio is expected to implement. In this regard, we look forward to working with the hon members to correct these resource shortfalls towards ensuring that we meaningfully attend to the aspirations of the people.

It must have been against the state of the people that arises from intolerable conditions such as the ones I have just described that the literary genius of our times, Ben Okri, wrote a poem that he titled “*Is Humanity Exhausted*” in which he cautioned, and I quote:

“I hear them talk about the end of history. But those of us who haven’t tasted the best fruits of time yet, to whom

history has been harsh, we think differently. We know that history is all there to be made in the future.”

Hon Chairperson, yes, beyond our political differences the state of the people of South Africa is a serious matter for every one of us. Because the improvement of the state of the people takes precedence over everything else, in tabling Budget Vote 19 of the Department of Social Development, I am calling upon each one of us to join efforts in addressing the multi-faceted challenges that afflict them.

Here are the priorities in working together in pursuit of realizing the aspirations of the people of South Africa, during the 2023/24 financial year we will give priority to building a capable, responsive, ethical and fit for purpose Social Development Portfolio and this calls for our systems to be jacked up, calls for the civil servants who had to do their work on day to day basis to be committed to doing this and being efficient in the process; working together with other mandates government departments we will produce South Africa’s poverty alleviation strategy which includes the policy on the basic income support for 18-59 year old people who are unemployed; optimizing the performance of Non-Profit

Organisations, NPO, while implementing a risk-based supervision framework that will prevent the abuse of NPOs in money laundering, terrorism financing and proliferation financing; you know we were greylisted and we have to do everything to come out of the greylisting and part of the reason we were greylisted is because is how the money flowed within the NPOs; strengthening the provision of care and support services for the survivors of gender-based violence and femicide through the provision and operationalization of shelters, economic participation and psychosocial support services, this something that we all have to do together because South Africa cannot afford to continue being on top of the list of countries that have a problem of gender-based violence; expanding community-based child care and protection services as well as early intervention services for older persons and persons with disabilities, the Deputy Minister has been crisscrossing the country in terms of ensuring that persons with disabilities are also taken care of; creating employment opportunities for social service professionals to address the social behaviour change challenges and help curb the rise of social ills; scaling up interventions that address the scourge of alcohol and substance abuse and the associated challenges of gangsterism; developing and operationalizing the

National Integrated Social Protection Information System, NISPIS, with the view to derive the value of integrating service delivery data, and from which the quality and reliability these services can be improved; working with stakeholders across government, the private sector and civil society sector, the Social Development portfolio will improve its disaster preparedness, coordination and responsiveness, and here we already have the experience, we know what has been happening in our provinces, we just need to sharpen and respond on time to our people; and devising economic participation interventions that particularly target our programmes’ pre-existing youth beneficiaries.

Having identified these priorities, I am tabling Budget Vote

19 of the Department of Social Development as follows, the total budget allocation for the national Department of Social Development for the 2023/24 financial year is R263 billion.

Included in this is an amount of R253 billion that consists of direct cash transfer payments that Sassa expects to pay to a projected 27 million eligible grant beneficiaries by March 2024. Sassa’s allocation accounts for an estimated 96,4% of the department’s total budget over the Medium-Term Expenditure

Framework, MTEF, period which goes directly to the hands of the beneficiaries. This is what needs to be appreciated that the bulk of our budget is money that goes directly to the beneficiaries.

The department’s total allocation for the 2023/24 financial year includes an additional R41 billion that will be directed towards the implementation and administration of the COVID-19 Social Relief Distress, SRD, until March 2024 as announced by the hon Minister of Finance, R35,7 billion and R400 million, respectively; the inflationary increase of the value of grants R5,8 billion; and the compensation of employees R15 million.

The department’s total budget allocation includes an amount of R7,8 billion for Sassa’s administration of grants. An amount of R220 million will be transferred to the National Development Agency, NDA, for this entity to carry out its mandate as legislated in the National Development Agency Act

108 of 1998 as amended.

We want to indicate that we are not pleased with this amount of money because it is not enough, but we are hoping that NDA will also be creative in the process and connect to the

private sector and other stakeholders to ensure that this money is augmented.

Hon Chair, having distributed these amounts accordingly, an amount of R951 million remains for the department’s management and operations’ budget. This amount is further re-allocated towards the support services programmes as follows, administration, R426 million; social security policy and administration, R116 million; social welfare services,

R267 million; and social policy and integrated service delivery R141 million.

Below are the key programmes that we will be focusing on as the department in this financial year. These programmes of the Social Development portfolio will particularly focus on realising the following deliverables during the 2023/24 financial year, administration, the reason for the existence of this programme is to provide leadership, management and support services to the department and the social development sector, R426 million is allocated to this programme.

Among others, the programme will continue to improve governance and institutional control measures at all levels.

As part of this programme, strategic vacancies will be filled during the 2023/24 financial year.

In addition, Sassa targets to reach children who are below the age of one. In so doing, Sassa will be ensuring that the number of its prospective beneficiaries within this age band is duly identified and does benefit from diverse statutory services that the Social Development portfolio offers, and the Deputy Minister reminded us of this yesterday. Ultimately, this will contribute to the visibility, improvement, and accessibility of the portfolio services at the community level.

Comprehensive social security and administration, this programme is responsible for the development of the social security policy, the administration of social grants as well as ensuring that administrative justice is enforced with respect to social grants. An amount of R116 million has been allocated to this programme. The Social Development portfolio continues to implement the special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress.

Welfare services policy development and implementation support or, programme 4, whereas this programme exists to create an enabling environment wherein developmental welfare services can equitably be delivered. An amount of R267 million has been allocated for its implementation.

In the 2023/24 financial year, this programme is going to focus on strengthening the care, protection, support, promotion and advocacy of the rights of children, older persons and people with disabilities; improving interventions that are aimed at moving children from vulnerability to resilience by means of integrating key services such as nutrition provision, educational support, psychosocial support, etc. together; the establishment and operationalisation of gender-based violence protection shelters in metropolitan/district municipalities that do not have them as well as Khuseleka centres in three provinces where there are none.

Also, while partnering with civil society, universities and the private sector, this year the programme will be intensifying the fight against substance abuse. This is the department’s core work.

Social policy and integrated service delivery, programme 5, the rationale for the existence of this programme is to develop and facilitate the implementation of community development services that will enable the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded among South Africans to build sustainable, vibrant, and healthy communities and secure a better life for themselves. An amount or R141 million has been allocated for this purpose.

This programme is the department’s primary mechanism with which conducive environments are enabled for the creation of vibrant and sustainable individuals, families, and communities.

The department’s interventions that target poverty alleviation, capacity building at the community level, community mobilisation and the economic linkages of beneficiaries are expressed through this programme. Hon Chairperson and hon members, we do not want to be known as a department of consumption but a department that deliberately looks at the grant beneficiaries and look at those that we can empower beyond giving them the social grant.

Through provincial social development departments, the delivery of social welfare services is estimated to result in the expenditure of R65,2 billion over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework.

Chairperson, I will now focus on the National Development Agency. The NDA has been allocated R220 million in this financial year to contribute towards government’s effort to reduce poverty and create job opportunities through grant funding and capacity building to civil society organisations.

The Agency is expected to create 3 000 job opportunities in the current financial year. Of this number, 2 300 will be created through the implementation of the volunteer programme that will be funded by the Presidential Employment Stimulus Package.

Yesterday, I was at an activity of the Child Protection Week and I was happy to see that the University of Cape Town had volunteers who came and I said to the volunteers and the university, our society needs these volunteers, our society needs people who can walk through the streets of South Africa to go and find out from time to time what is paining our

people. Therefore, it is important for us to take care of the volunteers because these are university students who have decided that they will be part and parcel of South Africa’s future.

Regarding implementation of the partnership model, the NDA has signed a new agreement with the Unemployment Insurance Fund, UIF, to the value of R103,5 million. This will be directed towards funding venture creation and sustainable livelihoods initiatives that will benefit 1 975 UIF beneficiaries.

In addition to grant funding, the agency will support an average 3 000 civil society organisations per year by strengthening institutional areas such as governance, compliance, financial management, reporting and conflict resolution over the MTEF period.

Hon Chair and members, we really have a serious problem amongst organisations who want us to keep putting money in, yet they are not accountable, and we say they have to be accountable.

To give effect to the District Development Model, DDM, the NDA will be piloting one project per district in all nine provinces to enhance sustainable livelihoods and social entrepreneurship opportunities for rural communities.

