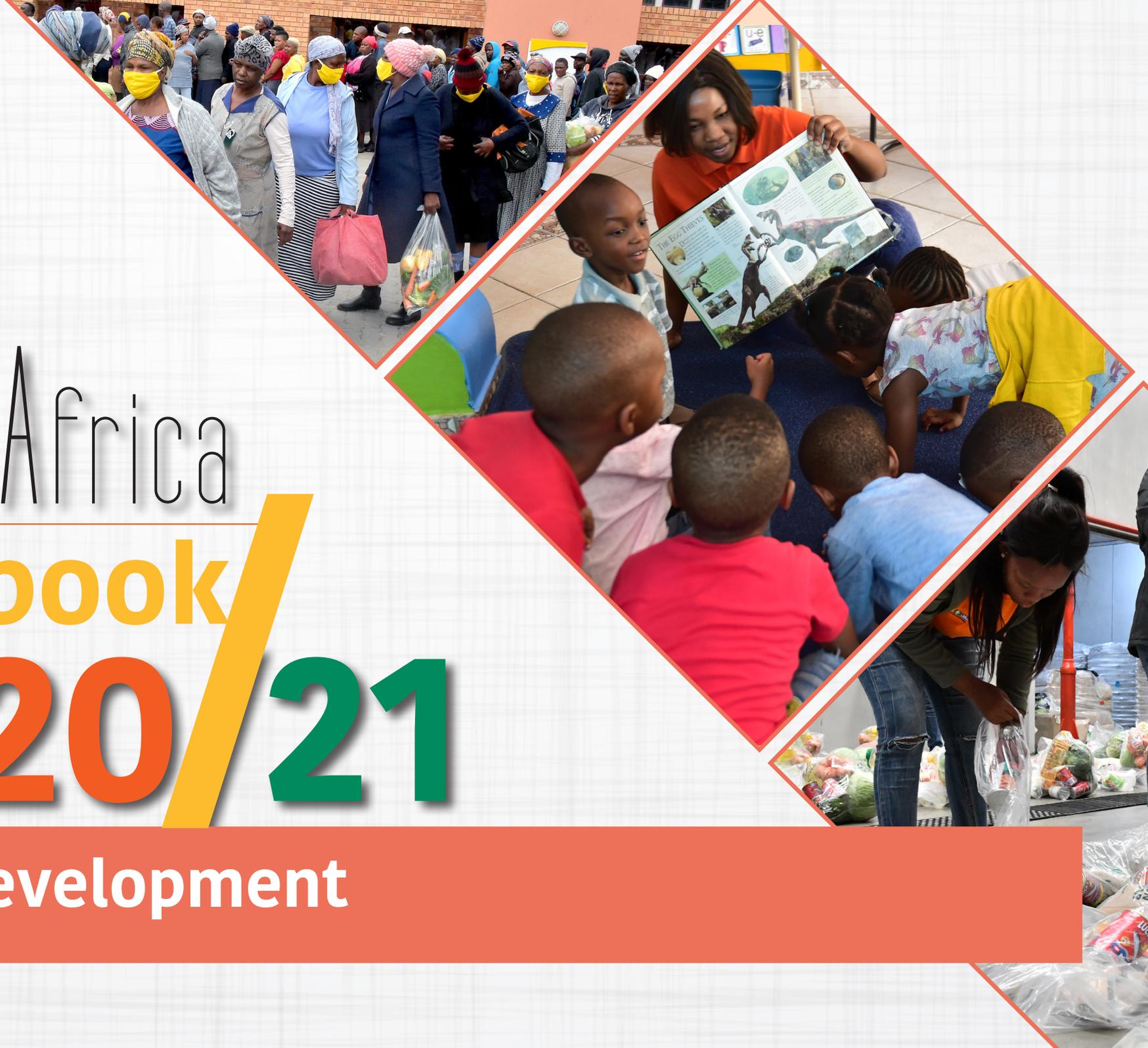


South Africa Yearbook 2020/21

Social Development



Social Development

The Department of Social Development (DSD) provides social protection services and leads government's efforts to forge partnerships through which vulnerable individuals, groups become capable and active participants in the development of themselves and society. The mission is to transform society by building conscious and capable citizens through the provision of comprehensive, integrated and sustainable social development services.

The National Development Plan (NDP) acknowledges the need to address the critical challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality to improve short-term and long-term prospects of current and future generations. In its efforts to give expression to this guiding policy, the DSD aims to improve quality of life for poor and vulnerable people and, in so doing, contributes to Priority 3 (consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality basic services) and Priority 6 (a capable, ethical and developmental state) of government's 2019 – 2024 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). Over the medium term, the DSD will focus on increasing the provision of social income support to poor and vulnerable people to improve their quality of life; developing policies, frameworks, and norms and standards to create a functional, efficient and integrated social development sector; and addressing social ills to empower individuals, families and communities. The DSD will also seek to improve policy and legislation governing the social development sector, and ensure that it is consistently applied across all provinces.

South Africa has made good progress in building social cohesion and promoting a new single national identity. The biggest barrier to increasing social cohesion is the remaining inequality in society, which needs to be attended to.

More than half of all households in South Africa benefit from government's social assistance programme. Comprehensive social security alleviates and reduces poverty, vulnerability, social exclusion and inequality through a comprehensive social protection system. Empowering young people, women, people with disabilities and old people helps rebuild families and communities.

Welfare services create and provide social protection to the most vulnerable of society, through the delivery of social welfare services via provincial government and non-profit organisation (NPO) structures.

Social income support to the poor and vulnerable

The Social Assistance Programme is an important lever in government's strategy to tackle poverty and inequality. Over the medium term, the DSD will continue to use this lever to provide direct income support to the elderly, children, war veterans and people with disabilities. The number of social grant beneficiaries is expected to increase from 18.2 million in 2020/21 to 19.3 million in 2023/24, accounting for an estimated 95% (R606.9 billion) of the DSD's budget. Despite the projected decrease in spending on social grants, amounting to R36 billion over the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period due to the Cabinet-approved reductions, social grants are expected to be extended to 300 000 additional beneficiaries per year. To administer social grants, the DSD expects to transfer R22.5 billion over the medium term to the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), accounting for an estimated 3.5% of total expenditure.

In working towards the ultimate goal of universal access to quality early childhood development (ECD) services, R3.5 billion is allocated as a conditional grant to provincial DSD over the MTEF period. It is estimated that through the conditional grant, provincial departments will be able to increase the subsidy rate from R17 per child per day in 2020/21 to R17.50 per child per day in 2023/24, and increase the number of children subsidised from 668 518 in 2020/21 to 717 767 in 2023/24. Work is under way to facilitate the transfer of the ECD function to the Department of Basic Education by 1 April 2022.

