

THURSDAY, 11 JULY 2019

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MINI PLENARY SESSION - OLD ASSEMBLY CHAMBER

Members of the mini-plenary session met in the Old Assembly Chamber at 16:40.

The House Chairperson, Mr M L D Ntombela, took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Debate on Vote No 17 - Social Development:

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: I hope we won't be in any of those errors, House Chairperson. Hon House Chairperson, hon members, members of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development; MECs for Social Development who are present here today; Acting Director-General of the Department of Social Development, Mr Mzolisi Toni; CEO of the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, Ms Busisiwe Memela-Khambula; CEO of the National Development Agency, NDA, Ms Thamo Mzobe; UN Population Fund Country Representative to South Africa, Ms Beatrice Mutali, whom I really wish to thank for being here and to

say that, together with many of the community members who are here today, she was out there with us and it was one of the best times that gave me the energy to be here and be able to speak. Thank you very much for being here; social grant beneficiaries, as well as beneficiaries from other programmes of the Department of Social Development portfolio; representatives of development agencies, cooperatives and civil society organisations and the public at large in the gallery, from the onset, please allow me to tender the apology of the Deputy Minister of Social Development, Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu who is unable to join us due to a family bereavement. Please join me in expressing our deepest condolences and in wishing her family hope and comfort during this time of grief.

I am presenting Budget Vote 17 of the Department of Social Development for your consideration and support under the theme: "Working together to empower our communities for sustainable livelihoods". I do so, full of optimism and hope to serve our people as we have already entered the sixth administration.

The theme, House Chairperson, works very well for us as we start the sixth administration because we are here to make sure that we empower our communities, and we empower our people to be able to do a lot of things for themselves with the support of government.

The theme of this budget is a major thrust of our social transformation agenda as we continue to build, brick by brick, the

South Africa we want. The South Africa we want to also inhabit. The core mandate of this department is to provide comprehensive social protection services that enable the poor and vulnerable to live sustainable livelihoods. This mandate is complemented by the work of the two other entities, that is Sassa and the NDA.

Sassa is responsible for the provision of a comprehensive social security system against vulnerability and poverty within the constitutional and legislative framework. The NDA contributes towards the eradication of poverty and its causes through grant funding and strengthening of civil society organisations that provide services to build resilient and self-sustainable communities.

I know, House Chairperson, that many people get confused when we talk about the NDA because they don't really know much about it; and it is time that the NDA itself comes out of its shadow and makes sure that the people know about it so that they can be able to benefit from it. But today we went to a community that benefitted from it and so, we think that we must pull it out so that it can be seen as part and parcel of us.

To achieve this, we will use a portfolio approach of the department working together with its agencies hand in hand, while we simultaneously build collaborations with other partners within government, the private sector and civil society.

Chairperson, I do want to say that social development is about the upliftment of our people and if the other departments do not step up in supporting us, it is useless for us to have these programmes. We want all departments to step up and help us.

The work of this department is central to the realisation of the ideals of the Freedom Charter. Fifty-six years ago on this day, 11 July 1963, during the dark days of the apartheid regime, the notorious police force raided the ANC's safe house, Lilliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, Johannesburg. They arrested the leadership nucleus of the armed wing of the ANC, Umkhonto We Sizwe, including Andrew Mlangeni who is still alive, Walter Sisulu and Ahmed Kathrada.

This day will forever be marked in South African history books as the start of a process, known as the Rivonia Trial, which eventually saw Nelson Mandela and seven other freedom fighters sentenced to life in prison at the Robben Island. As we present this budget, the sacrifices of this generation of leaders will continue to guide and inspire our actions.

The budget could not have come at a better time than the month of July, as we celebrate the birth of our first democratically-elected President of the Republic of SA, uTata Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela whose legacy embodies the work of this department.

Hon Chairperson, we are reminded of Madiba's words and I quote:

The world remains beset by so much human suffering, poverty and deprivation. It is in your hands to make a difference.

I can assure you, hon Chairperson and members, that we are here to make that difference, working together with you.

As we begin the new term of the sixth administration, we want to create certainty by putting people first, by responding timeously to the pressing needs of our people, while charting a path towards resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

This budget comes as we celebrate the silver jubilee of freedom and democracy. While we acknowledge that the South Africa we want is still a work in progress, we have every reason to celebrate the journey we have traversed thus far. We have every reason to celebrate the unprecedented progress we have made in lifting up our people out of abject poverty, the most vulnerable of our society.

Chairperson, I would like to say to you that in our first meeting with the portfolio committee, the chairperson of the portfolio committee said something very fundamental to us that nobody wants to walk around being known as the poorest of the poor. Nobody wants to have that on them forever and therefore, we need to do everything we can to make sure that we get rid of that language by ensuring that we deliver to our people.

As the democratic government, we have expanded access to lifesaving treatment, free primary health care, and free education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This ANC-led government has improved life expectancy and we have enabled more girls to attend school than ever before. Through our investments in the social assistance and child protection programmes, we have enabled vulnerable children to remain in and complete school. We have assisted over 140 000 social grants beneficiaries to further their studies through the National Students Financial Aid Scheme, NSFAS. The report on this just recently came out and I am sure that members can familiarize themselves with it.

We do not take these successes lightly. We are keenly aware of areas where we are still lagging behind, particularly today as we table this budget against a challenging economic environment. It is for that reason, hon Chairperson, that I said other departments including economic development, must step up and be able to assist us because, if we grow the economy, it means the opportunity for our people will also grow.

Given the foregoing, we remain cognisant of the fact that we cannot do everything all at once, but we will do all that we can, and we will do it well. We will do it, not because it is right, but also because sustainable development and livelihoods lie at the heart of the work of this department.

The Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Amos Masondo, directed us not only to be masters of doing, but also, to be the masters of doing things right by tackling poverty now and addressing issues that will end intergenerational poverty in the next 25 years and beyond. I hasten to add that the effectiveness of the programmes and strategic interventions in this budget, depend on joint action across all spheres of government and on partnership with the private sector, civil society and community-based organisations, some of which are present in the public gallery.

Yesterday, I held my first meeting with the MECs where we unanimously agreed on certain priority areas over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF period. And this includes fighting the scourge of alcohol and substance abuse that causes immeasurable damage to our country especially the youth; child abuse, neglect and exploitation, which rob our children of the joys of childhood; gender-based violence which is an affront to the ideals of the Freedom Charter, of building an equal, nonracial and nonsexist society; improving the provision of developmental welfare and community development services to deliver better results for the most vulnerable; and enhancing our coordination mechanisms, integration, planning, monitoring and evaluation to measure the impact of our interventions.

Quite frankly, hon Chairperson and members, our people are not interested in who did what, how they did it, and how did they

connect to each other. All they want is to know that the services that we have promised to give them, they will receive them on time.

We have committed ourselves to clean governance and administration that create a sense of certainty to deliver our services timeously and with honesty. We also agreed to work much closer with districts and local municipalities as the first port of call in service delivery value chain.

The tabling of this budget coincides with this year's commemoration of the World Population Day and that is why we have the UN present here under the theme: "Twenty-five years of International Conference on population and development: Looking back, looking forward." So, if the UN can look back and look forward, what stops us in South Africa from doing exactly the same? Twenty-five years passed, 25 years coming, what are our people going to expect from us?