The new NDA Board under the leadership of Ms Ruth Bhengu brings incisive experiences and expertise of the development landscape that are necessary in providing the NDA with strategic direction.

Hon Chair, very briefly, let me congratulate the entire Department of Social Development team for receiving on this Africa Month the prestigious 2023 Good Practice Award in Social Security for Africa. This was recently conferred on Sassa by the International Social Security Association, ISSA, through its Regional Social Security Forum in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

The 2023 Good Practice Award in Social Security for Africa is the meritorious recognition of Sassa’s extension of the Child Support Grant, CSG, to vulnerable children in communities throughout our country. The Department of social Development’s

entry was chosen from among 48 member institutions on the continent.

In addition, Sassa received two certificates of merit for the responsive implementation of the Social Relief of Distress for victims affected by regional floods in the KwaZulu-Natal province; as well as the innovative implementation of the special COVID-19 SRD in response to the advent of COVID-19.

The recognition of our work at the regional and global levels is an inspiration to our frontline personnel who relentlessly work towards meeting the aspirations of all South Africans through innovations.

Indeed, Sassa stands among premier social security institutions on the African continent and in the world. Further, this Award is explicitly saying to all of us in the Social Development portfolio, continue to be the innovators of regional and global best practices as well as trailblazers where this concerns serving the people.

During this financial year, Sassa will implement office accommodation improvement strategy in 54 identified offices

focusing on physical accessibility, alternative power supply and network connectivity amongst others. This translates in 6 offices per province.

In the same vein, the queue management system that Sassa piloted in the previous financial year has proven to be highly effective ... hon Adams, I know you’re listening ... [Laughter.]

Consequently, this financial year, Sassa will be implementing its use in 27 Sassa local offices across all nine provinces. Within the first quarter of this financial year, Sassa expected to complete its business process re-engineering. This must go fast because business engineering is what is going to help Sassa become much more efficient in its work.

A timely initiative by Sassa are partnership collaborations that this entity is entering into with the view to link selected grant beneficiaries with short-term skills training and economic participation opportunities.

Chairperson here, I would like to take this opportunity to request hon members to assist us. I have been in a few places

where I felt that grant beneficiaries are being bullied and told in schools that, your parents cannot take care of you and so many of them are afraid of saying that they are grant beneficiaries.

We will raise the bar and ensure that we take these grant beneficiaries and introduce them to their future because we need the grant beneficiaries to have confidence that government is lifting them out of poverty so that they are able to take care of themselves in the future.

Hon Chair, I have also met very interesting people who stood up and said, I am the chief executive officer, CEO, of a global company and I am a beneficiary of the social grant. I have told them to go out and talk to the others, go out and show the grant beneficiaries that it is possible.

Hon Chairperson, in conclusion, last June we introduced the top-up Child Support Grant as part of the legal solution to address foster care backlogs. Nearly a year later, I remain concerned about the low uptake rate for this grant.

In the quest to increase this number throughout the course of this financial year we are going to embark on a nationwide multi-media communication campaign. By the way, we have our own TV now, so you comrades, friends and everyone are going to log into our own DSDTV so that we can be able to give you the information directly. [Applause.] We will call everyone. It’s not just about us in government. Everybody who matters and has something important to say about how we can improve our system, we will see you on DSDTV.

As I conclude, this Budget Vote continues to fulfil the commitment of the 6th Administration to improve the provisions of the services that we render to the public. In as much as it materializes the benefits of social protection and developmental social welfare for vulnerable South Africans, it further translates the guidance of the ANC that 2023 should be the year of decisive action to advance the people's interest as well as to renew our society. Consequently, suggestions that seek to divide us where the people are concerned are nothing short of the stubborn past that weakens our strength as a collective.

I as the Minister of Social Development can tell the people of South Africa that we and the portfolio committee, the ANC members and all other opposition members work very well. We appreciate you chasing us because you want good things done for the people of South Africa. We say, keep that going because when you do so, you are helping us sharpen our system.

Those of us who are in the Social Development portfolio, inclusive of the Department of Social Development, Sassa, the NDA, and the nine provincial departments, the dim background that I painted earlier exerts additional demands on our responsibility to protect South Africans against the indignity of poverty, incomeless-ness, hunger and the vicious recurrence and reinforcements of social ills.

Let us find our inspiration from the historical framing of the Freedom Charter wherein the people resolved that no one should go hungry, the aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state. Cared for by the state goes beyond the state. Therefore, we should start with our families, house to house, street to street, community to community.

I personally believe that parents must not abdicate their responsibilities when it comes to taking care of the children. This is not a women’s only issue, both men and women must take responsibility.

In the quest to raise the majority of South Africans above the challenges that afflict them, the Department of Social Development strives to be the embodiment of the hope that carries people into a life that is free from indignity and lack.

Hon Chair and members, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my colleague, the hon Deputy Minister, the provincial, Members of the Executive Council, MECs; the acting director-general of the department, the CEO of Sassa and NDA, and everyone else including the Central Drug Authority chairperson and the board as well as Langi Malamba, the chairperson of the Central Drug Authority board.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the provincial Members of Executive Councils for Social Development for always being there. Last but not least, I thank my family, the people who wish that I am there but I am hardly ever there,

the people who appreciate that I, like all other who are in this room do the best and put our first foot forward to ensure that the people of South Africa will have confidence that we will do everything we can to change their lives.

Most importantly, I must thank my grandchildren, all eight of them and say to them ...

*IsiZulu*:

... ukhona ugogo uzobe elokhu enisebenzela nani esebenzela nabo bonke.

*English:*

Hon Chair. I now table Budget Vote 19 of the Department of Social Development for your consideration and I will wait for the questions. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): I took one minute from your other ten minutes so that I do not disturb you. That must be recorded as such.

Ms N Q MVANA: House Chair, good morning to our hon members, stakeholders, listeners. Let me first start by the positive

ones and request us to give a big applause for the department’s Minister and the Deputy Minister for getting a prestigious award of International Social Security Association, ISSA. Can we give them applause. [Applause.]

And with this DSTV one, it’s our first time to experience that, we really enjoy to have it. How we wish also to have the toll-free number working on time and work very, very strenuous for the people of South Africa.

House Chair, I will start by providing a safety net and protect the poor and vulnerable to sustain livelihoods.

Let me remind hon members and the House at large, the SA Social Security Agency, SASSA, was established in 2014 to manage social security in South Africa as per Act 9 of 2004. Earlier, this programme was called social welfare that was administered by the Department of Social Development.

Due to a number of challenges the Department of Social Development entrusted an agency administrator in this programme.

The agency accounts to the department and the department has to account with issues related to social security in South Africa.

The South African Constitution of 1996, I also want to remind the House, says everyone has the right to have access to social security including appropriate social assistance, if they are unable to support themselves. Thus, the state has the responsibility to offer social grants to the people who are worse off in society as it as basic function of government, part of social programmes to in response to people’s needs.

South Africa has one of the most extensive social welfare systems among the developing countries in the world. Our government supports more than 18 million people and they receive some form of social grants provided by the department or by the government.

The cash assistance programme that are currently available, which has been already mentioned by the Minister: child support grants, foster care grants, old-age grants and disability grants, and over the war veterans grant; not

forgetting to mention the Social Relief of Distress, SRD, grant.

And you know when you go around and you say you are from Parliament, whether you are coming from water and sanitation, people around you will ask about the R350; when am I going to get the R350? This programme has contributed positively to poverty alleviation in South Africa.

Grant such as the child support grant and the old-age pension improve the nutrition status and school enrolment rates of poor children and dress child staffing.

Let me go to the governmental efforts to address the impact of COVID-19 and other types of disasters on the livelihoods. In March 2022, it’s something that you also know that COVID-19 pandemic broke out, finding a weak South African economy.

In reality, the South African economy had been in a recession for two consecutive quarters before the pandemic hit our shores. COVID-19 pandemic, as a result, widened the economic crisis. Many people experienced hunger, many lost their jobs

and many have experienced extended periods of financial hardship.

Poverty was predicted to increase the inequality to expand. The required social and economic responses are supposed to meet or perhaps exceed the scale of the disruption created, given the extend of that destruction.

In response to this crisis, President Cyril Ramaphosa communicated our determination as a country in responding to the COVID-19 crisis when he said:

We are determined not merely to return our economy to where it was before the corona virus, but to forge a new economy in a new global reality.

As a result of the devastating state of our economy, the South African economy’s reconstruction and recovery plan was then put in place with an aim to build this South African economy that meets the needs of all our citizens.