The DSD plans to complete and table extensive policy proposals on social security reform over the MTEF period, such as augmenting the child support grant benefit for orphaned children living with relatives; expanding social assistance coverage; and designing an institutional structure for a coherent, efficient and sustainable social security system. In collaboration with other government departments and social partners, the DSD will also assess the feasibility of a basic income grant. For these activities, expenditure in the Social Security Policy Development subprogramme is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 7.8%, from R54.4 million in 2020/21 to R68.1 million in 2023/24.

Developing policies, frameworks, and norms and standards for an enhanced social development sector

The transformation and standardisation of social welfare services will continue to be a priority over the period ahead through the development and coordination of overarching policies, legislative frameworks, and norms and standards that promote defined, integrated, quality-driven, professional and accountable service delivery. This includes finalising a second amendment to the Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005), to enable government social workers to render adoption services; drafting a bill for social service practitioners to ensure the delivery of professional and accountable social services through the effective regulation of social service practice; revising the *1997 White Paper on Social Welfare*, which is expected to lead to the development of a draft social development Bill and the National Community Development Policy Framework; and implementing the Social Development Sector Funding Policy and accompanying guidelines to streamline the prioritisation and funding of welfare services across provinces, including for services delivered by NPOs.

This policy development will be supported through medium-term allocations in the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme and the Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery programme. Expenditure in the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme is set to decrease from R1.8 billion in 2020/21 to R1.6 billion in 2023/24 as a result of one-off allocations related to the Presidential Employment Intervention in 2020/21. This includes allocations of R380 million through the ECD Grant to provide support to 83 333 ECD-related workers, and R76 million to extend the contracts of 1 809 social workers employed to provide psychosocial support to individuals and families affected by COVID-19.

Reducing social ills and empowering individuals, families and communities

Violence against women and children continues to affect the well-being of people, families and communities. Its prevalence requires a concomitant response from government, civil society organisations and broader society. To address this social ill, the DSD will use an allocation of R398.1 million over the medium

term to employ and sustain the employment of 200 social workers in areas where they are most needed. This allocation previously focused on providing scholarships to social work students and has been shifted from the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme to the provincial equitable share. In addition, R315.9 million is shifted from the national budget to provinces to continue supporting implementing agencies in the delivery of programmes focused on addressing social and structural drivers of HIV, sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis (TB) and gender-based violence (GBV).

The DSD plans to design a standardised welfare package to improve the quality of services offered and adequately respond to an increasing number of reported social problems. The package will include essential minimum psychosocial support, and norms and standards for substance abuse, violence against women and children, and other problems affecting families and communities. Spending for this work is in the HIV and AIDS subprogramme, which has a budget of R93.1 million over the MTEF period, in the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme.

Addressing social ills such as GBV, HIV and AIDS

The work of the Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support programme aims to build the capacity of social service practitioners to enable them to provide psychosocial support in areas such as HIV and AIDS prevention, and the fight against GBV. These activities are mainly carried out by the HIV and AIDS subprogramme, which has a budget of R74.1 million over the medium term; and the Social Crime Prevention and Victim Empowerment subprogramme, with a budget of R225.4 million over the same period.

Additional measures, such as psychosocial support through social workers and support to shelters, are provided by provincial departments. Funds for food relief, HIV and AIDS, and behaviour change non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were shifted to provinces from 2020/21.

Legislation and frameworks

Several pieces of legislation determine the mandate of the DSD:

- the Children's Act of 2005, which sets out principles relating to the care and protection of children, and defines parental responsibilities and rights. It deals with ECD drop-in centres

and early intervention; children in alternative care such as foster care, child and youth care centres; and the adoption of children;

- the NPOs Act, 1997 (Act 71 of 1997), which establishes an administrative and regulatory framework within which NPOs can conduct their affairs, and provides for their registration by the DSD;
- the Older Persons Act, 2006 (Act 13 of 2006), which establishes a framework for empowering and protecting older people, and promoting and maintaining their status, rights, well-being, safety and security. It provides for older people to enjoy good quality services while staying with their families and in their communities for as long as possible. It also makes provision for older people to live in residential care facilities;
- the Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act, 2008 (Act 70 of 2008), which regulates substance abuse services and facilities;
- the Social Assistance Act, 2004 (Act 13 of 2004), which provides a legislative framework for providing social assistance. The Act sets out the different types of grants payable, as well as their qualifying criteria;
- the Social Service Professions Act, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978), which provides for the regulation of social service professionals;
- the *1997 White Paper for Social Welfare* sets out the principles, guidelines, policies and programmes for developmental social welfare in South Africa. It provides the foundation for social welfare in the post-1994 era;
- the *1998 White Paper on Population Policy for South Africa* is aimed at promoting the sustainable development of all South Africans by integrating population issues with development planning in all spheres of government and all sectors of society; and
- the *2015 White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* focuses on putting in place measures to reduce the exclusion and inequality experienced by persons with disabilities. This includes contributing towards fighting poverty among people with disabilities and their families, and providing policy guidelines on building capacity in the public sector to deliver equitable and accessible services to them.

Budget

For the 2020/21 financial year, the DSD had a budget reduction

of R15.48 billion, from R197.72 billion to R182.24 billion. However, when National Treasury presented the supplementary budget in response to COVID-19, the department received an additional R25.5 billion. Consequently, the annual budget of the DSD was readjusted to R223.192 billion for the financial 2020/21). The increase was caused by budget reallocations to three budget items:

- social assistance grants: R15 417 million;
- ECD conditional grants: R64.5 million; and
- operational funding: R56 million.

Expenditure is expected to decrease at an average annual rate of 2.2%, from R230.8 billion in 2020/21 to R216.1 billion in 2023/24. This is mainly due to a decrease in the social grant budget following the cessation of social assistance for the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/21 wherein an additional R32.8 billion was allocated, and Cabinet-approved reductions on social grants. However, to accommodate for the extension of the special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant, an additional R2.8 billion was allocated in 2020/21 as a direct charge for grant payments in February and March 2021.

Early Childhood Development Employment Stimulus Relief Fund (ECD-ESRF)

As part of relief measures to cushion the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ECD, the DSD was expected to use R496 million to assist the sector, which was amongst the hardest hit. The ECD-ESRF is part of sustaining and creating employment opportunities in the sector, in light of the high unemployment rate and job losses caused by the pandemic. This followed a proposal made by the DSD to National Treasury to access funding from the Presidential Employment Stimulus package for the ECD sector.