According to Statistics SA, South Africa's population size grew from 40,6 million in 1996 to 57,7 million in 2018. Data shows that South Africa continues to have a relatively-youthful population, with 39% between 15 and 35 years of age. We also note that we are undergoing an age transition from a young population to an ageing population. We must think about what that means for our economy and for everything that we would like to do.

Given the above, it is imperative that we implement an integrated approach that is responsive to the present needs of our youthful population, while at the same time addressing the long-term needs of the ageing population.

Chairperson, I want to just quickly share that when I was an ambassador in Brazil, one of the things that I saw was that, the elderly there were really taken care of. They had places and clubs to go to but here in South Africa the elderly don't know what to do. They sit at home and many a times get abused. So, this means we must step up so that even if they are there at home the whole week, during weekends they can go somewhere and play, somewhere they'll feel they are needed. But most important of all, it is the young people who have to give that respect to the elderly and stop abusing them. [Applause.]

Currently, we have too many young people who are not in education or employment. For this reason, we are making strategic investments critical for sustainable development, starting with early childhood development, training and creation of work opportunities, with particular focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. These investments are critical in the context of the fourth industrial revolution.

Hon members, our youth development programme is guided by the words of Mama Nomzamo Winnie Mandela, an activist, anti-apartheid veteran and a pioneer social worker who said and I quote:

The hopes of South Africa's future development lie in its youth, so it is important for us to give them hope.

The growing ageing population in South Africa presents challenges for the provision of public services such as health, welfare, housing, retirement savings and benefits, amongst others. In this regard, we will expand programmes that improve the quality of life and dignity of older persons, focusing on community-based care and support services. This includes active ageing programmes, prevention of elder abuse and income support. We are encouraged by the work of the SA Older Persons Forum, which continues to champion the rights of older persons.

We have a window of opportunity to act fast and act now to meet our population challenges! Some of the policy responses are contained in this budget we are presenting today, including the work of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Population Policy.

We will continue to work towards the realisation of the full range of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. Attention will be paid to the marginalised groups, including persons with

disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual, LGBTQIA+ people, rural, urban poor as well as young people.

South Africa's population policy recognises migration, including international migration as a fundamental human right. The dynamics of internal and international migration remain a challenges for proper planning and South Africa is not escaping that.

Hon House Chairperson, the South Africa envisioned in the NDP accords a central role to an inclusive and responsive social protection system. In tackling the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, the allocation for this financial year is a whopping R184 billion. Of this amount, R175 billion is a direct transfer to social grant beneficiaries, which constitutes 94,8% of the department's budget allocation over the MTEF period. This accounts for 3,2% of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product.

Expenditure on this programme increases at an average annual rate of 7,6%, from R162,9 billion in 2018-19 to R202,9 billion in 2021-22. The department will transfer R212 million to the NDA and R518 million of the ECD Conditional Grant to provinces. The balance goes to the department and Sassa for administration.

It is Important that we remind this August House where we come from. In 1994, we inherited a fragmented and discriminatory social security system that catered for the few along racial lines. While

black people were receiving their Old Age Grant pay every second month, their white counterparts were receiving it monthly. Twenty-five years down the line, we have not only eliminated the barriers that excluded the majority of our people, but we have also extended coverage to the most vulnerable in our society. These are the ANC-led government's achievements worth noting.

To date, we have extended social grants from two million on social grants in 1994 to over 17 million beneficiaries. Of this number, 12,5 million is Child Support Grant, followed by Old Age Grant at 3,5 million, Disability Grant just over one million and the balance covering Care Dependency, Foster Care, Grant-in-Aid and the War Veterans Grant.

I think that when we look at these figures, we must ask ourselves why it is that 12,5 million goes to Child Support Grant. Where are the fathers? Where are the mothers? What is happening? This is some of the money that is supposed to be going to supporting those who still have the capacity to make life for themselves instead of queuing for the social grant, but of course we understand, and we appreciate where we come from.

For two successive financial years, the social assistance programme has shown growth, with total uptake increasing by 1,7 % between 2017-18 and 2018-19. The Older Persons Grant grew by 3,8% while the Child Support Grant grew by 1,5%. At the same time, there was an

increase in the number of adult beneficiaries in need of regular care and support in the form of Grant-in-Aid, which grew by 15,5%. These figures show that the increase is mainly amongst the grants targeting the most vulnerable groups, that is children and older persons.

The 54th National Conference of the ANC directed us to finalise a number of social security reform policies. These include work on the definition of what constitutes a basket of social security benefits, addressing the social grants exclusion errors and the revised policy on mandatory cover for retirement, amongst others. We will also prioritise comprehensive social security reforms endorsed by Nedlac.

On the legislative front, we have commenced with the review of the SA Social Security Agency Act and draft regulations on Social Assistance Amendment Act. This work will contribute towards achieving the ANC's bold goals of ensuring that between now and June 2029, No person in South Africa will go hungry! This is at the heart of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs agenda of ensuring that we end poverty in all its forms and that no one is left behind. We do not want to reduce poverty as they sometimes speak the language of reduction of poverty. We want to get rid of poverty.

[Applause.]

Hon members, key to our goal of building a capable, ethical and developmental state is to stabilise our institutions. On this note,

I am pleased to inform this House that we have appointed Ms Busisiwe Memela-Khambula as the CEO of Sassa. Her vast experience in the private, public and development sector has already brought the much-needed stability as we work towards ensuring that the agency fulfils its core legislative mandate. One of the things that she did while coming here, because we don't want to just come here and speak, she went out to the community to see what is happening.

The current partnership between Sassa and the SA Post Office, Sapo is continuing without any major hurdles. We are improving social grant beneficiaries' experience by amongst others, ensuring that payments are done through multiple access channels such as Sapo outlets, cash payments, retail stores and automated teller machines, ATMs.

Most importantly, we will remain vigilant more than ever, before to ensure that social grants are paid to eligible beneficiaries njalo [always.] In this regard, we have taken temporary precautionary measures by suspending over 2 800 suspected fraudulent accounts. I have directed both CEOs of Sassa working with the CEO of Sapo to investigate and furnish me and the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, with a comprehensive report and action to address this matter, including complaints from social grants beneficiaries we received in the past 18 months. To address this fraudulent activities, we have allocated R68 million to social grants investigations in the current financial year. If we didn't

have that, we would be putting that money to better use but unfortunately for us we still have people who sit in the morning and plot and plan how to rob our people.

Hon members, while we mitigate the impact of poverty on the poor and vulnerable, we place greater priority on actions that will have a positive impact for them in a long term, targeting mainly young women in our social grants system.

Empowering our communities to contribute meaningfully to their development trajectory is fundamental to our approach, particularly given the fact that over 45% of the recipients of our social grants are young women below the age of 35.

As a developmental state, our uppermost and urgent task is to ensure that in years to come, the children of the current generation of social grants beneficiaries embark on different pathway to sustainable livelihoods to realise their full potential. To this end, we will use government's procurement and investment in the social assistance programme to stimulate local economic development.

The community I went to this morning, and I saw that they are doing a lot of good work, producing gardening and all. The issue is, where are they going to sell what they are producing so that they can be able to sustain themselves?

In the current financial year, we have allocated R410 million to the Social Relief of Distress, SRD programme to support families who go through undue hardship. Of this amount, R123 million rand is in addition to the 30% procurement policy of government contracts for small and medium enterprises. We will continue to foster an integrated approach, with the view to address barriers that hinder greater participation of women- and youth-owned enterprises.