The government as part of his social intervention, introduced a Social Relief Distress, that is of R350, which also the

Minister pronounced and read it before that it will be at the end of March 2024, because communities are asking: How long are we going to get this R350 and when is it going to stop?

Because they are panicking of when is it going to finish and end in the ...

We welcome the ongoing engagement with various social partners on the Basic Income Grant, BIG, which is critical to provide a sustainable safety net for the unemployed. We continue to receive positive acknowledgement by recipients of this grant as it helps them alleviate hunger and to use it to set economic opportunities.

As ANC in Nasrec conference, we reaffirmed that the state has a particular responsibility to improve social protections and provide income support for vulnerable individuals and households.

It has also resolved that as a system of social grants and welfare payments, should be expanded to provide for basic income as fiscal space allows.

Then let me go straight to governmental efforts to address other types of disasters. The department plays a critical role in responding to disasters. The department has to develop agile systems and processes to respond to disasters within the shortest possible period. We even said as portfolio committee: it mustn’t be an infinitive thing; it must have its critical timeframes.

Civil society is also critical in this regard. The department should train civil society organizations of disaster management responses to support future efforts.

Then the other point is the advancement that the department has made in the field of social protection, especially how this has helped to reduce poverty. This positive impact of social assistance is significant in many townships as it has, in fact even in rural areas, been proven to ensure minimum living conditions and alleviate poverty and create a bigger impact in developing households.

The social grants have a positive impact in terms of human development such as education and health. Social grants improve the lives of South Africans and it does not only

improve households but also contribute in terms of economy as it helps South Africans to develop local economies by creating local markets and encourages investment due to the demand in the market and increase consumption spending.

As we have heard from statistics that 32,9% unemployment rate in 2023, especially in the first quarter, we are aware of that and we are concerned about the age; that is 18 to 59 years old.

Then we observed the recommendations of the budget vote report. The committee raised concerns with regard to the recommendations that we made on previous budget vote reports and observed that those recommendations were not implemented by the department ... [Time expired.]

The committee also agreed and endorsed the report. Thank you. [Applause.]

Ms B S MASANGO: ... [No sound.] ... defiance yet again. These are a small fraction of the myriad of queries that receive urgent attention and I will be failing in my duty if I didn’t sincerely thank the department and its entities for rising to

the occasion in this desperate circumstances many of which are matters of life and death. But they are exceptions not the rule, hon Chairperson, the rule is the hundreds if not thousands who don’t know how to contact Members of Parliament and so languishing in despair as they have no way of contacting the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, because 435 Sassa Offices are experiencing systems problems while an additional 175 Sassa Offices are beset by telephone problems.

Sassa has experienced a myriad of changes in its social security offering from cards expiring to a migration to cordless services to Sassa Offices closing in droves and support seeding its agreement to Postbank. The least of challenges is endless but the recipients are all the same. Vulnerable South Africans without proper clearly explained and real time communication lines and alternatives people are left destitute.

The Department of Social Development is one of the department tasks to lead on the fight against Gender-based Violence and Femicide, GBVF, yet quarter after quarter, year by year, the victims of GBVF keep increasing. They have no hope of whether the government is protecting them.

Chairperson, I am not ignoring the Budget Vote, I am merely trying to link numbers on a presentation to the committee on a Wednesday morning to real lives of South Africans whose daily struggles we dare not reduce to targets, plans and summit at great detriment to the lives and livelihoods of those on whose behalf we exercise oversight over the executive.

The real struggles, real people experience gets lost in the translation of percentages, targets and programmes. In Harry Marks on the briefing by the Department of Social Development on 2023-24 Annual Performance Plans, APPs, and budget the Minister described the APPs as the Department of Social Development final formal performance commitments within the current Medium Term Strategic Framework, MTSF. And she said, and I quote: By definition this demands that through this APP the department should roundup and visible meaningfully and responsible deliver on the commitments of the 6th Administration of our democratic government. This noble summation by the hon Minister losses its meaning completely when you realise that the lived experiences of programmes and Non-Profit Organisations, NPOs, serving the elderly, children and people with disabilities. In Gauteng, for example, had their budget appropriately slashed to such an extent that many

would have had to close the doors while others will be forced to cut vital programmes and services.

It is clear that the department has not learned any lessons from the Life Esidimeni Tragedy. MEC Hlophe’s abrupt stoppage of life serving subsidies to NPOs that performs statutory services is a massive blow to NPOs, a death knell to beneficiaries of the department services.

Hon Minister Zulu must intervene before we see a repeat of Life Esidimeni this time significantly much worse. High unemployment has increased. Numbers of those who have been converted to the client of the Department of Social Development with the department programmes crumbling not only because of sheer numbers but because of warful in aptitude, blatant lack of care and total disregard for the department noble mandate.

Fellow South Africans let’s just be very clear contrary to the propaganda spread by the ANC, the DA will never take away social grants. In fact, a DA-led administration will increase child support grant to the above poverty line to strengthen

beneficiaries’ financial position to cope with the rising cost of living.

The democratic has without fail provided solutions to each of the concerns we have raised to no avail. So, start between the department and government that stop caring for the people a long time ago and deepening poverty and hunger. We are emboldened to ensure that we implement our solutions when we govern this country in 2024. The monitored pact is real and South Africans can expect to be top priority of a government that has hidden their cries and witness their plight as we have criss-crossed South Africa. Thank you, Chairperson.

Ms P MARAIS: Chairperson, I wanted to take this opportunity to acknowledge my commander in chief Julius Malema, my Deputy President, all the officials, komisas, fighters, ground forces, I greet you today.

Chairperson, when those who of us who had been in the struggle for liberation of this country got the solution and angry with the ANC for training the Hawks and many, a great many of our comrades died for many of us disengaged from active politics. That was until the clarion call was for EFF was made in 2013

and we dusted ourselves up, roll up our sleeves and until the call for the struggle for economic freedom in our lifetime.

We are delighted therefore that this year marks 10 years of rolling struggles for the emancipation of the down threatened for the living wage for women to the day-care and take care of their children for proper support to early child development centres because we know those are the foundations about which nations are build. Happy 10th anniversary to the EFF.

Chairperson, we reject this budget of the Department of Social Development. Minister, in the study released last year by the University of Cape Town, it was showed that there was about 2,9 million orphan children in this country and this amounts to about 14% of all children in this country. If not lucky enough we had a relative or a good Samaritan, we would take care of them. Most of these children were grown up without the necessary support mechanism for the conducive development of a child.

Despite the seriousness of this matter, the department and the ANC members serving in the portfolio committee on child

development has shown the middle finger to the pride of the children of this country.

Despite a fight for a comprehensive legal solution for the problem of foster care, for orphans abandoned having been known for many decades, the department was quite found a solution to this problem.

It was back in 2002 when the late Dr Zola Skweyiya here announced that foster grant care will be available for relatives for providing care for orphan children.

In 2017, we took a centre of child law to take the department to court for provision of comprehensive care for abandoned children. Despite this, the ruling party has basically fumbled and the opportunity for providing solutions with these problems when they actively sabotage Children Amendment Bill last year neglecting many provisions suggested by the committee and the experts. Not only that, but the department had also burned those who suffered the impact of hydraulic poverty.

While on 28 May, the world commemorates Hunger Day here in South Africa about 11,6% of South African households experienced hunger. South Africa faces challenges grumping from high unemployment rate, poverty and rising cost of living. This department has no imagination or plan to resolve the hunger problem.

We know that the corrupt bunch of people associated with the ruling party has used Sassa for their own corrupt ends. There are millions that had been distributed and illegible recipients that has no need and had no satisfactory investigation to find out who exactly is responsible for this and the recoup of the money.

The Department of Social Development had been sitting with Acting Director-General for the past few years. The poor performance of this department can largely be blamed with the fact that there is no stability or accountability. This was proven by the fact that there is no timely finalisation about outstanding disciplinary cases. There are no consequence management in the department. Going to the elections next year, we know that there will be spike in the number of interventions and food parcels from this department.

We want to warn the Minister; this department is for all the South Africans who are in need of help every day. It is not a campaigning tool. We reject the Budget. We also would like to say to the department that, you are the biggest department that can help people of South Africa. And on this note, I would like to invite each and every one to our celebration on

29 July in Johannesburg. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Ms L L VAN DER MERWE: House Chairperson, good morning to our Minister, our Deputy Minister, our chairperson of our portfolio committee, colleagues. House Chairperson, as we marked the start of Child Protection Week, our nation woke up to the tragic news of the brutal rape and murder of a 17-year- old schoolgirl, Palesa Malatji. She now joins the long list of young women like Anene Booysen, Tshegofatso Pule, Karabo Mokoena, and many others who’ve lost their lives in a country at war with itself, where the state is unable to keep its citizens safe. May her departed soul find peace, and the IFP joins our nation in calling for justice for young Palesa.