The proposal focused on four interrelated policy imperatives, including employment protection in the ECD sector, employment creation, containing the spread of COVID-19 and registration roll out for ECD programmes. Through the fund, ECDs will be better placed to survive the risk of permanent closure, and will be able to cover financial costs, including the payment of employees' salaries.

The fund was intended for all types of ECD programmes, including centre and non-centre-based programmes. Organisations that run, manage or oversee multiple centre- and non-centre-based ECD services were also eligible to apply. In addition, the DSD has launched the Vhangasali Programme to

encourage ECD centres to formalise themselves by registering with the department. This initiative is aimed at ensuring that informal and unregistered ECDs qualify to receive government support. Another important aspect about the programme is for ECDs to share information with the DSD through assessment forms which can be accessed from the provincial departments. This will ensure that the unregistered and partially registered ECDs comply with the norms and standards, and receive assistance from government.

South Africa will host the 5th International Conference on the Eradication of Child Labour from 2 to 4 May 2022. The conference is convened every three years under the leadership of the International Labour Organisation. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was postponed from 2021 to 2022.

The conference is expected to deliberate on the global efforts to eradicate child labour. Member states will get an opportunity to reflect on their respective interventions to stop child labour in their countries. South Africa has a child labour programme of action which provides the country's roadmap towards eliminating child labour.

Entities

National Development Agency

The primary focus of the agency is to contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to civil society organisations to implement development projects in poor communities. The agency recognises the massive responsibility it has to alleviate hardship in the face of the unrelenting challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which has damaged the health and livelihoods of millions. By forging sustainable partnerships with other government departments, the private sector and international funding agencies, the agency aims to raise R105 million over the MTEF period to support its efforts to mitigate the enduring effects of the pandemic on poverty-stricken communities.

These funds will be used to supplement the agency's total budget, which is expected to decrease at an average annual rate of 1.4%, from R232.2 million in 2020/21 to R222.3 million in 2023/24. A total of R41.7 million over the medium term is allocated for funding to civil society organisations for implementing development interventions to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through its efforts to improve the regulatory compliance of civil society organisations, the agency aims to strengthen their institutional capacity in areas such as financial and general management, legal compliance, constitution drafting, business plan development and resource mobilisation so that they are better equipped to provide services to poor communities. In this regard, a targeted 6 800 organisations over the MTEF period will receive support from the agency to meet the registration and reporting requirements of the NPO Act of 1997. To this end, R11.9 million is allocated over the period ahead.

The agency will endeavour to conduct focused research to produce empirical evidence that influences and informs the country's development trajectory. It aims to produce 10 research publications over the medium term, and host dialogues and information exchange sessions to debate the findings, implications for development policy and plausible solutions for the developmental challenges affecting the country. The agency will partner with reputable research and academic institutions to produce cutting-edge research that provides a basis for development policy. The budget for the research programme is expected to increase at an average

annual rate of 13.2%, from R7.5 million in 2020/21 to R10.9 million in 2023/24. Total expenditure is expected to decrease at an average annual rate of 1.4%, from R232.2 million in 2020/21 to R222.3 million in 2023/24. This is mainly due to the decrease in transfers from the department over the medium term. Transfers from the DSD account for an estimated 98.5% (R655.4 million) of the agency's revenue over the the medium term. The agency's projected expenditure for 2020/21 was R226.9 million.

South African Social Security Agency

The SASSA Act, 2004 (Act 9 of 2004) provides for the establishment of the SASSA, the objectives of which are to ensure the effective and efficient administration, management and payment of social assistance. The agency's core business is to administer and pay social assistance transfers. It has a large network of centres where citizens can apply for social grants and manages a large system of payment services.

Social assistance has proved to be one of the most effective pro-poor programmes that keeps vulnerable people from falling into abject poverty. By the end of 2019/20, the agency was providing income support to almost 18 million vulnerable individuals throughout the country. Compensation of employees accounts for an estimated 46% (R10.5 billion) of the agency's budget over the medium term. The remainder is earmarked for goods and services for essential operational requirements, such as grant payments, building leases, security, cleaning and computer services.

In 2020/21, the introduction of the special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant for unemployed citizens resulted in an additional nine million applications being processed, and monthly payments to over six million additional citizens. This stretched the agency's resources and capabilities, and close to R200 million was spent on building systems and paying grants to these additional recipients between May 2020 and January 2021. This provided a unique opportunity to implement electronic application channels and strengthen cooperation with other government departments to enable information provided by applicants to be validated electronically. The lessons learnt from the introduction of the grant will be carried through to the broader social grant environment, and will be implemented across all grants to strengthen the review process to ensure that social grants are disbursed only to eligible beneficiaries.

The social grants application process is partially automated – applications are captured electronically and then printed for signatures and record-keeping. These are scanned to build an electronic registry to ensure that all active grants have a complete and auditable file. However, the introduction of online application processes as an alternative application channel will create electronic files, thereby enhancing the agency's ability to store, retrieve and audit files. The agency plans to implement a fully automated grants application process (e-application, scanning supporting documents, digital signatures and electronic files) over the MTEF period at an estimated cost of R128 million.

In 2018/19, the agency developed a biometric identity access management solution for staff identification, and the enrolment and verification of beneficiaries. The biometric data of an estimated 21 million beneficiaries that was captured by payment contractors between 2012 and 2018 has been migrated to the agency's new system, and is expected to be fully rolled out in 2021/22. This is expected to ensure that no transactions processed are repudiated. An estimated R68 million will be spent on the system over the MTEF period.

The agency's new operating model, emanating from its 2020 to 2025 strategic plan, proposes clustering its nine regions into three. The high-level structure review will continue at an estimated cost of R40 million over the MTEF period, ensuring that the agency is structured to be fit for purpose, with modernised systems that improve operational efficiency and reduce the growth in the wage bill and executive management. As a result, expenditure is expected to decrease from R28 million in 2019/20 to an estimated R19 million in 2020/21.

To consolidate its communication channels into a single platform that will make it easier to disseminate information and engage with customers, the agency plans to implement a call centre solution over the MTEF period. This is expected to improve its engagement with strategic stakeholders such as grant beneficiaries and the public. The call centre is expected to be fully completed by the end of 2021/22 at an estimated cost of R113 million.

Expenditure is expected to decrease at an average annual rate of 2.2%, from R8.1 billion in 2020/21 to R7.6 billion in 2023/24, mainly due to the reductions imposed on the agency's allocation.

The agency expects to derive 99.9% (R22.5 billion) of its revenue over the MTEF period through transfers from the DSD. Revenue is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 0.4%, from R7.5 billion in 2020/21 to R7.6 billion in 2023/24.

In September 2020, the SASSA launched an online grant application portal, making it possible for applicants to apply for certain social grants through this platform.