While still on the subject of supporting cooperatives, allow me to turn the House's attention to the work that has been done by the NDA. Over the past 25 years, the agency has provided direct grant funding to civil society and community-based organisations to the value of R1,3 billion.

Last year alone, the agency linked over 1 000 cooperatives to business opportunities to the value of over R280 million. These cooperatives were linked to Sassa's SRD programme. We acknowledge the work of the organisations that are making a significant contribution to sustainable livelihoods in the war against poverty.

This includes the Mhani Gingi social entrepreneurial network based in Athlone, which we visited this morning and the Moya we Khaya Peace Garden is one of the cooperatives funded by the NDA. These organisations are making a dent on poverty and transforming the lives of women, their families and communities in which they live. Mhani Gingi has just confirmed a contract with the Netherlands

Embassy to provide some of their products to them - and I saw those products this morning.

Through these initiatives, we are setting up our people on a trajectory to throw off the colonial economic shackles. To paraphrase Isithwalandwe, former President Rolihlahla Mandela, our long walk to freedom and democracy was not just about gaining political power.

While important, the attainment of political freedom does not, and must not, mark the end of a bigger fight that lies ahead. This is a fight that our generation must never shy away from.

This is the fight for economic emancipation of our people. Our long walk to freedom was, and continues to give the majority of our people the first and firm foothold on the ladder of economic opportunities towards sustainable development.

Hon members, we remain committed to accelerating the transformation of welfare services and the sector as a whole. The provision of developmental welfare services to the most vulnerable is an integral part of our social protection agenda. Accordingly, we have commenced with a number of initiatives that we will table to Cabinet. Key amongst these is the White Paper for Social Development, the Social Services Practitioners Bill and the National Drug Master Plan.

The finalisation of this work will enable us to begin to implement key recommendations of the Ministerial Committee on the Review of the 1997 White Paper for Social Welfare. These include the demand and supply model for social service practitioners; resource allocation; establishment and enforcement of a simple, effective and standardised data system, to name but a few. Once completed, the White Paper for Developmental Social Welfare will culminate into the Social Development Act.

On a related matter, the supply and demand model for social service practitioners has been approved, with concurrence by key departments and partners. This model is key in forecasting future needs and demands for both services and categories of social service professionals in the form of social workers, auxiliary social workers, community development practitioners as well child and youth care givers.

I know that the issue of social workers is one of the most painful issues because when we go to our communities, they complain that the social workers in the schools are not enough. One of my comrades, Mbalula, Minister Mbalula, hon Mbalula said to me the other day ... [Time expired.] Just to conclude that quotation. I'll carry it to the next. Thank you. [Applause.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr M L D Nombela) Thank you very much, hon Minister.

Mr M GUNGUBELE: Hon Chair, the Minister, the Deputy Minister in absentia, we would like to extend our condolences; members of the portfolio committee, members of the House, our guests, I greet you all, in pursuit of the theme introduced by the Minister, of a developmental nation.

Just a short history, the apartheid government prior 1994 had had a social welfare service system that entrenched the socioeconomic privileges of the few. The social welfare service system under apartheid made no reference to social protection as an inclusive term in South Africa.

The ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme, RDP, and the White Paper on Social Welfare, amongst other key documents, provided a framework for the transformation of the social welfare services. A developmental approach was applied in the transformation of social welfare services and transpired within the confines of the Constitution of the Republic of SA, which envisioned a more inclusive, equal and caring society.

I must emphasise that key to the White Paper was that this developmental social welfare approach must be steeped in values such as a humane, peaceful, just, and caring society which will uphold welfare rights, facilitate the meeting of the basic human needs, release people's creative energies, help them achieve their aspirations, build human capacity and self-reliance, and participate

fully in all spheres of social, economic and political life. The aim was to meet the basic needs of all people in South Africa by transforming the entirety of society.

Fundamentally, introduced through the developmental social welfare approach, were interventions that redistributed resources and benefits with the objective of empowering disadvantaged groups and raising the general welfare of society. Hon members, this resonates well with two key policy positions of the ANC that our attack on poverty must seek to empower people to take themselves out of poverty and that social grants must not create dependency and must be linked to economic activities.

Over the past 25 years, the government's approach to social developmental welfare has been anchored on empowering our people to help themselves and become independent. South Africa's commitment to social cohesion is reflected in government's expenditure on this item since the advent of democracy. We reaffirm these principles in the assertion through the manner in which the Vote has been allocated.

Hon members, in reaffirming the government's commitment towards social protection, we have put in place safety nets to protect the poor and the most vulnerable. This has led South Africa to have one of the most comprehensive and far-reaching social security nets globally. Monthly, through the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa,

7,5 million South Africans receive social grants. The majority of these beneficiaries have been migrated to the SA Post Office, Sapo. It must be boldly mentioned, that through the collaborative efforts of the department and the Sapo, the social grant payment system has been improved to ensure that there is effective and efficient service delivery.

We welcome the confirmation by the President in his state of the nation address that significant progress has been made in devising a comprehensive social security strategy through the National Economic Development and Labour Council, Nedlac. The significance of this is the desire to have an affordable, sustainable, appropriate, and inclusive comprehensive social security system.

The comprehensive social security system is important in consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality basic services. This is one of the seven apex priority areas mentioned in the Sona. Within this, as guided by the governing party, social development is tasked with ensuring that there is an increase in the number of social workers that will work in collaboration with the Departments of Basic Education and Health to ensure that there is continued investments in our children in relation to the first 1 000 days, that we subsidise Early Childhood Development, ECD, and that we intensify our antipoverty protection services.

A brief on the budget ... To save time, I will prefer not to repeat, Chair, because I think the Minister has articulated it very well. The following main programmes in the Vote declined in real terms from the previous financial year: Administration declined by -0,8%; Social Policy and Administration declined by -6,4%; and Social Welfare Policy Development and Implementation Support declined by -22,9%.

What are the societal challenges that we ought to deal with? This Vote comes at a time when the South African society is confronted by a myriad of challenges which we have to collectively resolve.

The persistent realities of poverty, unemployment and inequality continue to confront us. This is informed by Statistics SA revealing that in the first quarter of 2019, 9,9 million in the country remain unemployed. Furthermore, 25,9% of South Africans are food poor and 40% have to choose between food and other important items.

The Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo are the three poorest provinces, whilst Gauteng and the Western Cape are seen to be the wealthiest. The Gini coefficient of the country is at 0,68%, whilst inequality is highest amongst black Africans at 0,65%.

Key to all these, hon members, is the fact that we thought we need the Minister acknowledge that the tone he has set is actually saying to South Africans, no human being is inherently poor. People are

born under conditions of poverty. You have taken a mental attitude to conquer those conditions and in so doing, in my closing remarks, I want to say that your approach is actually supported by collective that has been demonstrated by the department and the committee. What is exciting in our committee is that we have taken a spirit of combating the scourge of poverty as South Africans. The spirit of unity is there and we have promised that when we are robust and clinical, it will be under conditions of clarity not under conditions of confusion.

Therefore, this approach, in my concluding words, calls for the change of mindset, the mindset that helps to do the following: eliminate the sense of feeling poor; open our eyes into our individual human potential; see possibilities in our human space, and thus invites in our hearts and minds a desire to live across all ages; and liberate ourselves from the victimhood of the past to the conquerors of this legacy. We support this Vote. [Applause.]