The ruling party once promised us a better life for all. Now

29 years since the dawn of our democracy, and they proudly proclaim the creation of a wealthy state as one of their

greatest achievements. On 27 March 2023, President Ramaphosa said:

Just over 2,5 million people were receiving social grants in 1999. Today, it’s one of the greatest achievements of our democratic society that 18 million people are now dependent on a grant.

While the Daily News ran with the following headline on

15 May 2023: “ANC banks on social grants to win the 2024 elections”. It goes without saying that we want a government that will lift our people out of poverty, not drive them further into poverty. This is an admission by our own government that it has failed to restore the dignity of our people through job creation.

Minister Makeba, we want to join you in the rollout of the basic income grant, but it goes without saying none of us came here today to approve a budget that will be used for election purposes. We want a budget that will restore the dignity of our people and that will lift our people out of poverty and restore hope. It goes without saying that with deepening levels of social despair comes deepening social ills. However,

it’s not clear how successful this department has been in the fight against gender-based violence.

Gender-based violence keeps rising, and it's also not clear, for example, what the role of the Central Drug Authority is in terms of co-ordinating the fight against substance abuse.

Substance abuse levels in our country keeps rising. This morning, while we in this Chamber, a young girl will be raped, adding to our ever-rising teenage pregnancy rates. While a young boy on the Cape Flats will be subjected to gang violence. Both children will have nowhere to turn to because there aren’t social workers at their schools. Tonight, a child will sleep hungry because child malnutrition rates keep rising and there’s no plan to combat this. Tomorrow, a young drug addict in a rural community will seek help, but there will be nowhere to turn to. And by the end of this week, a baby would have been abandoned because a crisis pregnancy doesn’t mean that you've got access to state resources. Next month, a vulnerable child will still be languishing in a children’s home because someone in this department have taken an anti- adoption stance and therefore delay adoptions.

But it’s when the state fails that NGOs stand in the gap providing vital services on behalf of the state. But our NGO sector 2 is in crisis, and hon Minister, I wonder how you can spend money on a TV station when in fact people are starving and our NGOs are in crisis. In recent months, some NGOs in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in particular, have had to close their doors as fundings have dried up from this department.

This have impacted children, the elderly, disabled and those living with HIV.

Sassa too is an urgent need of interventions. Its telephone lines don’t work. You can phone any of their telephone lines, you won’t reach them. They are still crippled by corruption, and they still pay grants to people who are not eligible to receive their grants. There is no dignity, and offices without chairs, with no shelter, no generators, no toilets, and beneficiaries sleeping outside Sassa offices overnight.

Minister, we want the department that pays more than just grants. This budget before us must fund the social workers that are sitting at home. It must fund NGOs. The R350 must be linked to skills training like the plumbing opportunities that the IFP-led Zululand municipality has made available to young

people, and I am glad you did touch on that. This budget must fund visible GBV, anti-substance abuse, anti-bullying, anti- gang-gangsterism, and teenage pregnancy interventions.

Finally, we call for the safe abandonment of babies to be legalised alongside baby savers. Far too many women are abandoning babies in unsafe spaces because they’ve got nowhere to turn to. We cannot today support an ANC election budget, but we will support a budget that is a lifeline to an NGO, that is a stipend to a social worker, and a meal to a vulnerable child. The IFP will support your budget. I thank.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Thank you. Hon members, let us bring ourselves to the understanding of Rule 64 E, which has been recently amended on the 30 March. Any placards, dangerous, non-dangerous and non-threatening placards, or articles, it should be through the permission of the Speaker before you do it in the House. Thank you. I didn’t have to disturb you because it was not a threatening one. But next time, please get the permission. Thank you. Hon Breedt.

*Afrikaans*:

Me T BREEDT: Huisvoorsitter, die departement en sy entiteite speel ‘n kritieke rol in die samelewing, vanaf die SA Agentskap vir Maatskaplike Sekerheid, Sassa, toelae tot nie- winsgewende organisasies. Die mees weerloses is van die departement en sy entiteite afhanklik en word dag tot dag deur hulle gefaal.

Kom ons begin by Sassa en die uitbetalings van toelaes. As die geld nie opraak nie, is die ooreenkoms nie geteken nie, dan is stelsels van lyn af, of is daar beurtkrag en niks werk nie.

Dit alles te midde die feit dat ons mees weerloses ly.

Dan kom ons by die moeilikheid by die Poskantoor, of sal ons sê dit is die Posbank. Sassa gaan beslis ‘n ander oplossing moet kry vir die uitbetaling van toelaes wat deur die Posbank uitbetaal word. Die Posbank het bewys dat hy nie bevoeg is om uitbetalings te hanteer nie. Tussen die geld wat deur werknemers gesteel is, geld wat by betalingspunte opraak, die stelsel wat oppak, outomatiese tellermasjiene, OTMs, wat ontrekkings van geld ... [Onhoorbaar.] ... maar die trekkers kry nie die geld nie, en so stapel die krisisse op en op en die mees weerloses ly. Is dit nie tyd dat ons sê, genoeg is genoeg nie?

Wat verder kommerwekkend is, is die hele goue kaart debakel

... is dat die Posbank geweet het dat die kaarte gaan verval. In ‘n onlangse mediaverklaring, het die Posbank te kenne gegee dat hulle eers in die volgende paar weke ’n plan daar gaan stel met die uitreikening van die hernuwing van kaarte. As gevolg van die proses wat die Posbank nagelaat het, moes die Reserwebank weereens ’n sperdatum uitstel en is duisende trekkers deur die stelsel gefaal. Duisende Sassa begunstigdes moes vir ure in toue staan. Baie van hierdie begunstigdes is bejaardes of het kwale soos artritis en diabetes en moes sonder die nodige geriewe klaarkom. Ons kan dankbaar wees dat nie meer mense iets oorgekom het nie.

*English*:

Many rural and older clients remain reliant on the withdrawal of Sassa grants from SA Post Office, Sapo, offices, and Sassa itself admitted that this remains a concern, as the number of doctors is also a problem. The doctor shortage needs to be addressed with the utmost urgency, as does the crisis with the Postbank. What is positive is the agency’s plans to implement a fully automated grant application process from e- applications to scanning supporting documents and the like, over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, period, at a

cost of R128 million. This will hopefully see the alleviation of the problems that Sassa is currently facing.

However, what remains to be seen is whether the annual performance targets will be met. Some of the most notable is the focus on the improvement of organisational structure that will see: 5% of social assistance debts recovered or submitted for writing off; 75% of current financial misconduct cases finalised within 120 days; 95% of backlogs of financial misconduct cases finalised; 90% of reported fraud and corruption cases investigated and finalised; 70% of labour relations cases finalised; and 90% of vacant funded posts filled. This is welcomed. However, if Sassa does not get its house in order, we can rely on seeing more and not fewer issues.

To get to the department itself, the department needs to start with appointing a director-general, DG, and chief financial officer, CFO. This department has been without both for a very long time, maybe even years, if I’m not correct. Although the current acting incumbents are doing a good job given the circumstances, we need stability in a department as crucial as this.

*Afrikaans*:

Die departement ervaar besonderse probleme wanneer dit by nie- winsgewende organisasies kom en die Minister het daarna verwys. Laat betalings van subsidies is maar een van die probleme wat ervaar word. Kinderhuise is dan gewoonlik dié wat die swaarste hieronder trek en onskuldige kinders is dié wat weereens ly.

Ek is deur ‘n nie-winsgewende organisasie wat al vir meer as ses maande sukkel om by die departement te registreer, genader. Uiteindelik op 20 April het dit geblyk dat hul stawende dokumente agterstalig is. Op 21 April het hulle dit ingedien, en wou hulle seker maak dat alles in orde is en dat al die nodige dokumentasie aanvaar is. Tot vandag toe kon hulle nie die departement in die hande kry nie. Gister het ek toe ‘n oproep na die departement se nasionale call centre [inbelsentrum] gemaak en so ook die Vrystaat kantoor. Die nasionale call centre [inbelsentrum] se nommer bestaan nie en die Vrystaat kantoor se nommers gaan nie eers deur nie. Dit is ‘n skreiende skande dat hierdie nommers buite werking is en dit moet so spoedig as moontlik herstel word. Die departement faal Suid-Afrika. Sy entiteite faal hul begunstigdes. Suid- Afrika verdien beter. Ek dank u.

