

## POLICY BRIEF: QUALITY SOCIAL SERVICES FOR ALL JULY 2011

### **Perspective**

A fundamental paradigm shift has taken place in terms of the approach towards social welfare services in South Africa. Welfare has transitioned, with social inclusivity as its cornerstone, to developmental social welfare. The key features of this developmental social welfare approach are rights-based, integrated social and economic development, participation and citizenship and partnerships. (Patel, 2008; Patel and Midgley, 2004) This approach attempts to transcend remedial efforts and seeks to bring about a balance between 'rehabilitation, promotion, prevention and developmental efforts.' (Patel, 2008) In order to adequately address the scourge of poverty and inequity and make a meaningful contribution to its alleviation, a social-development approach is needed. (Lombard, 2007)

A compelling need currently exists for the development of a legislative framework for social welfare and development services in South Africa. Thousands of civil society organisations provide core services in this arena, providing and contributing to critical care for our people and communities. Right now, there is an absence of legislation regarding the functioning of the sector as a whole, including the partnership between government and non-profit organisations which is crucial to service delivery. It is impossible to suggest that a developmental state can be built in the absence of visionary legislation that defines the human development objectives of the country.

### **A brief background**

Historically welfare services were racially fragmented with an urban and gender bias. Past welfare legislation and policies were grossly inequitable and ineffective in addressing poverty equally, leaving a critical mass, largely Black African, in the poverty trap bereft of basic human needs. Subsequently the apartheid legacy created a deeply divided society sustained by a system of separate and unequal development and segregation in almost all spheres of socio-economic, political and cultural life.<sup>6</sup>

The pre-1994 legislative framework that governed the relationship specifically between social service organisations and government was set out in two Apartheid laws - the National Welfare Act of 1978 and

---

<sup>6</sup> Prof. B. C. Chikulo, Development Policy in South Africa: A Review, DPMN Bulletin: Volume X, Number 2, April 2003

the Fundraising Act of 1978. Given the abuse of these Acts to entrench the Apartheid system and to suppress anti-government activities, all but a few clauses were quickly repealed after the coming of democracy. While this action removed major distortions in, and abuses of, the sector, there remains an absence of appropriate legislation to clarify the responsibilities of the social welfare sector, to identify the responsibilities of the three spheres of government in this regard, to guide the relationship between the Department of Social Development and non-profit organisations, and to provide for the funding of these organisations and their projects. Also absent is proper provision for the registration of social welfare organisations - as opposed to registration for NPOs in general via the Non-Profit Organisations Act, which covers civil society organisations in every sector. It does not address itself to the planning needs of the social welfare sector, or to its need for specific controls to address fraud and to protect vulnerable groups. In short, this proposed legislation picks up from where the White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997 left off.

Whilst some of the post 1994 policies have made great progress in terms of relieving poverty and delivering basic services, the twin scourge of poverty and unemployment still persist. This begs the question of what more needs to be done and deeper research into areas of excellence and failures. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) highlights an important collective strategy in dealing with poverty and avers that 'equitable social development is the foundation of economic prosperity, and economic growth is necessary for social development.' This means that social and economic development goals are mutually re-enforcing and inextricably linked. *Thus social welfare would require an integrated and comprehensive system of social services, and without social investment, economic growth would be compromised.*<sup>7</sup>

Given that government has not moved forward on that landmark policy proposal, it is vital for our ongoing developmental state agenda, that we immediately revisit the key outcomes of the 1997 process and move forward with urgency to ensure we fulfil our Constitutional mandate to build a better life for all.

---

<sup>7</sup> White Paper of Social Welfare, 1997, Republic of South Africa

### **The basic proposal for an overarching framework**

Building from the White Paper, the development of an appropriate legal framework could have a huge and positive impact on the social welfare and development sector as a start and contribute to the overall objective of building a developmental state. Such a framework could address areas such as:

- Defining the scope of the social service, development and welfare responsibilities of national, provincial and local government,
- In relation to a developmental state agenda and the realisation of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**,
- And framed by the imperatives of addressing the ever increasing poverty and inequality in South Africa **with**,
- Cognisance of the economic growth required to sustain the current level of social security we provide.
- It will also provide a holistic legislative framework for the location of the **National Development Agency (NDA)**, the **National Lottery Distribution Fund (NLDTF)** and specific allocations from **Official development assistance (ODA)** and corporate social investments, congruent with the developmental state agenda and,
- Ensure maximisation of the budgetary imperatives for such earmarked development funds.
- Combined social and economic goals geared toward broader developmental goals
- Continual building of research and evaluation research capacity on impact assessment of social service interventions and implementation of new social policy
- Setting clear parameters for the partnership between government and NPOs in service delivery, including the manner in which such organisations are to be funded and developing partnerships for graduation of social security grantees.
- Statutory provision for genuinely consultative processes between government and civil society for the planning and implementation of services.
- A framework for ongoing monitoring, evaluation and constant service innovation in relation to meeting the needs of a developmental state.