The pilot project covers the child support, older persons and foster child grants. The online method saves grant applicants the inconvenience of standing in queues at the SASSA offices. It also eliminates the risk of spreading COVID-19 because there will be no need to gather at public places when applying.

This remote self-service option is available on computers and mobile phones. The turnaround time is 10 days, provided the applicant supplies all stipulated documents.

Programmes and projects Social Assistance

Over the medium term, the DSD will continue to transfer funds to the SASSA for the provision of social grants to the elderly, children, war veterans and persons with disabilities. Social grants account for an estimated 94.3% (R175.3 billion per year on average) of the department's total budget over the MTEF period. The department expects the SASSA to pay social grants to 18.1 million beneficiaries in 2020/21, up from 18.6 million in 2021/22.

Spending on grants is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 7.5% over the medium term. Mostly due to inflationary adjustments to the value of the grants and growth in the number of beneficiaries. The elderly population – people older than 60, is growing by 3% per year. As such, the number of beneficiaries who receive the old age grant is expected to increase.

As the child population grows, the number of beneficiaries who receive the child support grant is also expected to increase. The high level of unemployment and poverty level in the country, combined with high wage inequality and low labour market participation, are contributory factors to the growth of the social grants to children. Furthermore, the continuing trend of generally low wages paid to those who are working means that a high proportion of working parents do not earn sufficient wages to adequately provide for their children.

For the foreseeable future, the Social Assistance programme will continue to be an important lever in government's arsenal to tackle poverty and inequality. In the immediate future as the country battles the COVID-19 pandemic, the social assistance system has become even more important as a key response to mitigate the severe impact on incomes and livelihoods of vulnerable workers and their households. The economic fallout of the pandemic continues to reverberate across the economy, necessitating urgent intervention including the increased allocation of R40 billion to augment the social grants budget.

This has been applied to provide a R250 increase for the Older Person's Grant, Disability Grant, Foster Child Grant and the Care Dependency Grant, together with a R300 once off increase to the Child Support Grant and R500 per month to the caregiver for five months. In addition, a temporary R350 per month COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant was introduced to mitigate income losses among the 18 – 59 age group who ordinarily do not receive social grants.

Social Security Policy and Administration

The programme aims to amend the Social Assistance Act of 2004 and the Fund Raising Act, 1978 (Act 107 of 1978), to address existing gaps and inconsistencies in the legislation. Specifically, the amendment to the Social Assistance Act of 2004 aims to introduce a provision to empower the Minister of Social Development, with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance, to augment the Child Support Grant benefit provided to orphaned children residing with relatives. This is intended to reduce the demand on the foster child system, by reducing the number of children entering the foster care system purely to access the Foster Child Grant due to the large differential in value between this grant and the Child Support Grant.

The Act will also enhance access to administrative justice, by reducing the time it takes for appeals to be adjudicated from 180 days to 90 days. The DSD expects the workload of the tribunal to increase once the Act is passed, since all the complainants will be able to come directly to the tribunal without first approaching the SASSA.

When proclaimed, the Act will also pave the way for the establishment of an inspectorate for social assistance appeals, which will be tasked with ensuring and promoting the integrity of the social assistance framework.

The programme further aims to complete the extensive policy proposals on social security reform, ranging from extending social assistance coverage to all, introducing mandatory contributions for retirement, death and disability, creating a platform for informal sector workers to participate in social security coverage and developing an appropriate institutional architecture for a coherent, efficient and sustainable social security system in the long term.

These policy proposals were expected to be consolidated into a single green paper during the 2020/21 financial year, and subjected to extensive consultation with all stakeholders. Because of their wide scope and the significant impact they are likely to have on every person in the country and the economy, it will be essential to consult widely on all aspects and develop a social compact between business, labour and civil society regarding the proposals.

The severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy and its ability to create jobs has raised new questions about the reliance on economic growth to address unemployment and poverty, and revived interest in the prospect of a basic income

grant as another lever to tackle poverty and inequality, and engender a more inclusive growth path. The DSD will therefore initiate a feasibility assessment of a basic income grant during the 2020/21 financial year.

Ongoing policy development will continue, particularly to address very specific social security coverage gaps in relation to pregnant and lactating women, and institutional mechanisms and the cost thereof, to crowd in all government interventions to address the social protection needs of children, using the social grants as an entry point.

The department will also table the Fundraising Amendment Bill to Parliament, in order to streamline the administration of the various funds established before the democratic dispensation to provide humanitarian relief in times of disaster.

Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support

The purpose of the programme is to create an enabling environment for the delivery of equitable developmental welfare services through the formulation of policies, norms, standards and best practices; and the provision of support to implementing agencies.

This programme consists of the following sub programmes:

- Service Standards, which ensures the transformation and standardisation of social welfare services through the development and coordination of overarching policies and legislation that promote integrated, quality-driven, professional and accountable service delivery;
- Social Work Scholarship, which provides full scholarships for social work students;
- Substance Abuse, which develops, supports and monitors the implementation of policies, legislation, and norms and standards for combating substance abuse;
- Older Persons, which develops, supports and monitors the implementation of policies, legislation, and norms and standards for social welfare services to older people;
- Disability Rights, which promotes the empowerment and rights of persons with disabilities through accelerated mainstreaming of disability considerations and the strengthening of disability specific services;
- Children, which develops, supports and monitors the implementation of policies, legislation and norms and standards for social welfare services to children;

- Families, which develops, supports and monitors the implementation of policies, legislation and programmes for services aimed at strengthening families;
- Social Crime Prevention and Victim Empowerment, which develops, supports and monitors the implementation of policies, legislation and programmes aimed at protecting, empowering and supporting victims of crime and violence; and
- HIV and AIDS, which develops, supports and monitors the implementation of policies, programmes and guidelines aimed at preventing and mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS in line with the 2017 – 2022 National Strategic Plan for HIV, sexually transmitted infections and TB.

Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery

The purpose of the programme is to support community development and promote evidence-based policy making in the DSD and the social development sector. Community development programme implementation is geared towards empowering communities through capacity enhancement and creation of structures. Poverty and inequality continue to ravage communities as they are experienced through multi deprivation and vulnerabilities, which include poor nutrition, unemployment, poor education and poor health outcomes. The department plans to intensify its effort to ensure that vulnerable households and communities are profiled to determine their socio-economic needs. It will conduct community capacity enhancement in all nine provinces to bolster social cohesion.

Functional community structures will be created as part of prevention and addressing social ills of communities. Out of 17.4 grant recipients, the department intends to target 2% to link the beneficiaries as a means to alleviate poverty and build sustainable communities. Through the programme, the department will facilitate the implementation of the NPO Funding Policy and Partnership Model thereby ensuring uniformity in the sector. The programme will also ensure the formulation of the overarching Community Development Policy that will harness implementation of community development in the country.