Ms M E SUKERS: Hon Chair, the ACDP rises this morning to extend our deepest condolences to the families of five children killed in a horrific accident on their way to school in Mitchells Plain. May the Lord grant you comfort by His Holy Spirit in the midst of your sorrow. As we consider this budget, the ACDP wishes to focus attention on the growing crisis in the children’s sector. There is a critical need for a round table on the plight of vulnerable children, and the urgency for this committee to increase oversight on the work of the department in this sector. We have requested a round table Minister in committee, and want to reiterate that call here today.

Child activist and journalist Robyn Wolfson-Vorster rightly commented that children are the constituency-based politicians, and the state ignore them because they do not protest or burn tyres. This is at the very heart of the issues affecting children, their voices remain silent even in the law making and policy process. The state seeks to close their schools without hearing their voices, and effectively ignore their plight of homelessness and hunger, by defunding NGOs in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

In the Karoo there is only one youth care centre, YCC, Huis Triomf, serving the vast area of Oudtshoorn, Leeu Gamka, De Rust and Prince Albert all the way to Beaufort West. The ACDP sought a social partner for its doors to remain open, and the Barn Christian Church, under the leadership of Roelof Kwant, heeded that call. Congregants who contribute to the billions available to this department committed another R1,5 million to restore dignity to 30 boys.Our call for further engagements on the growing need of vulnerable children in the Karoo to the MEC of Social Development here in the Western Cape remain unanswered. We are calling for the capacity of Huis Triomf to be expanded, and for protection services in the Karoo to be upscaled urgently.

The war on children is in the numbers. Violence against children is widespread with one in three children reporting some form of maltreatment. A 2013 study in the Western Cape found that 98,9% of adolescents had witnessed community violence, 40,1% had been a direct victim of community violence, 76,9% had witnessed home violence, 58,6% had been a victim of home violence, and 75,8% had either had direct or indirect exposure to school violence. Twenty-six per cent of adolescents have experienced some form of sexual assault. The

impact of this on our nation will be seen in the decade to come.

In closing, I want to acknowledge your commitment, Minister, by the continuation of the programme with the community of Lavender Hill in Southern Peninsula, initiated by the ACDP, and now driven by the Western Cape province and the national department. This was a response by you on a Budget Vote two years ago. It is our hope that we can do exactly the same for the children in the Karoo. God bless you.

*IsiXhosa*:

Mnu N L S KWANKWA: Ndiyabulela. Enye into bebefutshane bonke aba bantu bebethetha apha.

*English*:

Hon Chairperson, the UDM supports the Budget Vote 19 on Social Development. This department has an important duty and mandate to develop and implement programmes aimed at eradicating poverty and ensure social protection and social development among the poor and the most vulnerable and marginalised.

However, in our view the department has not been able to implement the strategy in so far as ensuring that we have

adequate or enough number of social workers servicing our people. For instance, it has not been able to address the long-standing issue of shortage of social workers.

In July 2022, during the Presidential Imbizo and Oversight Visit in Gauteng, you hon Minister and your department revealed that the country needs about 55 000 social workers, to meet the demand for appropriate basic social welfare services. However, only about 17 500 social workers are providing services to communities around the country. Despite the dire need for social workers, more than 9 000 qualified social workers remain unemployed. The department has not made significant strides to close this gap and employ more social workers.

The shortage of social workers in particular serves as a stumbling block in response to the brutal effects of all forms of violence against women, children, older persons and other vulnerable groups. The citizens in particular are deprived from receiving adequate social support as stipulated in the Probation Services Act 116 of 1991. Minister there also needs when it comes to the developing an automated application

process for the grant application, it needs to be simplified for people. So that ...

*IsiXhosa*:

... ingabavaleli ngaphandle.

*English*:

The other important thing which I think the entire government needs to consider is the development of a digital profile for people. Once they are born, they have an identity number and a birth certificate, but maybe we should now move towards developing a digital profile for South Africans, which would actually make it easier to process the grant system. The challenges faced by the post office I don’t think they fall in your department, but you can play your role to try and ensure that is resolved. We are of the view that there are still many people who receive the R350 ...

*IsiXhosa*:

... ebekumele ukuba abayifumani ...

*English*:

... primarily because the government has not been able to resolve the issue of the informal sector of the economy. Most of the people who entry R350 were not supposed to be earning it. Apart from the rogue elements from the administration obviously are people who are self-employed in the informal sector. Some of them are earning more than the minimum wage of R3 500. Because we have not documented that and put steps in place to try and support that sector, we are not able to tell who earns an income and who doesn’t, so that we can have resources that we can channel to the most deserving members of our society. We support the Budget Vote. Thank you very much.

Mr B N HERRON: Chairperson, let me start by welcoming the Minister’s comment that the department will develop a ... [Inaudible.] ... policy for homelessness. Homelessness firmly resides within the social development space and we cannot allow policing to be the solution or the response to street homelessness as we see across our country the criminalisation of people who are homeless. So, we welcome that intervention, Minister.

South Africa’s deep inequality is rampant poverty, weak economic growth and woefully low job creation numbers leave us

with no choice but to be substantially in our social wage. Our Constitution guarantees social assistance and social security for those who are unable to provide for themselves. So, while we would like an economy to provide jobs for all those who are looking for work, we still have a legal and narrow obligation to ensure social assistance for those who, despite their desires and their dreams to work, simply cannot find jobs. For those who regard social security or any of our grants that we currently provide under our current social security system, s a gift r a hand out and not a right – you are hopelessly wrong.

The people of South Africa who are unable to support themselves have a constitutional right to social assistance. We must and we do acknowledge the massive social support system currently in place in South Africa as million grant beneficiaries is as substantial as it is depressing. The dream for our democratic South Africa was for much more prosperity and much less poverty. While acknowledging the substantial social security system already in place, we once again raise our concerns about the social relief of distress grant.

Our first concern is the fact that the grant, already below the food poverty line, has remain stuck at R350 a month which by the department’s own admission means a real decline in value considering inflation of 2,3%. The second concern is the persistence reference to the grant ending at the end of the current financial year and thus the concomitant reference to the number of grant beneficiaries declining to 19,6 million.

There is no way that we can withdraw the grant form 7 million beneficiaries without replacing it. Of course, we would like this grant to be replaced by a permanent basic income guarantee. In April 2022 the lower abound poverty line was R945 per person per month. The National Development Plan includes the target of reducing the portion of persons living below lower bound poverty line to zero by 2030. Minister, it can be done, but it will require the courage to restructure our fiscal priorities, our allocations and our social security systems. We support the budget but we urge the Minister to intensify the fight for the right to social security and we will be at the forefront with him. Thank you.

Ms A S HLONGO: Hon Chairperson, hon Minister and hon Deputy Minister, hon chairperson of the portfolio committee, hon

members, good morning. Combating sexism, Gender-based Violence and Femicide, GBVF, and all other forms of violence and discrimination should be a priority for all sectors of society. This is linked to the country’s attainment of social justice and human rights. Members of society should become productive beings who can participate in the social, political and the economic growth and development of an equitable and inclusive society.

Hon Chairperson, since the advent of democracy, government has been focused on building a united, nonracial and nonsexist, democratic and prosperous society. That is a significant departure of colonial apartheid government method which saw black people and members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, Plus, LGBTIQA+, community faced with discrimination, marginalisation and prosecution.

Hon Chairperson, to promote gender equality and eradicate gender-based violence, the democratic government has implemented several progressive policies and laws. The Constitution has been one of the pioneering documents in guiding and defining the parameters of the type of society we

should aspire to, including the protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The SA Constitution is regarded as one of the most progressive in the world with well-defined legal framework and social values. It is underpinned by human rights which condemns all forms of violence and discrimination. It safeguards the rights of those who have been historically disadvantaged and oppressed.

Hon Chairperson, South Africa has been a strong advocate of gender equality and the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community on the continent and throughout the world. South Africa is party to numerous global goals that govern its standards and participation in achieving a universal co-ordination efforts to reduce gender inequalities and empower women and members of the LGBTQIA+. South Africa’s active participation in advocating for gender equality on local and on international platforms has contributed to shaping global discourse on women empowerment and the LGBTQIA+. This has resulted in increased awareness campaigns, challenging stereotypes and advocating for the recognition of human rights for all regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Despite the progress thus far, hon Chairperson, there is still more work to be done in challenging and addressing the socioeconomic conditions that breed and perpetuate discrimination, sexism, gender-based violence and gender inequality. Poverty, unemployment and lack of access to education and other related socioeconomic factors are the issues that must be addressed.