Ms B S MASANGO Hon House Chair, before I start, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to the Deputy Minister Bogopane-Zulu on her bereavement.

In his response to the President's state of the nation address, the DA leader, Mmusi Maimane stated and I quote:

I wish to say to you that when the decisions you take are in the interests of this country, we will be the first ones to support you.

This is exactly how I felt after the Portfolio Committee on Social Development was addressed by the new Minister. I felt encouraged and hopeful for the millions of South Africans, whose wellbeing depends on the leadership of the new Minister, Minister Lindiwe Zulu, working in partnership with the portfolio committee to ease the burdens that have been placed on them by the many social ills that beset this country.

The Minister acknowledged the many challenges faced by the department and committed to working with all partners to change the current situation.

The message I got from the Minister and the CEOs of the department's entities was that of acknowledging that the department and its entities alone will not be able to turn the tide of poor service delivery, eradicating the levels of vulnerability in our society and dealing decisively with those who have been found guilty of misconduct.

Much was said about ensuring that the many costly challenges that the department and its entities have grappled with will be resolved during the Sixth Parliament. We will exercise oversight on this

important undertaking. Amongst others, House Chair, the following remain a concern and need to be addressed without delay: Over 20 000 fraud cases in Sassa that require swift action both to save the millions of rand that have been defrauded and ensure the beneficiaries receive their grants on time; and the backlog in appeals due to the two-level processes that delay appeals by up to 90 days while the-would-be beneficiaries languish in hunger. To this effect, it is bizarre that the amendment Bill was approved by Cabinet in 2016 but only tabled in Parliament at the end of the 2017-18 financial year.

Substance abuse has escalated to very high levels in the country, but this has not been matched by concomitant interventions by the department. The operationalisation of the only four public substance abuse centres has been dragging for years. We expect this to happen without delay as this scourge has reared its ugly head even in schools, making teaching and learning difficult and even impossible in some cases.

The deteriorating relationship between the department and most nonprofit organizations has been a cause for great concern; considering that these are the organisations that provide much-needed services to the most vulnerable members of our society. The sector financing policy has been long awaited, during which time some non-profit-making organisations, NPOs, have had to close their doors, exposing those they served to more vulnerability.

Hon House Chair, we will monitor the realisation of the potential of the National Development Agency, NDA, to wean off the capable, willing and keen young people, who are recipients of the child support grant. In a country where unemployment has reached such high levels amongst the youth, every avenue must be exploited to ensure that work opportunities are made available for our citizens as early on in their lives as possible. The DA stands ready to support any effort and programme that seeks to intervene towards this end.

Hon House Chair, as the portfolio committee, we await the tabling of the Children's Act Amendment Bill which the previous Minister of Social Development presented as the response to the 2017 High Court order, instructing the department to generate a comprehensive legal solution to the foster care crisis we face. It has come to our attention that the children sector has been alarmed by some sections of this Bill and their implications for the hundreds and thousands of orphaned and abandoned children. The DA shares grave concern over what will happen to the children currently in the foster care system if the department is unable to solve this crisis; this, with specific reference to the 200 000 children whose grants will expire in November and December 2019.

We await the tabling of the Bill to understand how the department plans to solve this crisis, especially in light of the DDG's response to my question on this matter during the portfolio committee meeting in preparation for this debate, where she

explained that the amendment Bill will alleviate the foster care challenge by and I quote:

Allowing a poor woman in Bushbuckridge to adopt a child.

Hon Chairperson, our constitution states that:

A child's best interest is of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.

We therefore wait in anticipation the tabling of this Bill before the committee. I thank you. [Applause.]

Mrs D B NGWENYA: Chair, I greet you, hon commissars and fighters, I greet you South Africans. The primary mandate of the Department of Social Development is and I quote:

The provision of comprehensive, integrated and sustainable social development services.

We are a country and people traumatised by centuries of dispossession, violence, poverty and landlessness. That is why the Department of Social Development has such an important role to play because if we want to develop this country and build a nation and people that is proud of itself and its achievements, we need to

support the social development of our people because currently, the social fabric of our society is collapsing.

Youth up and down the country are hooked by substance abuse, and the worst of these substances is Nyaope. Nyaope is killing our youth, and without a youth, there will be no future. We must declare war on Nyaope and other drugs such as Tic. For this to end, the Department of Social Development must begin to work with the Departments of Police, Health, Education, Sports and Recreation to develop a joint programme that will allow us to tackle the drug epidemic.

In this fight against substance abuse, hon Chair, a key role the department can play is providing rehabilitation centres across the country. Our young people who are hooked on drugs must be able to find a space in our society where they are able to properly recover from their addiction, so that they can once again be integrated into society and become functioning and productive members. That space must be created by this department and must be in the form of good quality, well-staffed and well-resourced rehabilitation centres.

But rehabilitating people once they are hooked on drugs is only a short-term solution to the problem. The more long-term approach this department can take is to train and deploy social workers across our country. We need to have social workers and counsellors in schools, hospitals, police stations, orphanages, universities, TVET colleges and in workplaces.

It cannot be that throughout the country the SA Police Service only employs 114 counsellors and only 200 social workers. It cannot be that schools, TVET colleges and clinics do not have social workers. Our people, particularly women and young people experience the trauma of poverty, violence, unemployment and dispossession every day. If they do not have a way to progressively deal with this trauma, they will obviously turn to drugs or become suicidal.

Young people are dying every day because of mental health issues and for this issue to be addressed properly, social workers and counsellors need to be deployed everywhere in South Africa. If your department does not ensure the expansion of the social worker programme, our young people will continue to die and suffer from drug abuse and mental health issues.

On the issue of social grants, hon Chair, we have always maintained the principled position that the current allocation for social grants is simply not enough. We cannot expect 17 million South Africans to live off these meagre grants. That is why they must all be doubled.

But on top of that, municipalities cannot be charging families surviving on social grant for utilities. Any individual who relies on a social grant should not be required to pay for electricity or water. It is ridiculous and shows an alienation from the struggles of our people that this government expects people who receive these

social grants to pay for water and electricity. Many electricity bills including yours, Minister, are more than the total money received by social grant recipients every month.

We also need to see this department migrate all social grant beneficiaries to the Postbank. Currently, only 70% of these beneficiaries have been migrated.

An issue that this department must address is that over the years there have been 20 000 cases of fraud at SA Social Security Agency, SASSA, which have cost more than 5 000 people their grants; all because there was no fraud unit manager. The people who lost out on grants because of this vacancy must be immediately reimbursed. And we also want to thank the Minister for making sure that this vacancy is filled.

Another area where your department should establish joint programmes with other government departments, hon Minister, is with regard to the issue of sanitary pads, so that all learners at schools and institutions of higher learning who require sanitary pads receive them free of charge. We cannot continue to allow the exclusion of young girls from valuable class time simply because they do not have sanitary pads, and this department has an important role to play in ending this problem.

What is shocking, however, is that despite our society's growing need for this department and the services it should be providing, we are seeing cuts in staff as well as in the budget for things like equipment and machinery. This will impact on the provision of services by this department. If this department is cutting budgets, how is it going to build the much-needed shelters for women who run away from abuse? Government must create a safe place for abused women.

