**Budget Vote 19: DSD 2022/05/13**

Voorsitter, die departement en sy entiteite was ‘n sleutel departement gedurende die afgelope ramptoestand. Die departement was nog altyd veronderstel om die lig aan die einde van ‘n baie donker tonnel vir ons mees behoeftiges in Suid-Afrika te wees, maar die realiteit is dat hierdie departement en sy entiteite die mense gefaal het.

Die bevindinge van die OG is nie nuwe nuus of enigsins eers verstommend nie. Dit bevestig egter net wat die opposisie van die begin af gesê het.

Alhoewel dit nie nuwe nuus is nie, lees dit soos ‘n Stephen King riller.

Under the various headings: Financial Management and health, Compliance management, Human Resources, Procurement and contract management the findings are more damning than the next. What is of specific concern is the material losses from non-compliance with legislation, fraudulent transactions as well as Irregular, Fruitless and Wasteful expenditure.

Furthermore, the inability to finalise investigations in a timely manner has resulted in a failure to implement consequence management against those who were responsible for incurring irregular expenditure and fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

Sassa apparently recovered R12.6 million from 3 268 public servants who illegally received grants. However, there has thus far been no consequences for state employees who have been found to receive grants they did not qualify for.

This is a disgrace and I would urge the minister to not just pay lip service, but to take action.

A start can also be the filling of key posts, such as the position of the director-general of the department. Whether the Acting DG is doing a good job or not, is not the discussion. The fact of the matter is that the department needs stability. A permanent DG will be a start.

Mother Teresa once said: “We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked, and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty.”

And that chairperson, brings me to a matter that I feel the minister needs to address today and that is the court case between SA Childcare and the department regarding the payment of conditional ECD grants.

R15 per child per day. That is what the grant consists of… These are children that are orphans or have absolutely no other source of nutrition and care but through these centres, they have to be approved to receive this through a stringent process provided for in the Framework to DORA. In these instances they were approved in 2019 already.

Vulnerable children who are dependent on these ECD’s and this grant for food, were deprived thereof during the worst of times – the pandemic. The grant was rather utilised to procure PPE’s than provide food to these children.

The end result of the initial judgement was that Judge Jansen Van Nieuwenhuizen found the Minister and eight MEC’s in breach of their statutory duties prescribed in DORA by failing to pay the funds allocated to the children as well as in breach of their constitutional duties prescribed in section 28(1)(c) of the Constitution.

Instead of adhering to the judgment, the Minister and MEC’s (after conceding on no less than 10 occasions that the money is due and owing) appealed against the order. Leave to appeal was granted in December of 2020.

Fast forward 18 months, to a notice for hearing, a new directive to argue whether the matter has not become academic in nature and still no officials have been brought to book and the most vulnerable are still suffering.

This matter needs to be resolved in the interest of the children and the ECD’s.

Voorsitter, dis egter ‘n skreiende skande dat vir meer as nege jaar daardie toelaag stagneer het op R15 per kind per dag. Terwyl die regering geld mors op duur funksies, hotelverblyf, VIP-protection en besigheidsklas vlugte vir ministers, kry hierdie mees kwesbare kinders slegs R15 per dag vir kos, klere & skooltoebehore.

As die departement nie gaan begin fokus op kinders en die ontwikkeling van kinders nie sal ons ‘n welsynstaat bly.

Maar ek sluit af:

Die probleem lê by die ANC. Want die ANC pak alles ideologies aan en verkies om die mense afhanklik te hou en tot en met die minister en haar departement nie hierdie kopskuif maak nie, gaan Suid-Afrika nie net ‘n gefaalde staat wees nie, maar ‘n Welsynstaat bly.