Based on the principles and values of our democracy and the Constitution, which have developed a strong foundation for building a society based on equality and nondescrimination. Poverty is a creeping socioeconomic reality that limit people’s access to opportunities and quality to life. These limitations open up women and other marginalised groups, in particular to different forms of violence that range from psychological, mental, emotional, physical and economical.

There are numerous studies that affirm a collaboration between poverty and gender-based violence. According to the United Nations, UN, Women, particular groups of women including women and the girls living in poverty face multiple forms of discrimination and face increased risks of violence as a result.

Studies shows that poor girls are 2,5 times more likely to merry in childhood than those living in the wealthiest quantile. Women and girls living in poverty are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation including trafficking. Those who experience domestic or intimate partner violence have fewer options to leave violent relationships due to the lack of income and resources.

Hon members, women and other marginalised groups may face violence in a number of ways according to their socioeconomic status and sexual orientation such as financial abuse, stigma, exploitation, sexual harassment and sexual assault. Due to the limited access generated by poverty these groups may find themselves unable to access information and organisations that can assist them such as government programmes, shelters and legal aid. Therefore, victims stay trapped in violent situations because they are uninformed that there are alternative realities and processes available to assist them.

Furthermore, gender-based violence comes at a great cost of victims as the individuals might have psychological, mental, physical and other effects as a result of their abuse. That may impair their productivity and capacity to work or maintain

themselves financially. We need to expand social services for the provision of mental health and wellness programmes.

Addressing poverty and gender-based violence, necessitates a concerted and a co-ordinated effort on the part of all stakeholders of society. That includes communities, churches, government and civil society. Adequate resources must be allocated to ensure the implementation of sustainable programmes to reduce poverty in society. Run educational programmes on Gender-based Violence and Femicide and other related matters. Improve access to education and health care and streamline victim support services such as shelters and Legal Aid. By tackling poverty and gender-based violence, we can work together creating a more habitable and equal society for all.

The Department of Social Development is committed to delivering social protection services as part of its mandate and directing government efforts to create partnerships and empower marginalised groups and communities to take an active role in their own development. The department has undertaken various interventions that are concerned with preventing, identifying and addressing Gender-based Violence and Femicide

in communities and contributing to creating safe and secure communities for the LGBTQIA+ and other marginalised groups. For instance, in an effort to keep users safe, the department has created an application, App, called Bright Sky SA which enables users to determine whether they or someone they know is in an abusive relationship by filling a risk assessment form. One of the Bright Sky SA feature is a brief questioner that is used to identify various sorts of abuse and the many kids of support that are offered. It informs the user about the many types of gender-based violence and the different case studies. The App uses geolocation and deliver details on the department on the support services offered in South Africa, including a list of police stations, hospitals and NGOs available.

In addition to this, the department launched a Gender-based Violence Command Centre. It is a 24-hour, seven-day a week national call centre that offers professional assistance to victims of gender-based violence. Social workers and other professionals are employed at the centre and charged with answering and referring calls to relevant institutions such as directing callers to the SA Police Service, SAPS, and dispatching relevant help to assist gender-based violence

victims. This is important to improve accessibility by the public.

The department will be implementing prevention and the early intervention measures to cab social ills including Gender- based Violence and Femicide and substance abuse among children and young people in 30 campuses per year over the medium-term.

The department will further implement Pillar 4 which deals with response care, support and healing of the National Strategic Plan of Gender-based Violence and Femicide by training 45 Gender-based Violence and Femicide hot sports districts on the provision of psychosocial services.

The Department of Social Development also has a Victim Empowerment Programme which focusses on changing people’s attitude, practices and behaviours to promote the value and contribution of the Gender-based Violence and Femicide Command Centre. The initiative is cross-sectoral and cross departmental and is built on a solid collaboration of the government, NGOs, volunteers, the private sector and academic institutions. The programme emphasizes a victim central approach to crime and work to increase understanding of victim

concerns, increase resources, meet the needs of victims, encourage voluntarism and avoid secondary victimisation amongst other matters.

Therefore, as the ANC, we support Budget Vote No 19. I thank you. [Applause.]

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: House Chairperson, the NFP will support this budget vote tabled here today. Very important discussion

– social development, let us not forget the plight of the Palestinians, particularly children who have not seen their parents, some up 20 years while in detention without trail.

This is the plight of Palestinian women and children. Let us also not forget the in the 16 women in Palestine that have been raped by Israeli soldiers and more importantly not only raped but it was video recorded so that they could be blackmailed. And some people think it’s a joke. Some people think it’s ... shocking isn’t, shocking! People forget where they come from when they jump ship, yes but anyway.

Hon Minister, I want to start on a few things, very important things. And I think we’ve had his discussions before. You will

agree with me that there are many, many nongovernmental organizations, NGOs, billions of rands are changing hands every day. The question is what are they doing to save our women and children?

All I can see is that when there’s somebody raped, they are standing outside the courts with these billboards “No bail for rapists” but have they done anything, in the community knowing that something is going wrong? Nothing. So, I ask you to deal with this issue because there’s no oversight in the amount of money that comes in, particularly to NGOs and NPOs, non-profit organizations and their roles. Because they are supposed to be partners with us.

Very importantly, the socioeconomic condition under which we live. A good example is, I was in Kimberley the other day, 127 taverns, 64 bottle stores, now what do you expect? If you look at the level of alcohol ...and what is happening, politicians are the cause of it. Because liquor board give you licence to two o’clock, politicians give you to six ‘clock.

I ask you Minister to deal with this, I ask you to leave a legacy behind by introducing, I say it again Minister,

starting at school level. The problem must be started at school level to identify children that are coming from dysfunctional families. If we can do that and help them, we will create a better society in the future. That’s the only way we can do it. That’s my plea to you.

So, what I find is this that you need to work with safety ambassadors, social workers, and you know, and I was by the Department of Basic Education that we have social workers. When I took further, this what I find, there’s one social worker to the entire district, which you can’t cope at all.

Each school must have safety ambassadors to work with social workers, who must work those people in those communities.

Identify children that are coming from problem ... [Inaudible.] ... help them. So that we prevent them from becoming rapists, murderers and being part and parcel... I am running out of time. The NFP will support this budget vote.

Thank you very much.

Ms A L A ABRAHAMS: House Chairperson, the Department of Social Development budget vote, brings into question what measurable impact these multi-billion-rand budgets have on the ground.

Lifting the 18,2 million South Africans out of extreme poverty and reducing inequality.

Despite the portfolio committee’s continual requests since 2019 for impact reporting from the Department of Social Development, DSD, and its entities, we still only receive polished presentations, very often a contradiction to the lived realities on the ground. Instead, we told x number of youth attended a once off imbizo or youth camp in x number of provinces. Box ticked. Annual performance plan, APP, Target met. Job done. The DSD and the government have addressed the plight of the youth.

But because there is no follow up process on where in a year or two these young people end up; the question must be asked did the once off imbizo actually have an impact? When the facilitator said: stay in school and don’t do drugs. Did the child actually complete matric? Did the child not do drugs or join a gang or became a teen parent?

House Chairperson, news articles and research reports, and the like, all point to an increase in social ills. Teen pregnancy is on the increase. Children as young as nine are drug

addicts, gun runners for gangs, or sold into prostitution. Our secure child and youth care centres have never been fuller and the age of convicted and sentenced rapists and murderers, getting younger and younger.

There is no guarantee the billions spent are in fact having the intended impact because there is no follow up and more importantly no permanent presence for youth to return too. This is contra to the 12 permanent Western Cape government- funded youth cafes located throughout the province, providing youth with access to skills, personal development training as well as economic and social development opportunities. The youth café doors are always open and young people know exactly where to find them.

The impact of the National Development Agency also inspires little confidence, House Chairperson. A once respected institution, now a mere shadow of its former self. Doing so poorly that National Treasury and the Presidency considered removing the entity’s budget entirely.

The NDA spends 68% of its budget on employee salaries, 21% on admin costs and only 8% on delivering on its mandate:

strengthening civil society organisations, CSOs, involved in eradicating poverty. If the NDA was a private company, with little to show for its multi-million-rand annual budget, it would not exist. But this entity, and many more, continue as taxpayer funded places of employment for ANC cadres.