This department cannot meet the social development needs of this country and it is reflected in this budget. The budget of this Department of Social Development is not enough. That is why as the EFF, we reject this budget. Thank you.

Ms L L VAN DER MERWE: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister and hon Deputy Minister in her absence, we also wish to convey the IFP's condolences to her family. House Chairperson, we are South Africans, and we are women. So, we know the statistics on violence against women and children. We know because they are the highest in the world.

We know because yesterday we were once more confronted with a heart-wrenching story. This time it was the story of 32-year-old Joyce from the Jika Joe informal settlement in Pietermaritzburg. She had been searching for her 13-year-old disabled daughter since Sunday, only to discover her naked body two days ago.

We know. But what we do not know is how to deal with this crisis because our government has still not come up with clear, concrete and costed plan to fight violence against women and children. We know the statistics on social grants, on joblessness and on poverty, we know. The numbers sit in neat columns in printed documents much like the numbers in the budget before us.

Our job here today is not to just focus on the budget, but to fully appreciate the scale of the social crisis we are facing. The problem is neither hypothetical nor far removed. Just outside the parliamentary precinct, there are destitute people who sleep every night on the freezing cobblestones and broken benches. Just outside the parliamentary precinct in the early hours of tomorrow morning, drug addicts will feed their habit while a young woman on her way to work might risk being mugged or even raped.

When will you put them first, hon Minister, as you said in your opening remarks? And I wonder where is our moral outrage at the plight of the most vulnerable in our society, and where are the interventions of the Department of Social Development?

Because quite honestly, hon Minister, we are tired of hearing of more workshops and summits, talks about talks, more plans when the desperation of our people is increasing. When there are more addicts in the streets and more children in children's homes. When there are

more beggars at traffic lights, more people sleeping on our streets and more women facing war on our streets.

What we need now from you, Minister, is to lead a department that will drive radical consistent life-changing interventions under your leadership. And we need to see you, hon Minister, being the change that we need because for far too long, the Department of Social Development was led by a one-woman wrecking ball.

To make matters worse, the ANC's self-created Sassa crisis dominated our focus. The crisis was so intertwined with the ruling party that we were hardly surprised when the now former Minister of the Department Social Development told us that wives of ANC members, in fact, benefitted from the illegal Cash Paymaster contract it held with the state.

And even though Sassa is now on a stable footing, hon Minister, the governance of Sassa must be strengthened. In the Fifth Parliament, the IFP proposed a private members Bill to establish a board for Sassa and we hope to bring this to the committee in due course.

I heard you on the matters of fraud pertaining to Sassa, hon Minister, but it is clear that you need to beef up the fraud unit, to make accessible to the public, and to expedite investigations and refunds. Those caught stealing from the poor, must get lengthy jail sentences. Furthermore, the grant system must be linked to training

opportunities so that those who receive grants can also receive life skills.

But those will not be your only interventions that you will have to make, hon Minister. The plight of sex workers must be urgently addressed. Violence against women and children must be declared a national crisis and be dealt with as such.

The thousands of social workers who are sitting at home must be employed by the state, whether it is at schools to deal with violence or at police stations to handle rape cases. Greater support for nongovernmental organisations, NGOs, is needed because they provide vital services on behalf of the state. We need more treatment centres for those who come forward to seek help for substance abuse and it is shameful that government is still not rolling out its free sanitary pad programme in all provinces.

Every community must receive funded shelters for abused women; this is a non-negotiable. Femicide in South Africa is five times higher than the global rate. Surely, if we can spend a few hundred rands on prisoners in jails, we can spend more than R5 on a woman seeking help at a shelter. And no social worker at a shelter should still be earning less than the minimum wage.

Chairperson, as somebody who hopes to adopt children myself in future, I implore all of us to support and promote adoption in South

Africa. To this end, the IFP will not be supporting any plans that are afoot that will see adoption agencies possibly closing down. We look forward to working with you, new Minister, and chairperson of the committee. The time for talking is over; we must act now, and we need you to be as vociferous in speaking for the vulnerable, as you are when you heckle us in the National Assembly. I thank you. [Time expired.] [Applause.]

Ms T BREEDT: Hon Chairperson, the FF Plus also wishes to express its condolences to the Deputy Minister in her time of bereavement. With previous state of the nation address the President has always boasted about this department and the increase in the number of social grants being paid. The latest figure according to the Sassa's annual performance plan and budget presentation is that 17,8 million social grants to just over 11 million adult recipients are being paid. To me this has never quite made sense. Should the government's main goal not be to decrease a number of social grants because it has eradicated poverty? Should the government not want people to stand on their own two feet? Does the government not want their citizens to reach their full potential and to be part of the economically-sound and growing South Africa? I honestly, think not.

I have done some research and I am glad to hear that the Minister knows what her department is about. I would like to quote the department's explanation as to what they are supposed to be doing.

We endeavour to create a better life for the poor, vulnerable and excluded in our society. Our task is to develop and monitor the implementation of social policy that ...

... and this is very important ...

... both creates an enabling environment for and leads to the reduction in poverty. As social welfare professionals, we act on the basis of solidarity with all of humanity and we seek to empower communities and engender self-reliance by creating conditions of sustainable livelihoods.

Die departement is egter in 'n jammerlike toestand en faal afgrysvol in hierdie hoofdoel.

Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling is wel een van die belangrikste begrotingsposte, aangesien dit met die versorging van behoeftige mense en die belangrike mandaat van ontwikkeling en opheffing te doen het. Agb Minister, deur die Voorsitter, ons hoop dat die belofte om hierdie mandaat uit te voer, nie net 'n droom sal bly nie. Om die werklike maatskaplike en welsynsbehoefte van Suid-Afrika in ag te neem, is dit duidelik dat hierdie begroting en teikens geherprioritiseer moet word.

Die departement het 'n strategiese verpligting om opheffings- en ontwikkelingswerk te doen. Ons kan nie bekostig om slegs 'n

welsynstaat te wees wat miljarde rande aan welsynstoelae bestee en nie die werkloses en armes werklik ophef deur geïntegreerde projekte wat onderwys en werkskepping bevorder nie.

Vroeë kinderonwikkelingsprojekte is hier ook baie belangrik. Baie van hierdie projekte faal egter weens wanadministrasie en wanbesteding van fondse. (*Translation of Afrikaans paragraph follows.*)

[However, the department is in a sorry state and is failing dreadfully at this main goal.

Social Development is indeed one of the most important budgetary posts as it has to do with the caring of the needy and the important mandate of development and upliftment. Hon Minister, through the Chairperson, we hope that the promise to carry out this mandate will not merely remain a dream. To take into account the real social and welfare needs of South Africa, it is evident that this budget and goals must be reprioritised.

The department has a strategic obligation to uplift and to develop. We cannot afford to be just a welfare state that spends billions of rand on welfare grants, and not really uplift the unemployed and the poor through integrated projects that promote education and job creation.

Early childhood development projects are also very important here. However, many of these projects fail as a result of maladministration and misappropriation of funds.]

We do acknowledge that the department is facing immense and increasing challenges as the demands and needs with regard to social welfare increase. Hon Minister, through you Chair, I know I am focussing on Sassa a lot but Sassa in particular has me worried. We have nine provinces and out of these nine provinces, six have regional executive manager posts that are vacant with every new year the number of permanent staff decreases.