- Finally, such a framework provides a valuable tool for lessons of managing and implementing large scale state driven developmental initiatives, that can be leveraged across other sectors such as the environment, tourism etc.
- Such a legislative framework should be designed to incorporate and consolidate several current 'homeless' policy imperatives.

### **A way forward**

The White Paper for Social Welfare laid a solid foundation for further development of social and development services. Given the critical services provided by this sector to the most vulnerable people in our society, there is an urgent need to develop a new and better legislative environment for the social welfare and development sector. The mandate of the social and development services sector is also continuously expanding to incorporate new challenges such as the achievement of the MDGs.

This proposed legislation is vital in strengthening key partnerships between government, the private sector and civil society. It would provide a synergised approach towards the building and sustenance of our envisioned development state, as each sector clearly understands their role within the broader vision. This collective vision would give much needed impetus to the vulnerable sectors of our society and provides a solid understanding that our development path must be built on coherent and collaborated efforts. We also re-iterate our call to government to work with the civil society sector to take forward this important development imperative for South Africa.

---

For more information about the *Quality Social Services for all* initiative or to request a copy of the current **Background Paper**, please send an email to [myvoice@forum.org.za](mailto:myvoice@forum.org.za)

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ORGANISATIONS

The National Welfare Forum (**NWF**) is a membership-based organisation with constituent bodies and/or partner organisations in each province of South Africa. We strive to engage constructively with government, labour and business in order to develop, monitor and implement social service and development policies and programmes that contribute to building a great country.

The members of the NWF are predominantly community based organisations, providing direct services in the fields of home-based care, early childhood development, psycho-social support, services to people with disabilities, support to women who are survivors of gender based violence, providers of social service information through community based advice offices, we act as enablers of positive sport and culture based activities for young people and various other support services on a needs driven basis.

The beneficiaries of these services are 80% black, predominantly female, in the LSM 1 to 4 band and have an educational level peaking at grade 12. The remaining 20% of beneficiaries are mostly people in long-term care facilities such as hospices for people living with AIDS, old age homes, care centres for people with severe physical and intellectual disabilities.

The annual members meetings and the resolutions that emerge from that process, serve as a record of the deliberations of representatives of the 3500 member organisations of the NWF and thus are the views and opinions of the largest number of social service and development delivery workers and organisations in the country. In short, the resolutions reflect what the people doing the work on the ground have to say about the policies and programmes of government and how these affect their ability to do their work. The NWF develops policy, discussion and position papers that reflect these resolutions and works to engage government, business and labour in the process to find innovative ways to help poor and marginalised people to access and enjoy their socio-economic rights as enshrined in the Freedom Charter and Constitution.

The NWF and its members participate in various rights based initiatives, including the promotion and development of comprehensive social security systems, engagements with international rights instruments such as the ICESCR and various local and international campaigning initiatives.

---

## THE NWF HAS FORMAL WORKING AGREEMENTS WITH:

### South African National NGO Coalition (SANGOCO)

<http://www.ngopulse.org/press-release/south-africa-s-leading-ngo-coalitions-tie-knot>

### National Coalition of Social Services (NACOSS)

<http://www.forum.org.za/Forum-Network-Partner-NACOSS>

### Global Call to Action Against Poverty in South Africa (GCAP-SA)

<http://www.whiteband.org>

The NWF works in partnership with **CORE**, **CAFSA**, **SANGONeT**, **CIVICUS** and the **LRC** on a project to understand and improve the funding flows to civil society in South Africa. This collective works in partnership with **CDRA**, **SCAT**, **REAP** and **Inyathelo** who are engaged in similar work. The NWF also works in partnership with the **Black Sash**, **SPII** the **SACC**, **SSPAN**, **ACCESS**, **Amnesty SA** and various other partners on project specific initiatives in accord with its mandate.

The NWF is a member of **CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation**

---

### Contact Details

Telephone: 011 482 3708  
Fax: 011 482 6941  
Email: [reception@forum.org.za](mailto:reception@forum.org.za)  
POST: P O Box 4025, Johannesburg, 2000  
Physical: 14 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Melville, Johannesburg, 2192  
Web: [www.forum.org.za](http://www.forum.org.za)

### Key Contact persons

Mrs. Beulah Lumkwana – National Chairperson - Tel: 041 582 1592 or Mobile: 082 200 3735  
Mr. Lion Phasha – Quality Social Services Campaigner – Tel: 011 482 3708 or Mobile: 072 594 3117  
Mrs. Zama Mabaso – NWF Chairperson to the JSC – Tel: 031 202 8987 or Mobile: 082 200 4043  
Mr. Rajesh Latchman – National Coordinator – Tel: 011 482 3708 or Mobile: 083 443 0227



[www.forum.org.za](http://www.forum.org.za)

Making a positive impact on social welfare policy  
and programmes