Through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), the DSD will continue to create meaningful work opportunities as a social protection safety net for vulnerable individuals over the MTSF period. This is in line with government's commitment

to job creation as contained in the Phase 4 EPWP Business Plan. The department also administers the NPO Act of 1997 and has identified the following outputs: NPO Policy Framework, turnaround time on NPO registration, NPO compliance monitoring and NPO education and awareness programmes as pillars that will ensure that the outcome – reduced levels of poverty – is achieved. This is hoped to be achieved by increasing public trust and confidence through effective yet fair regulation of NPOs.

Reducing poverty levels require contributions from NPOs in delivering programmes that support the achievement of set outcomes. This requires that NPOs understand legislation and compliance thereof in order to be credible and accountable entities that can deliver on their respective mandates. The planned outputs on provision of education and awareness programmes to NPOs will lead to an empowered and strengthened sector that is able to deliver quality services to vulnerable and poor communities, thus improving the quality of life.

The DSD will, in the next MTSF, implement the National Food and Nutrition Security Plan for South Africa. The plan seeks to ensure implementation of food and nutrition security initiatives targeting vulnerable individuals and households. This will be accomplished through the coordination of the DSD food and nutrition interventions which include all centre-based feeding programmes providing nutritious food to the poor and vulnerable in partnership with civil society organisations, social partners and agencies. Community development will seek to ensure development of the National Community Development Policy Framework, with an emphasis on the creation of vibrant and sustainable communities.

The department will also prioritise the linking of Child Support Grant recipients below 60 years of age to sustainable livelihoods opportunities. The Community Development branch will continue with the development of policy framework, guidelines and tools to enhance community development within the country.

Ten-Point Plan

The strategic plan of the DSD is informed by the 10-Point Plan, which represents the priorities to be addressed by the social development sector. These are:

- Rebuilding of family, community and social relations: restoring the ethics of care and human development in all

welfare programmes. This requires an urgent rebuilding of family, community and social relations in order to promote social integration.

- Integrated poverty eradication strategy: designing an integrated poverty eradication strategy that provides direct benefits to those in greatest need, especially women, youth and children in rural areas and informal settlements.
- Comprehensive social security system: developing a comprehensive social security system that builds on existing contributory and non-contributory schemes and prioritises the most vulnerable households.
- Violence against women and children, older persons and other vulnerable groups: responding to brutal effects of all forms of violence against women, children, older persons and other vulnerable groups, as well as designing effective strategies to deal with perpetrators.
- HIV and AIDS: programmes include a range of services to support community-based care and assistance for the people living with HIV and AIDS. Particular attention will be given to orphans and children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.
- Youth development: developing a national strategy to reduce the number of youth in conflict with the law and promoting youth development within the framework of the National Crime Prevention Strategy and in partnership with the National Youth Commission.
- Accessibility of social welfare services: making social welfare services accessible and available to people in rural, peri-urban and informal settlements, and ensuring equity in service provision.
- Services to people with disabilities: redesigning services to people with disabilities in ways that promote their human rights and economic development and working with people with disabilities to ensure that their needs are met without further marginalising them.
- Commitment to cooperative governance: work must be based on a commitment to cooperative governance that includes working with different spheres of government and civil society.
- Train, educate, re-deploy and employ a new category of workers in social development: this includes the re-orientation of social service workers to meet the challenges of South Africa and link these to regional and global demands.

Project Mikondzo

Project Mikondzo (which means “footprints” in Xitsonga) compels office-bound officials from the DSD, the National Development Agency and the SASSA to join frontline officials to interact with communities in a bid to tackle social problems such as poverty, malnutrition, violence against women and child-headed households.

The project includes an audit of ECD centres and the setting up of a command centre with a toll-free hotline open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It also includes a substance abuse awareness campaign targeting sports and music events, the targeting of GBV and the strengthening of NPOs.

The project helps government reach about two million children who qualify for child support grants, but have not registered with SASSA to receive grants.

The DSD trains caregivers to improve assistance to child- and youth-headed households. Government continues to implement the service delivery initiatives, Project Mikondzo and the Integrated Community Registration Outreach Programme to improve the sector’s services and increase access to social assistance for impoverished communities.

Expanded Public Works Programme

The EPWP is a nationwide programme under the auspices of government and state-owned enterprises. The programme provides an important avenue for labour absorption and income transfers to poor households in the short to medium term. It is also a deliberate attempt by public sector bodies to use expenditure on goods and services to create job opportunities for the unemployed.

The EPWP projects employ workers on a temporary or ongoing basis either by government, contractors or NGOs under the Ministerial Conditions of Employment for the EPWP or learnership employment conditions.

The Vuk’uphile Learnership Programme is an EPWP Contractor Development Programme. It is a subprogramme of the EPWP infrastructure sector which is aimed at training and developing emerging contractors within the construction industry.

The programme develops the administrative, technical, contractual, managerial and entrepreneurial skills of the learners within a learner-contracting entity. The Vuk’uphile Learnership Programme uses labour-intensive methods of construction.

The EPWP Knowledge Management Committee is composed of various national government departments such as Social Development, Environmental Affairs, and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, with the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) leading the committee.

Whilst the DPWI must continue with its role of coordinating the EPWP nationally, the DSD drives the implementation of the projects in the social sector space.

War on Poverty campaign

The Cooperative Shop Project is aimed at combating poverty by linking social grant beneficiaries (particularly the caregivers of children receiving child support grants) and other vulnerable groups to meaningful socio-economic opportunities. The DSD and its entities identify cooperatives that need support, with the intention of developing skills of the members of the cooperative to ensure they are able to produce goods of quality.

The project is in line with government's developmental agenda and could be seen as an addition to the grants that are provided. The primary intention is not to take people out of the grant system but to provide opportunities for grant beneficiaries to supplement their income.

Food for All Programme

The DSD is tasked with facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Food for All Programme. To this end, distressed households were being provided with food through the DSD and the FoodForward SA programme. While this provides short-term relief for poor households, government recognises that longer-term solutions are needed.

Government is committed to improving its efforts at ensuring food security for all in the country, starting with vulnerable households and communities. To this end, households have been assisted in establishing food gardens to produce their own food, thus participating in their own development.

National Family Policy

The DSD is tasked with implementing the National Family Policy, and provides training in family-preservation services, marriage preparation and enrichment, parenting/primary caregiving and families in crisis to service providers in the area of family services.