The DSD recently won an international Good Practice Award titled: “Gradual extension of social security coverage to vulnerable children”. But how does South Africa celebrate this award when there are still children dying the slow and violent death of malnutrition, scavenging in landfills, eating wildflowers and sand to survive? We all know, R500 a month for a household is absolutely nothing in this economic climate.

And I say household because that’s exactly what it’s spent on, never the child alone.

The DA has long called for the child support grant to be aligned with the food poverty line. An achievable goal if for one, the ANC Ministers and Deputies searched their souls for a shred of humility and compassion and let go of their excessive Cabinet perks.

How do orphaned children celebrate this award, when the Child Support Grant Top-Up, the solution to a foster care crisis created by the national government, still has no dedicated budget? Instead, this money is taken from savings from existing social grants.

Speaking about savings, House Chairperson, in 2022-23 DSD declared a total of R9,162 billion in savings. How can this department have savings when South Africans are suffering under job killing loadshedding and skyrocketing cost of living? Families facing eviction, are unable to afford their own homes, but they are forced to pay for ANC Ministers’ multiple homes.

Savings when nongovernmental organizations, NGOs, are underfunded yet expected to mend our broken communities. Savings when neglected children in abusive homes wait for a social worker who will never come to rescue them because there is no money to employ more.

Recently, DSD presented a costing, not a budget, costing that in order to fulfil the NDP Vision 2030 to reach 55 000 social work professionals, it will need approximately R9 billion. The

Adjusted Appropriation Bill bulldozed through this Parliament by the ANC’s majority, supported by ANC aligned parties, saw DSD’s R9,162 billion rand, which could have funded the employment of social workers or provided some food relief to households, shifted to Transportation network, Transnet, the failing South African Post Office, the Department of Defence, and to top it all off, R300 million shifted to the Department of Home Affairs for political party funding of which the ANC will receive the lion share. Every party and member of Parliament who voted in favour of these anti poor bills should hang their heads in shame.

In conclusion, House Chairperson, 23 years ago this department changed its name from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Social Development, but when 96,5% of the budget is self-spent on social grants, with little impact or social improvement on the ground, is it not still just, a social welfare department?

And with my few seconds Minister, I wait in anticipation to hear what Digital Satellite Television, DSTV, package, this new DSTV channel will be screened on and how the Minister proposes South African Social Security Agency, SASSA

beneficiaries will pay for a dish decoder in a monthly DSTV fee. Thank you, House Chairperson.

*Xitsonga:*

Man N K BILANKULU: Mutshamaxitulu, ndza khensa nkarhi lowu mi ndzi nyikeke wona. Eka Holobye wa hina na Xandla xa n’wina; eka vachaviseki hinkwenu lava mi nga kona; MaAfrika-Dzonga hinkwenu; ndza mi losa, I nhlekanhi. [Va hleka.]

Ndzi tsakile ku va xiphemu eka swivulavuri leswi nga kona. Ndzi rhandza ku vula leswaku hi ri ANC, hi seketela mpimanyeto lowu boxiweke namuntlha. Holobye, a ndzi tsakeli ku yi seketela ntsena, kambe ndzi twisisa nkoka lowu yi nga ta wu endla eka vaaki. Tanihi MuAfrika-Dzonga, ndzi twisisa swinene leswaku vanhu vo tala va hanya ehansi ka ntshikelelo na ku xaniseka lava va pfumalaka ku pfuniwa hi Ndzawulo ya Nhluvukiso wa Vaaki. Hikwalaho, ndzi rhandza ku vula leswaku n’wina Holobye na nhlangano wa ANC mi endla swilo swa kahle.

I nhlangano wa ANC wu ri woxe lowu tivaka na ku twisisa ku xaniseka ka vanhu vantima eka malembe yo tala. Hikwalaho, nhlangano lowu wa ha tinyiketerile ku pfuna vaaki ku yisa emahlweni. Muchaviseki Masango, mbyana yi vukula movha lowu

fambaka. Loko movha yi nga ri ku fambeni mbyana a yi vukuli. A swi hlamarisi leswi mi swi vulaka. Mi swi vula hi ku vona leswaku ANC yi le ku tirheni. Loko a yi nga ri ku tirheni a mi nga ta vula nchumu hikuva a mi ta va mi nga voni nchumu. Mi vulavurisa hi ku vona xan’wanchumu lexi endlekaka.

Lemukani leswaku ku na mindyangu yo tala leyi yi tinyungubyisaka hi ANC hikuva va pfuneka. Vaakatiko vo tala a va ta etlela va nga dyanga. Vana vo tala a va nga ta nghena xikolo kambe va le xikolweni sweswi hikokwalaho ka ANC. Holobye, mi karhi ku endla kahle, yisani emahlweni ntirho lowu wo saseka. [Va phokotela.]

*English:*

... [Inaudible.] ... civil society in the center of effort socioeconomic transformation. Our efforts of socioeconomic transformation are mainly underpinned by the principles of the reconstruction and recovery plan which is a direct response to economic challenges caused by, but not limited to COVID-19.

The plan is about the creation of a transformed inclusive economy.

In chanting the way forward, the ANC in its January 8th Statement, re-emphasised the notion of the social impact which places civil society organisations in the center of efforts for socioeconomic transformation. This further resonates with the National Development Plan which prescribes the harnessing of the energies of the people in growing inclusive economy, building capabilities, promoting leadership and partnership throughout society to attain a national democratic society with a reduced unemployment rate and alleviated poverty. Over the medium-term, the Department of Social Development aims to strengthen community engagement in 34 districts through implementing the community mobilisation and empowerment framework which promotes the use of the household and community profiling to inform service delivery and support provisions.

In order to meet the vision of a democratic society, the National Development Plan, NDP, made explicit reference to building the capacity of civil society through extensive development of human resource. It provides a central role for nonprofit organisation, a vibrant and diverse civil society in its important in consolidating and sustaining democracy, as well as holding government accountable. Therefore, it is

important that the civil society organisations are properly capacitated to meet the tasks.

The National Development Agency aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of single society organisation that provides services to poor communities. Since 1994, the government has involved civil society in various stages of policy development aimed at alleviating poverty and further building sustainable communities hence the government is committed to capacitating them. So, they play a substantive role. In the words of the revolutionary, Kofi Annan, I quote:

“If we are to make poverty history we must have the active participation of state, civil society organisation, the private sector, as well as individual volunteers.”

In building and solidifying the social compact, the ANC as the organisation committed to changing the lives of the impoverished. The government needs to continue with the work of concluding sectoral compact that will form pillars of the comprehensive social compact with all social partners with the aim of supporting the broad approach and principles of the economic reconstruction and recovery plan. This compact will

set out the obligations, commitments and trade-offs needed from the private sector organised labour and civil society to ensure effective social and economic recovery and transformation. Therefore, the ANC in its 55th Conference took a solution that an interministerial committee must be established in combat of the ensuring gender-based violence and femicide and other social ills, that this committee consider the role of civil society organisations motivated by the Medium-Term Strategic Framework.

The government departments and civil society organisation have developed the monitoring and evaluation framework and plan which is used by department in reporting progress on the implementation of the national strategic plan. The strategic objective of social transformation is to transform and build a new society that is peaceful, equal and just as envisaged in the strategic frameworks; the Freedom Charter ready to govern policy documents, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the National Development Plan Vision 2030, the Unites Nations, UN, agenda 2030 and Africa’s Agenda 2063.

The ANC takes a firm stand in fighting the social ills and building social compact, hence it has proposed strategic

interventions such as providing gender transformative training to address toxic masculinity in society, to address patriarchy and integrate positive masculinity, educate young people on ubuntu, diversity and inclusive society to combat project practices, explore the development of information technologies, IT applications and system to assist victims and survivors to call for help, upscale social behaviour, change programmes in dealing with gender-based violence and femicide, upscale the use of initiative initiation schools as a platform to educate boys about gender-based violence and femicide and introduce family programmes on gender-based violence and femicide and involved communities in dialogues.

In these interventions the role of nongovernmental organisations, NGOs, remains in the epicenter. Under the National Development Agency, civil society organisations have succeeded in mobilising communities to take charge of their own development beyond the political boundaries. This has been achieved through activities like needs and beneficial identification, project implementation and fundraising.

Despite this success, civil society experiences challenges in ensuring that their programmes are effective and sustainable. These challenges include limited funding, lack of various

skills including management skills, ... [Inaudible.] ... skills resource mobilisation and accountability which therefore informs the National Development Agency priorities for the 2023-2024 financial year which sets to align key international and national frameworks.