Met poste, en veral kritieke poste, wat nie gevul word nie, kan ons nie verwag dat die armstes van die armes ooit opgehef gaan word nie.

'n Praktiese voorbeeld hiervan is Jagersfontein in die Vrystaat, waarvandaan ek kom, waar daar slegs een dokter, een keer elke twee maande besoek aflê vir die goedkeuring van mediese ongeskiktheidstoelae. Hierdie een dokter kan nie by almal uitkon nie en meeste van die persone wat kwalifiseer vir ongeskiktheidstoelaes, word weggewys.

Verder is die haglike toestande, waarin hierdie pasiënte moet wag, onaanvaarbaar en verhinder dit die siek, swak en gestremdes om die nodige papierwerk te doen, om hul toelaes te ontvang. Hierdie

sneeubaleffek veroorsaak dat persone en gesinne vir maande sonder enige vorm van inkomste of mediese sorg moet voortgaan.

Ons kan nie dat die mees behoeftiges in Suid-Afrika weens onbekwaamheid, gebrek aan beplanning en verkeerde prioriteite ly nie.

Voorsitter, dan het ek nog nie eers begin praat van die Suid-Afrikaanse Agentskap vir Maatskaplike Sekerheid, Sassa, se teikens wat nie behaal is of die onreëlmatige uitgawes van R2 miljard nie. (*Translation of Afrikaans paragraphs follows.*)

[With posts, and especially critical posts, that are not being filled, we cannot expect that the poorest of the poor will ever be uplifted.

A practical example is Jagersfontein in the Free State, from where I come, where only one doctor is visiting once every two months for approval of medical disability allowance. This one doctor cannot reach everyone and therefore most of the people who qualify for disability allowances are rejected.

Furthermore, the dire conditions in which these people must wait are unacceptable and prevent the sick, weak and disabled from doing the necessary paperwork to receive their grants. This snowball effect is

causing individuals and families to continue for months without income or medical care.

We cannot allow the neediest in South Africa to suffer because of incompetence, lack of planning and wrong priorities.

Chairperson, I have not even begun to talk about the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa's targets that have not been achieved or the irregular expenditure of R2 billion.]

Hon Chair, poverty will never be eradicated by social grants alone neither by ANC rhetoric and blame shifting that we currently see in the tasks. Keeping a large part of the population dependent on social grants might be politically convenient for the ruling party but it is not sustainable for South Africa as a whole. It is not good or healthy for South Africa.

Ek het ook 'n droom, soos die agb President ... (*Translation of Afrikaans sentence follows.*)

[I also have a dream, like the hon President ...]

... but I dream of a South Africa where this department has become obsolete. I dream of South Africa where there are equal opportunities for all and where poverty is no more.

My droom sal egter slegs waar word, wanneer die ANC nie meer in regering is nie. Ek dank u. [Tyd verstryk het.] (*Translation of Afrikaans paragraph follows.*)

[However, my dream will only come true when the ANC is no longer in government. I thank you. [Time expired.]]

Ms T BREEDT: Hon Chairperson, on a point of order: I heard some of the comments from the members and maybe the Table staff could assist to ascertain if the interpreting services are working or not. I wanted to bring this to your attention before the hon member starts so that we can sort that out because a lot of our debates are missing due to that. I thank you. [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubele-Mashele): Order hon members! Interpreting is on channel one and as you continue you get other languages on other channels. I was able to understand you because I put Interpreting channel number one into English. So, interpreting is working.

Ms M E SUKERS: Hon Chairperson, the ACDP congratulates the Minister on her appointment. Hon Minister, the conviction with which you made a commitment to service has to be cascaded down to every civil servant in this department. Every gogo [grandmother], foster parent and orphan must be served with that same conviction at service points. Access, availability and care ...

... omgee moet die fondasie wees van diens! (*Translation of Afrikaans sentence follows.*)

[Caring must be the foundation of service!]

Treasury projects that 18,6 million people, up from 17,6 million, will be on social grants within the next two years. If the Department of Social Development fails in its mission, South Africa fails as a nation. It is critical for the National Development Agency, NDA to get its house in order and deliver a budget that is focused on the reason for its existence: to move individuals and communities towards self-reliance. Therein lies the silver bullet to combat poverty and reliance on the state.

Vir miljoene Suid Afrikaners is Sosiale Ontwikkeling 'n lewensboot, teen die aanslae van armoede, geweld en verslawing. Verslawing beroof ons jongmense van hul drome, en ons land van waardevolle menslike potensiaal. Dit bind ons gemeenskappe in 'n siklus van geweld en ekonomiese afhanklikheid! Die goeie stories soos die van Life Recovery Sentrum in Randfontein moet die norm wees.

(*Translation of Afrikaans paragraph follows.*)

[For millions of South Africans Social Development is a lifeboat against the onslaught of poverty, violence and addiction. Addiction deprives our young people of their dreams, and our country of precious human potential. It binds our communities in a cycle of

violence and economic dependency! The good stories like those of Life Recovery Centre in Randfontein must be the norm.]

Chair, we need more rehabilitation centres and we urge the department to urgently ensure that the rehabilitation centre in the Free State is fully functional. We also have to strengthen the efforts of nonprofit organisations, NPOs and community organisations who are at the forefront of the fight against addiction. We have to link addiction treatment and skills development by channelling funds and capacity-building interventions to grassroots programmes. We must develop strategic interventions to raise awareness on the dangers of drugs and make it easier for addicts to find help. Families affected by drugs need to get help quickly, and this requires a responsive social support system.

In order for us to build more self-reliant communities, we need to make sure that the life boat they are on, does not take on water. Address and deal decisively with fraud and unlawful expenditure. The fear of imprisonment must be a deterrent for those who abuse the system and steal from the vulnerable. Let us attract and train our talented young people to become social entrepreneurs or social workers in order to build our social economy.

Lastly, hon Minister we urge the department to increase social grants to the elderly, and those who take care of vulnerable children, provided all regulatory conditions are met. A crisis gives

rise to opportunity, and the ACDP views our current crisis as an opportunity for all of us to unite in common purpose, build a stronger nation, and help our people to grow and become more productive and self-reliant. We support the department's objective to move the young, abled and people with disabilities towards self-reliance.

It will however require commitment to good governance and implementation of social programmes aimed at empowerment. I thank you.

Nksk T G MPAMBO-SIBHUKWANA: Ngqanga neentsiba zayo. Ukusilela kweSebe lezoPhuhliso loLuntu kwisicwangciso kushiya uninzi loonontlalo-ntle abanezidanga beswele imisebenzi. Ndivumele ndithi kuMphathiswa owona mba utshisa ibunzi kweli sebe kukungathathwa koonontlalontle. Urhulumente ezijule ijacu wafundisa ulutsha ukuba babengoonontlalo-ntle. Ngomnyaka wama-2018 urhulumente uthembise ukuba liza kwenyuka inani lisuke kuma-3 800. Ngoku kusemva konyaka kodwa eli nani lisamile. Urhulumente usibambise isisila sehobe.

Oonontlalo-ntle bahleli nje emakhaya endaweni yokunceda uluntu ludinga imisebenzi kodwa sisizwe esonganyelwe kukuxhatshazwa kotywala neziyobisi. Oku kubonakalisa ukuba ulutsha aluzithembanga kwaye ilahleko yemali kweli sebe ingaphaya kokuthetha.