The *2013 White Paper on Families* emphasises the need

for all to build strong families that protect the most vulnerable members of society. The purpose of the White Paper is to provide a platform for all South Africans to engage and exchange views on how to build stable families. It also addresses some of the challenges faced by individuals in families, including the abuse of women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

National Minimum Wage (NMW)

The NMW came into effect in January 2019. In February 2021, government announced that the NMW would increase to R21.69 per hour from R20.76. The increment was effective from March 2021. Following a transitional phase, the farmworker sector was also aligned with the minimum wage rate of R21.69 per hour. The domestic workers sector wage was set at R19.09 per hour and is expected to be aligned with the NMW in the next review. Workers on the EPWP are entitled to R11.93 per hour and workers who have concluded learnership agreements are entitled to allowances as determined by the National Qualifications Framework level.

In line with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act 75 of 1997), the increase in the NMW will mean that wages prescribed in the sectoral determinations that were higher than the set minimum wage at its promulgation, must be increased proportionally to the adjustments. The contract cleaning; and wholesale and retail sectors would, therefore, have their wages upwardly adjusted by 4.5%.

The minimum wage is a tool to ensure that vulnerable workers do not fall below the poverty line and it is designed to reduce inequality and huge disparities in income in the national labour market.

HIV and AIDS Youth Programme

Isibindi is a programme which deploys child and youth care workers in communities to assist children in vulnerable homes. Isibindi has a special focus on Grade 12 learners. The assistance by Isibindi child and youth care workers ensures that children remain in school and attend classes. The child and youth care workers support these children and make sure that they are relieved from household responsibilities, including being parents to their siblings while they are trying to pass Grade 12.

Almost 300 Isibindi projects have been replicated across South African provinces, serving over 100 000 children who would otherwise have fallen outside of the care and protection matrix. Including quality assurance mechanisms, and a community development approach, the Isibindi model has received public acclaim, and is currently being scaled up through a South African government initiative.

Additional components of the model include a young women's empowerment programme, a young men's empowerment programme, a non-centre based ECD model and a disability model – all of which enable progressive realisation of a wide range of children's rights and protection needs, through effective deployment of community-based child and youth care workers.

HIV and AIDS Advocacy, Awareness and Outreach Programme

Achieving a meaningful and clear understanding of the scientific facts about HIV and AIDS will lead to individual self-management regarding the risk of HIV infection.

The awareness programme has four main pillars – disclosure, communication, rights and facilitation.

The programme also deals with the physical and emotional consequences of HIV and AIDS. It addresses the following challenges:

In November 2020, the DSD relaunched the GBV Command Centre – a 24-hour facility that addresses a variety of emergencies, including indecent assault, physical violence, rape and abandonment of children.

The facility's emergency line can be accessed by calling 0800 428 428 or sending a "please call me" to *120*7867#. It can also be accessed on Skype by adding 'Helpme GBV' on one's Skype contacts. Users can also SMS: the word 'help' to 31531.

- the lack of accurate and current information on HIV and AIDS;
- the lack of access to care, support, treatment and new healthcare developments; and
- discrimination against the infected and affected.

The programme aims to involve people living with HIV and AIDS in initiatives that directly help affected and infected people to alleviate stigmatisation.

Victim Empowerment Programme

South Africa's Victim Empowerment Policy is based upon the concept of restorative justice. Victim empowerment is a means of facilitating access to a range of services for all people who have individually or collectively suffered harm, trauma and/or material loss through violence, crime, natural disaster, human accident and/or through socio-economic conditions.

It is the process of promoting the resourcefulness of victims of crime and violence by providing opportunities to access services available to them, as well as to use and build their own capacity and support networks and to act on their own choices.

National Directory on Services for Victims of Violence and Crime

The National Directory on Services for Victims of Violence and Crime is updated annually in collaboration with the provincial Victim Empowerment Policy managers or coordinators and their provincial counterparts.

Prevention and treatment of substance and drug abuse

Sobriety Week is a national campaign aimed at creating awareness among the general South African public, particularly the youth, women and pregnant women about the adverse effects of liquor abuse.

Sobriety Week incorporates International Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Day, which is observed internationally on 9 September every year to highlight the irreversible damage caused to unborn babies when their mothers consume alcohol during pregnancy. Government recognises challenges such as unemployment, which result in people using and abusing alcohol.

Children and youth

The Home Community-Based Care Programme is the centrepiece of government's interventions to build a protective and caring environment for vulnerable children.

Most services to orphans and vulnerable children are rendered through home community-based care and include early identification of vulnerable children and their families, referrals, training of community caregivers and psychosocial support and material assistance.

This approach is geared towards keeping children within their families and communities. It is aimed at providing comprehensive care and support, which is complemented by proactive action at community level. This includes linking families with poverty alleviation projects and other services in the community, such as food security initiatives and ECD services.

In July 2020, the DSD, in partnership with the United States (US) Agency for International Development launched a government-to-government social and behaviour change programme for children.

Under the partnership, the US government has made funds available for the South African Government to implement the DSD's flagship social and behavioural change programmes, including You Only Live Once (YOLO) and ChommY which target children and young people between the ages of 10 and 24.

YOLO and ChommY are part of the DSD's collection of social and behavioural change programmes that seek to reduce risky sexual behaviours to prevent new HIV infections.

The partnership will ensure that the DSD intensifies the programmes in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng for five years.

Child Labour Programme of Action

The Child Labour Programme of Action is a national partnership initiated by government and civil-society partners comprising organised business, organised labour and NGOs. It is led by the Department of Labour. It is South Africa's roadmap towards the prevention, reduction and eventual elimination of child labour.

The programme was first adopted in 2003, after extensive consultation within government, with a wide range of organisations outside government and with groups of teenage children involved in different forms of child labour. The programme sets out specific actions to be taken and assigned responsibility for these actions.

Childline South Africa

Childline offers a 24-hour toll-free crisis line (116) to children and families across South Africa. It provides immediate assistance to children and families in crisis who need counselling and information. Childline is an NPO that works to protect children from all forms of violence and creates a culture of respect for children's rights.

Programmes delivered through the provincial offices include:

- a crisis line,
- child rights and education,
- training and education of volunteers,
- training of other professionals who work with child protection services and children,
- therapy for abused and traumatised children and their families,
- court preparation of child witnesses,
- networking and coordination,
 - lobbying and advocacy, and
 - analysis of law and policy.

National Child Protection Week

National Child Protection Week 2021 was commemorated from 30 May to 6 June. It was held under the theme; "Let us all Protect Children during COVID-19 and Beyond". National Child Protection Week is commemorated in the country annually to raise awareness of the rights of children as articulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and Children's Act of 2005.

The campaign is led by the DSD in partnership with key government departments and civil society organisations rendering child protection services. During the 2021 event, government called on South Africans to support Child Protection Week by ensuring that the most vulnerable in society do not suffer abuse. It emphasised the fact that the stopping of the abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation of children is in society's hands.