The National Development Agency has a vision of developing a society free from poverty. This vision requires all developmental interventions provided by government institution, the private sector and civil society organisation to help a co-ordination and integration mechanism. In order to ensure long lasting impact of programmes, there is a great need for strengthening the organisational management and administrative capacity of the civil society organisation. It is generally accepted that local organisation capacity is recognised as key for developmental effectiveness and empowerment of the poor.

The ANC government is a government that believes in the bottom-up approach in solving our social ills. Therefore, it is paramount that all spheres of our society are well capacitated to play a meaningful role in building an ethical and incapable developmental state. The role of the National

Development Agency within the society development sector is to provide developmental programmes and projects that support and provide a continuum for poverty relief for most, especially the social grant beneficiaries. This includes self-help developmental interventions that bring income to these individuals and families through programmes like the Extended Public Works Programme and other related programmes.

The National Development Agency, therefore, plays the role to increase the number of civil society organisations and that have access to development intervention aimed at developing their capacities to efficiently manage mobilised resources and sustain themselves. The Department of Social Development has taken a firm stance with its social policy and integrated service delivery programmes in creating an enabling environment for nonprofit organisations and increase public trust and confidence in them through effective and fair regulations.

In conclusion, we call on all of you to play an imperative role in fortifying the social compact. Advancing the developmental stage through society organisations should be the epicenter of this revolutionary neighbouring. Together, we

can build a society that is free from social ills, gender- based violence and femicide, drugs and substance abuse. The ANC urge the national government to take urgent steps to enhance the crime fighting capacity of law enforcement agencies by increasing the number of police personnel to match our country’s population increase. In line with the international norms, urgent steps must also be taken to rebuild the capacity of law enforcement agencies and other institutions of the criminal justice system to make the work of civil society organisation easier.

*Xitsonga:*

Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu. Ha wu seketela mpimanyeto lowu hikuva hi na leswi hi lavaka ku endla swona hi wona.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson, firstly, I really would like to thank all the members who have supported the budget. I also wish to thank the members for the contribution to what’s helping us to improve as a Department of Social Development and government in general. It is in our interest that we must continue doing the best we can, to improve our system so that we can deliver better to our people.

Regarding the communications, I heard some noises there about the DSD TV. The portfolio committee has been on numerous occasions complained about the lack of communication within the DSD portfolio and so the truth of the matter is that government cannot afford a time and production cost for our content through outsourced communication platforms. Bottom line, it’s time we took charge of the narrative ourselves, because we are the ones that do the work on the ground and yourselves, as members. We will follow you and make sure that the issues that were raised are also played on the platform. This platform also enables government to control that narrative, as I said, and the DSDTV is over the top platform, which is normally called OTP. It provides the government with an invaluable opportunity to talk to its beneficiaries at a reduced cost. I also heard that the issue was about the money and the platform creates internal capacity and skills to produce DSD-related content.

It’s important for us to communicate our content and it’s not propaganda, by the way. People say propaganda is something else that is developed maybe to try and cover, but also, it’s a wrong notion this thing of thinking propaganda is always about the negative. We, as the government of the African

National Congress, have been paying social grants from the time that we came into government, and there shouldn’t be any illusion about it that we are about to cut, or we are about to reduce. In fact, if we were to look at it, we’ve been doing our best to try and increase the social grants in the best way, and that we can.

I’d also like to indicate hon Mvana, thank you for your comments. We will indeed improve on toll freeline to ensure that we have better access to our services offered and I have tasked the department, together with the agencies, to work on a single line that is more reliable and real time. There’s no doubt that social grants have also been one of our country’s most effective poverty alleviation programs and it will continue to be implemented. There’s no policy decision to take away the grants.

In fact, I'm not standing here and presenting a budget for elections. That must be made clear from the beginning. From the time that this government, ... If I look at all the Ministers who’ve been here before me, they laid the basis for what we have today. They built the foundation from which we are working, and so every year when we come here and present

the budget, we’re not presenting a budget for elections. We are presenting budgets that will help us service our people and give them the best that we can. I know that in many instances, there are problems sometimes with the budget, the expenditure, the oversight thereof, and there’s also corruption somewhere in the middle. My task and the task of the Deputy Minister and everyone is to make sure that the money is spent properly.

Hon Breedt, we are working with the Postbank on the challenges that affect our payment of the grants and hon Van der Merwe, I'm sure you may not have had the time to look at the developments in Gauteng province regarding the NPOs. We were the first to jump and say can we have a conversation? This is not going to work for us, and we engaged particularly the MEC and the premier. I think, we listened to civil society organisations and the NPO’s because they also stood up and said you cannot do this to us. We cannot afford to take away money from NPO’s. We cannot afford that because not only are they an extension in a way, because we give them the resources. We believe that those are the people who are on day-to-day basis on the ground, who should be working with local government structures.

Hon Kwankwa, thank you and other members for supporting our budget vote. I can assure you that we are working on developing operationalising, the national integrated social Protection information system, known better as Nispis with the view to derive the value of integrating service delivery data which will speak to digital profiling.

I think, Sassa has been a very good example of how, when we use technology and I know at the beginning people were saying hey, but how are the people in the rural areas going to be able to apply? Right at the beginning, we had 15 million applications. That, then showed us that it is possible for us to reach people, but it’s our responsibility also to make sure that the gadgets, to make sure that those that give the data and we all work with them. When data is not available to people, it becomes very difficult for them.

I was shocked when I was looking at the figures of the rich of telephony and the gadgets in the hands of people in the country runs up to 22 million and that to us is teaching us a lesson that we need to look at that and what kind of gadgets do they have. How do we make it easy for us?

Hon Sukers, you may be aware that we have child ambassadors across all provinces who represent children in their provinces. Even now, during child Protection Week, they were engaged and hon Hlongo, that we are indeed trying to reach all tertiary institutions. That’s what we did, yesterday. Also was part of the program of reaching out and to tertiary institutions. Yesterday, there was a launch of the assist app where students can get help on the use of drugs and alcohol and that there must be able to thank the woman who stood up there yesterday and answered all the questions, including how many times she takes alcohol. Has she ever taken drugs? It was shocking to sit there and listen. But it was an example to the rest of the students that were there.

Hon Abrams, I'm confident that the NDA will do lot better this year, especially with the new dynamic board in place, as I indicated earlier on. We have uMama Ruth Bhengu. She takes no prisoners that one. We are working on the turnaround strategy and will be augmenting the budget. But also, I would like to thank hon Shaik Imam and the members also do call us and we try, by all means, to respond to their calls.

Regarding the homelessness in South Africa, I’m hoping that the document that we have developed as a document, it’s research that was done. I’m hoping that members can take that and look at it and improve it because we had an experience during COVID-19 where all the homeless people needed to be taken somewhere. Post COVID, they are back on the streets and even the few services that we were giving to them, we didn’t continue them. We have to continue that because those people are out on the street, not by choice. They are out on the streets due to the circumstances.

Well, yes, the municipalities are supposed to take responsibility. Unfortunately, sometimes they don’t. And during COVID-19, it became clear that the homeless are even homeless within our own space. We need to take responsibility for that. With regards to the families, we are also responsible, as everyone is aware. We are responsible for the programs that are related to taking care of families. But again, I'd like to say that we cannot do this alone. We have to do this collectively.

Lastly, Chair, I do want to highlight that we will continue to address the schedule of gender-based violence and femicide,

substance abuse and alcohol abuse, and I fully agree, the number of taverns ... I fully agree, it is us, the government also that give these licenses. We must be careful where we ... In fact, most of these taverns in our communities, are found around the churches and yet, we give the licenses. The employment of social workers, improvement on the effectiveness of the NPO’s working with strategic partners, I do want here to take an opportunity and thank all strategic partners from churches to business, to all those who step up in supporting us, especially during the times of disaster. I wish to thank all those who are always with the with us and also to indicate that, by the way, we want to work with them closely so that they appreciate and understand that DSD in its portfolio, it never leaves the community, so some come and then they bring whatever they bring and then they disappear. We don't leave the community. Oh sorry, I’m saying I have 47 seconds. Thank you. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

*IsiXhosa:*

Kuphele ixesha lam, enkosi.

*English:*

The HOUSE CHAIPERSON (Mr M G Mahlaule): Hon members, you are reminded that the House Hybrid plenary to debate Parliament's budget vote will take place at 1400 in the Good Hope Chamber. That concludes the debate and the business of this mini plenary session.

The mini plenary rose at 11:59.