Singakuqinesika njani ukutywalwa kwemali nohanjiswa kwezakhono ezizizo kulutsha lwethu xa urhulumente engalugeshi?

Nangona urhulumente ememelele oonontlalo-ntle abangagqibelelanga ukuba babhalise kweyeKwindla wama-2019, uninzi lwabo alukaqeshwa kunanamhlanje. Uphando luthi bangaphantsi kwama-4 000 abaxhamle ekufundisweni ngurhulumente kodwa kungokunje abakaqeshwa. Eli nani alithethi ngaba bazifundisileyo. Umzila kaBathabile Dlamini wokungasetyenziswa kwemali ngendlela eyiyo nasekutyesheleni kwakhe ukuhlolwa nokoluswa kweli sebe, kushiye kunechaphaza elibi.

(Translation of isiXhosa paragraphs follows.)

[Mrs T G MPAMBO-SIBHUKWANA: All protocol observed. The Department of Social Development's lack of planning leaves many graduate social workers unemployed. Allow me to tell the Minister that the most pressing issue in this department is not employing social workers. The government fully committed itself to educating the youth to become social workers. In 2018, the government promised that their number will increase from 3 800. Now it is more than a year later, but the number is still the same. The government deceived us.

Social workers are just sitting at home instead of helping people; they need jobs but we are a society that is overcome by alcohol and drug abuse. This shows that young people lack confidence and that the financial loss in the department is far from over. How can we ensure investment and the transfer of basic skills to our youth when government is not employing them?

Although the government has invited inexperienced social workers to register in March 2019, today many of them are still not employed. Surveys show that less than 4 000 benefitted from government funding, but they are currently unemployed. This number does not include those who paid their own fees. Bathabile Dlamini has left a bad track record of irregular spending and avoiding oversight and monitoring which left this department with a bad reputation.]

What we need from the government is an update of its current registration procedures on the National Development Plan which envisions the employment of social workers as part of the 55 000 social service practitioners by 2030. Exactly how is the government planning to achieve this goal? And even though government-funded graduates may be prioritized, how does the government plan to incorporate those graduates who have been privately funded?

Omnje umba otshisa ibunzi ngulo weziyobisi. (*Translation of isiXhosa sentence follows.*)

[Another serious issue is the one of drugs.]

It has recently been reported that the widespread and problematic use of heroin in South African small towns, big cities and rural areas has significantly increased. According to the NX project in 2015, figures indicated a total of 75 000 users injecting the drugs while 110 000 smoked it. It is important to note that this issue of

past and future drug abuse does not exist independently from that of the aforementioned issue of social workers.

Uphando lubonisa ukuba bekukho oontlalo-ntle abanezakhono kumaziko abuyisela kwiimeko zesiqhelo ngekungcono kwaye ngekukho impumelelo. Oonontlalo-ntle abanezakhono bayafuneka ekuncedisaneni neengxaki abantu abaqubisana nazo. Luxanduva leli sebe Mphathiswa ukuqesha nokuginisekisa ukuba amaziko okubuyisela kwiimeko zesiqhelo ayasebenza.

Ulutsha kufuneka luhlale luhlolwa njalo kula maziko okubuyisela kwiimeko zesiqhelo. Amaziko okubuyisela kwiimeko zesiqhelo eziphantsi kwenkampani uBosasa zifunyaniswe ukuba zifumana imali ngorhwaphilizo. Ukuba la maqumrhu ayevaliwe ngesingekho kule ngxaki sizibona sikuyo. IDA yakhe umkhanyo, lumka! [Laphela ixesha.] [Kwaqhwytywa.] (*Translation of isiXhosa paragraphs follows.*)

[Surveys show that if there were more experienced social workers at rehabilitation centres, that would have been better and that would be a success. Skilled social workers are needed to help solve the problems that people face. It is the responsibility of this department, hon Minister, to appoint social workers and to ensure that the rehabilitation centres are working.

Young people should be monitored regularly at these rehabilitation centres. Rehabilitation centres under Bosasa have been found to have

received money fraudulently. If these entities were closed, we would not be in this situation. The DA is watching; be careful! [Time expired.] [Applause.]]

Mr D M STOCK: Hon Chairperson, Minister, chairperson of the portfolio committee, hon Gungubele, the Deputy Minister in absentia, we would like to convey our sincere condolences to the Deputy Minister during this moment of bereavement. The ANC rises in support of Vote 17 of Social Development. Key to the ANC's social transformation programme is the meeting of social needs, which are aimed at strategically dealing with the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality which confront the majority of our people who are poor and vulnerable.

The hon member of the FF Plus came to the podium earlier and made some irritating sound vibes from this podium. We can really not leave this podium without clarifying that, but we also take note of the fact the hon member is indeed a new member of this sixth administration. We acknowledge the fact that we were all new, irrespective of whether it was in the sixth or the fourth administration. We were all new. We must also allow hon members to learn the Rules of this Parliament and they must not be too much in a rush. The disadvantage of being in a rush is that you end up collapsing on your own without being pushed to collapse.

Hon Breedt, it was your maiden speech, but ...

... ons moet jou een ding sê. Social grants [staatstoelae] is baie belangrik vir ons mense wat swaarkry en wat staatmaak op dit wat die ANC-regering vir hulle gee. Jy kan nie vandag vir ons sê dat die ANC-regering vir die al mense geld gee om die propaganda daarvan aan te moedig nie. Dis nie die waarheid nie. Daardie statement [stelling] van jou is baie misleading [misleidend]. (*Translation of Afrikaans paragraph follows.*)

[... we must tell you one thing. Social grants are very important to our people who are suffering and who rely on what the ANC-led government is giving them. You cannot tell us today that the ANC-led government is giving money to all these people in support of its propaganda. That is not the truth. That statement of yours is very misleading.]

Our ordinary people on the ground, our poorest of the poor, rely on those social grants because of our historical background, through the apartheid legacy, which the ANC inherited in 1994. We had to inherit what the apartheid regime did to our people. So, the ANC, since 1994, 25 years into democracy, is actually working to correct that legacy of the past. So, you don't have to come here and tell us that our people are receiving those grants because we want to continue to dispense patronage for them to support us. No.

We remain committed in ensuring that a decent life is created for our people through the ANC-led government and the budget that was presented here earlier by our hon Minister.

This will require a comprehensive social security system, which is underpinned by the elimination of poverty and is linked towards the reduction of poverty and inequality. This is particularly important, as the key outcome of the social transformation goal of the ANC seeks to ensure the restoration of the total human dignity for all South Africans is being achieved.

The ANC's social protection policies and programmes over the last 25 years have commendably enabled millions of poor people to change their livelihoods for the better. However, we are aware that challenges still persist and we will work with the department and the entities of the department to ensure that our people receive the dignity they deserve and to ensure that their dignity is being restored through the budget that was outlined earlier by the Minister.

Let me take this opportunity again to explain, because I have picked up a few issues that we need to clarify and respond to. One of them is the issue of the social workers' scholarship and funding.

The awarding of bursaries to young people has enabled the department to recruit, train and deploy the youth to work in the social

services sector. As a result, implementing the social worker employment grant at a national level has reached the zenith of its success, which has led the department to transfer this responsibility to the different provinces. Provincial social development departments will now have the responsibility of employing social work graduates in the different provinces. This means that R678,5 million over the medium term has shifted from the national to the provincial departments to facilitate this process from the 2019-20 financial year.