Response to COVID-19

In March 2020, government introduced an economic and social response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic response was divided into three phases. The first phase was the declaration of the coronavirus pandemic as a national disaster. This included a broad range of measures to mitigate the worst effects of the pandemic on businesses, communities and individuals.

The measures included tax relief, the release of disaster relief funds, emergency procurement, wage support through the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and funding to small businesses. The second phase of the economic response aimed to stabilise the economy, address the extreme decline in supply and demand, and protect jobs. As part of the phase, government announced a massive social relief and economic support package of R500 billion – amounting to around 10% of the country's gross domestic product.

Additional funding of R20 billion was made available to municipalities for the provision of emergency water supply, increased sanitisation of public transport and facilities, and the provision of food and shelter for the homeless. Government also introduced a temporary six-month COVID-19 grant to reach the most vulnerable families in the country. It directed R50 billion towards relieving the plight of those who were desperately affected by the pandemic. Child Support Grant beneficiaries received an extra R300 in May 2020, and from June to October 2020 they received an additional R500 each month. All other grant beneficiaries received R250 per month for six months.

In addition, a special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant of R350 a month was paid to individuals who were unemployed and did not receive any other form of social grant or UIF payment.

The third phase was the economic strategy that the country

expected to implement to drive the recovery of the economy as it emerged from the pandemic. Central to the economic recovery strategy were measures put in place to stimulate demand and supply through interventions such as a substantial infrastructure build programme, the speedy implementation of economic reforms, the transformation of the economy and embarking on steps that would ignite inclusive economic growth. In July 2021, government reinstated the R350 Social Relief of Distress Grant to caregivers who receive the Child Support Grant. The grant will be paid to poor and unemployed South Africans until March 2022.

COVID-19 Rapid Needs Assessment Report

In October 2020, the DSD and the United Nations Development Programme officially launched the COVID-19 Rapid Needs Assessment Report after the department commissioned the agency to conduct a rapid assessment of the COVID-19 situation, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups.

The results have further revealed the deeply ingrained socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment and inequality. The human impact of the pandemic has been devastating with income loss estimated at between R41 and R53 million for 9.5 million affected formal sector employees, and 2.5 million informal workers and owners of small, micro and medium enterprises. The report also revealed that 740 616 informal workers were at risk of falling below the upper poverty line during the extended lockdown due to COVID-19, while 900 000 households had severely inadequate access to food. The report recommended that the country needs to prepare for the long haul. The key recommendation includes raising the COVID-19 Relief Grant from R350 to at least R560 per month.

Role players

Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities is situated in The Presidency. The department derives its mandate from Section 9(3) of the Constitution. It is required to champion socio-economic transformation and the empowerment and participation of women, youth and people with disabilities through mainstreaming, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation.

The NDP envisages economic participation, education and skills development for women and other vulnerable groups,

and the elimination of violence against women and children. This vision is given expression by Priority 1 (economic transformation and job creation), Priority 5 (social cohesion and safe communities) and Priority 6 (a capable, ethical and developmental state) of government's 2019 – 2024 MTSF. The work of this department is directly aligned with these priorities through facilitating the planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and auditing processes responsive to gender, youth and disability rights across the State. Accordingly, over the medium term, the department intends to focus on reducing gender-based violence and femicide, and strengthening the national gender machinery; making interventions for economic empowerment; engaging in responsive government-wide planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation; ensuring compliance with international commitments; promoting the rights of people with disabilities; and supporting the development of young people.

People with disabilities

The 2016 DSD White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WPRPD) takes its cue from the Constitution and a number of international instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, and the sustainable development goals, which reaffirm the human rights of people with disabilities.

The White Paper is a crucial step along the journey of improving the lives of people with disabilities and moves the country closer to a fully inclusive society.

The White Paper:

- updates South Africa's 1997 White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy;
- integrates obligations of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and in the Continental Plan of Action for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (both of which South Africa has signed), with South Africa's legislation, policy frameworks and the NDP;
- endorses a mainstreaming trajectory for realising the rights of persons with disabilities;
- provides clarity on and guides the development of standard operating procedures for mainstreaming disability;
- guides the review of all existing, and the development of

new, sectoral policies, programmes, budgets and reporting systems, to bring these in line with both Constitutional and international treaty obligations;

- stipulates norms and standards for the removal of discriminatory barriers that perpetuate the exclusion and segregation of persons with disabilities; and
- outlines the responsibilities and accountabilities of the various stakeholders involved in providing barrier-free, appropriate, effective, efficient and coordinated service delivery to persons with disabilities, and guides self-representation of persons with disabilities.

It is intended to accelerate transformation and redress with regard to full inclusion, integration and equality for people with disabilities. South Africa had to collectively contribute to the empowerment of people with disabilities through accessible disability information services, inclusive ECD opportunities and accessible rehabilitation services.

This would enable people with disabilities to take up the opportunities created in much larger numbers, improving performance in achieving equity targets.

People with disabilities represent the voice of the sector in institutions such as the South African Human Rights Commission, the Commission on Gender Equality, the Board of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, the National Youth Development Agency and many transformation and developmental entities.

The South African experience has also helped to shape the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Continental Plan for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities. South Africa has been celebrating the International Day for People with Disabilities annually since 1997.

The vision of the WPRPD is the creation of a free and just society inclusive of all persons with disabilities as equal citizens. It commits duty bearers to realising the rights of persons with disabilities by:

- accelerating implementation of existing legislation that advocates equality for persons with disabilities;
- taking calculated action to ensure that their rights as equal persons are upheld;
- removing discriminatory barriers to access and participation;
- ensuring that universal design informs access and participation in the planning, budgeting and service delivery value chain of all programmes;
- recognising the right to self-representation;

- acknowledging that not all persons with disabilities are alike, and that personal circumstances, gender, age, sexuality, religious and cultural backgrounds, and geographical location, requires different responses; and
- embedding the obligations contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in legislation, policy and service delivery.

The WPRPD is built on nine strategic pillars:

- Removing barriers to access and participation.
- Protecting the rights of persons at risk of compounded marginalisation.
- Supporting sustainable integrated community life.
- Promoting and supporting the empowerment of children, women, youth and persons with disabilities.
- Reducing economic vulnerability and releasing human capital.
- Strengthening the representative voice of persons with disabilities.
- Building a disability equitable state machinery.
- Promoting international cooperation.
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Blind SA

Blind SA is an organisation for the blind, and is governed by the blind. Situated in Johannesburg, it is aligned with other member organisations throughout South Africa. Blind SA's main focus is to improve the quality of life of all South Africa's visually impaired people by empowering them through education.

Its objectives are to protect and promote the interests of people with visual impairment and enable all visually impaired people to achieve their optimal potential through independence; and by providing development care for and protecting the rights of those who, owing to circumstances beyond their control, are unable to do so themselves.

Orientation, mobility and skills development to blind and newly blinded people is an important aspect of the work undertaken by Blind SA. The organisation provides, among other things, study bursaries for visually impaired students for further education, Braille publications in all South African official languages, Braille training that entails writing and reading, and orientation and mobility training.

The purpose of Blind SA is to end the cycle of poverty for blind South Africans, empowering them with knowledge and information through education, Braille and developmental

services. It aims to break down barriers, provide opportunities and create answers that improve the quality of life for the blind community so that they can live the life they choose. Recent initiatives include Mali-Bhala – a money counter and signature guide.

This locally created device comes in two standard sizes that are designed to fit either in a person's wallet or pocket. It is used as an indicator to differentiate between the five South African 'Mandela' bank notes and as a signature guide.

South African Braille Authority (SABA)

The SABA promotes and advocates for Braille and Braille-related matters in South Africa. Its purpose is to set and maintain standards for Braille in all 11 official languages of South Africa. These standards relate to the development and maintenance of Braille codes; production of quality Braille; the teaching of, access to and promotion of Braille; Braille examinations; and many other Braille-related matters.

Members of the SABA include schools for the blind, consumer organisations of the blind, student disability units, Braille producers and the South African Library for the Blind. Through the SABA, South Africa is a member of the International Council on English Braille. The membership enables the country to stay abreast of and participate in international Braille-related matters.

South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB)

The SANCB is the coordinating body for over 100-member organisations that span the full spectrum of services offered for and to blind and partially sighted people throughout the country. The SANCB comprises four core business areas, namely social development, the bureau for the prevention of blindness, education and fundraising and public relations.

To combat as much as 80% of avoidable blindness, the council regularly undertakes tours with its mobile eye care clinics to rural areas for eye screening, referrals and to perform cataract removal operations. The SANCB provides entrepreneurial training, adult basic education and training, and facilitates skills training such as computer literacy and call centre programmes through its Optima College.

It is also affiliated to international organisations, including the African Union of the Blind and the World Blind Union.

Support for the deaf

South Africa's national organisation for the deaf is the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA). It acts as the national research, information and community action organisation on behalf of South Africans that are culturally and linguistically deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind.

DeafSA, formerly known as the South African National Council for the Deaf (SANCD), was founded in 1929. In 1995, the SANCD was transformed to a new democratically elected organisation, the DeafSA. This resulted in a paradigm shift from an organisation for the deaf to one of the deaf. The changes in the constitution and attitudes also meant that decisions about the services and affairs of deaf people were no longer taken by hearing people on behalf of deaf people – but by deaf people.

The organisation has nine provincial chapters throughout South Africa. An estimated 500 000 to 600 000 South Africans use the South African Sign Language (SASL). As sign language has grown in South Africa – particularly baby sign language – an NPO, Sign Language Education and Development, has been formed to promote the language. Signing with hearing babies and children is being promoted through the Signsational Kids website.

South Africa has a long-established deaf education system. The Institute for the Deaf in Worcester operates Deaf College South Africa, which trains deaf people for jobs. In addition, the Bible College for the Deaf in Gauteng trains people to work in deaf ministry.

The University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg has a Centre for Deaf Studies. The centre offers programmes in deaf education and focuses on teaching, research and community service. Among other services, the National Institute for the Deaf provides services for the multiple disabled deaf, runs two deaf churches and provides audiological and mental health services.

A Deaf Child Centre at the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of Cape Town, provides pre-school education and community services. This centre also focuses on deafness research.

The Carel du Toit Centre, based in Cape Town, provides early childhood auditory-oral education. In addition, the centre engages in community outreaches, helping families with hearing-related needs and more practical needs, such as food.

A similar centre is the Eduplex in Pretoria. It provides auditory-oral pre-school and primary school educational

services, teaching hearing and deaf children together and provides training to prospective teachers, audiologists and therapists.

In 2018, sign language was administered as a new subject for the first time during the National Senior Certificate examinations.

SASL Charter

In September 2020, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) launched the SASL Charter. With September being Deaf Awareness Month, the launch of the SASL Charter kickstarted various activities that were undertaken by the PanSALB in various parts of the country to raise awareness about this initiative.

The charter was conceptualised to address issues that relate to communication, access to information, facilities and social justice for the deaf community, including the type of service provided by the SASL Charter interpreters in general.

The charter articulates the linguistic rights of deaf persons in South Africa and is aimed at creating conditions for the development of the SASL. It compels all government departments, and other organs of state, as well as the private sector to make provisions for SASL interpreting. It also guarantees access to services by deaf persons through ensuring that essential service staff, such as social workers and police officers, receive advanced level training in SASL.

Older people

The DSD promotes a holistic approach to active ageing and well-being among the country's senior citizens. A number of initiatives have been rolled out by the departments of Social Development, Health, Tourism, Sport, Arts and Culture, and other stakeholders to promote general health among older persons, especially through sports to promote general well-being. In 2008, government implemented a national active ageing programme in line with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing of 2002.

The Madrid Plan of Action offers a bold agenda for handling the issue of ageing in the 21st century. It focuses on three priority areas – older persons and development, advancing health and well-being into old age and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

The Older Persons Act of 2006 aims to enhance the quality of life and improve the health of older persons by engaging

them in programmes that promote social, physical, mental and emotional well-being, to prevent or delay the onset of ageing challenges and keep illnesses related to old age at bay.

The Older Persons' Parliament takes place annually in October. It gives elders the opportunity to engage with the executive on critical issues affecting their lives.

Training and skills development

Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers

The Unemployed Social Workers Database informs the DSD about the number of unemployed social workers who have studied outside the DSD scholarship programme.

This aims to address the issue of qualified social workers who are unemployed.

Government has mandated the development of strategies to facilitate the recruitment and retention of such scarce skills. The DSD has been the main driver in the implementation of this social policy. In addition, the NDP indicates that 60 000 social workers will be needed by 2030 to serve the population.

Professionalising community development

The Council for Social Service Professions was established in terms of the Social Service Professions Act of 1978.

The key functions are:

- protecting and promoting the interests of the professions, in respect of which professional boards have been or are to be established, and to deal with any matter relating to such interests;
- advising the Minister of Social Development on matters affecting the professions in respect of which professional boards have been established; and
- controlling and exercising authority regarding all financial matters relating to the council and the professional boards; and assisting in the promotion of social services.