I must highlight that through the department's social worker scholarship programme, 632 social work graduates have successfully completed this programme. This has enabled these social work graduates to deliver services to the neediest and vulnerable. The department will, in the 2020-21 financial year, support 1 046 students to complete their studies through social service scholarships. It must be noted that this is a decline from the current number, due to the reprioritisation of funds.

On unemployed social worker graduates, we note with serious concern the number of unemployed social worker graduates and request the department to continue with haste its collaboration with other departments to ensure that the absorption of these social worker graduates is actually being implemented or prioritised.

The challenge which we have to urgently pursue is that even with these pursued interdepartmental collaborations to absorb social work graduates, there is no funding to address this challenge because it is not a priority for this department. We cannot emphasise how important the profession of social work is, particularly in these current times at schools and in our communities.

Regarding vacant posts, which were also raised by one of the hon members, we note the cost-containment measures that National Treasury has put in place, which have reduced programme budgets, all due to the current economic climate. This has however led to several posts in the department remaining vacant for a very long time, which directly affects the department's ability to fulfil its mandate and strategically intervene in addressing the triple challenges.

We encourage the department to ensure that the available resources are optimally used, to not only prioritise the most critical posts, but towards getting the basics right to ensure that with the minimum resources, optimal service delivery is being prioritised.

Regarding the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, we are in support of the strides being made at Sassa to address the challenges that the entity confronts. We are encouraged by the proactive action to turn the entity around to ensure the effective and efficient administration, management and payment of social assistance to our people.

With regard to the social grant fraud investigation, which was also raised, we welcome the efforts that Sassa has made in ensuring that 95% of reported theft and corruption cases were finalised by March 2019. We remain concerned about the renewed fraud cases, specifically targeting older persons. We urge Sassa to increase its pace on its turnaround time in resolving cases of fraud.

We urge the unions to also walk in collaboration with Sassa to resolve the implementation of the biometric system, which will, in particular, deal with the challenges of fraud that the system is confronted with. Fraud, whereby people change the identity and the bank accounts of people and rob the poorest of the poor.

The ANC has resolved that there should be a comprehensive strategy that co-ordinates and monitors the protection of vulnerable groups, which must be resourced to ensure that these vulnerable groups are always protected. The ANC remains committed in our policy decision, that social transformation must empower our people to lift themselves out of poverty and change their lives for the better, whilst ensuring that a safety net is provided for the vulnerable. It is through this budget that our people will move and migrate from the situations of poverty, unemployment and inequality that confront them. The ANC supports this Budget Vote. I thank you. [Applause.]

Mr C H M SIBISI: Hon House Chairperson, hon Minister and hon members. The NFP welcomes and supports Budget Vote of the Department of Social Development.

House Chairperson, we have over 30 million people living below the upper-bound poverty line, and women are the most affected by this. Female-headed households mostly feel and experience poverty. Women and children suffer a great deal in these circumstances. We are considered one of the most unequal countries in the world, and yet the gap between rich and poor is increasing.

The Department of Social Development must find a way to assist those unemployed social workers.

The NFP welcomes the intersectoral policy on sheltering services. The homeless avoid making use of the sheltering services in the place due to the harsh conditions of many of these shelters. Chairperson, we need to build more shelters and improve those in place together with nongovernmental organizations, NGOs, and civil societies.

Minister, as we walk up to Parliament we cannot avoid the number of homeless people sleeping on the doorsteps of local shops. The finding presented by the Commission on Gender Equality, CGE, Systemic Investigation Report of Shelters that Accommodate Victims

of Violence gives us a clear indication that serious attention must be given to those issues.

Chairperson, the Minister, in the report, highlighted the need for SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, to have a board through the amendment of the Act. The NFP supports the implementation of a board; however, the selection process must be thoroughly scrutinized and closely monitored. We must elect board members that will restore the people's trust after the unfortunate failures of the past administration.

The NFP agrees with the Minister's decision to integrate entities to eliminate groups working in silos in order to achieve a common goal.

The NFP believes that social entrepreneurship training must be provided to all underprivileged communities. In the report the Minister aims to change the narrative of the department from just a grant-giving department to a self-development channel. What better way to create entrepreneurs that can assist with alleviating poverty and create healthy working communities.

We must empower our communities through skills and training. The department must provide a variety of programs that can assist people in becoming self-reliant. Thank you.

Ms A L A ABRAHAMS: Hon Minister, Chairperson, ladies and gentleman, on 29 June an eight-month-old baby was sexually assaulted on the Cape Flats. There is little doubt left that social ills such as substance abuse and domestic abuse are rapidly increasing and our families disintegrating.

Social work graduates signing up on your database, is not a job. They are still sitting at home. Get these social work graduates that your department spent millions on into our communities and give these graduates their hope back and our children their innocence.

Our country's Gross Domestic Product, GDP, is not growing and this is will only increase the number of South Africans in need of social assistance. Spending R184 billion this year means absolutely nothing to the person who has no education, no food, no jobs, and under this ANC-led government, no future. [Interjections.]

These billions of rand must contribute to a long-term sustainable solution for a better South Africa, not a growing dependency on state welfare.

Single mother, Patricia Davids of Elsies River, was shot and paralysed, confining her to a wheelchair. She lives in a shelter with her 13-year-old daughter. Ms Davids is grateful for the grant, but she says it is simply not enough to cover their basic needs.

Social grants are not meant to be Ms Davids and her daughter's way of life; it's meant to be a means to a better one.

The first 1 000 days in a child's life is the most crucial, yet, what is R440 a month supposed to cover, when part of that money must still be used for electricity and food for the rest of the family? In October this amount will increase by R10. Minister, how is R10 an investment in our children? [Interjections.] [Applause.]

The DA's plan is to increase the child grant to an objective measure of what it actual costs to feed a child. That pregnant mothers are pre-registered, so that when that baby arrives they will have the necessities.

Sassa's R162 billion spent on grants this financial year is meant to improve the standard of living. But the grant amounts are not enough to get our people out of poverty; they're merely enough to keep them alive.

Minister, how are you going to eradicate poverty when you can't even get Sassa officials to stop stealing the grant money or Cash Paymaster Services, CPS, and those ANC wives liable for the years of theft? [Interjections.]

Social Development and its welfare system is supposed to be a safety net for the vulnerable. Instead, it has become a spider's web,

capturing and paralyzing our citizens until they are exhausted with no way of escaping. Thank you, Chair. [Applause.]

Manana N K BILANKULU: Mutshamaxitulu, Holobye wa na Xandla xa Holobye, hi ri chavelelekani eka xiyimo lexi mi nga eka xona. Onge Xikwembu xa matilo xi nga mi pfuna mi hundza eka xona. Eka vachaviseki hinkwenu, MaAfrika-Dzonga, va ndzawulo, SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, na National Development Agency, NDA, ri perile. Ndzi rhandza ku sungula hi ku vula leswaku hi ri ANC, hi ri ha yi seketela vhoti ya mpimanyeto leyi.

Nhlangano wa ANC a wu telanga ku ta vulavula switori, kambe mitirho ya vulavula. Ndzi twa ndzi xiximiwile swinene namuntlha ku va ndzi ri xiphemu xa vanhu lava nga eka njhekanjhekisano wa mpimanyeto lowu nga vekiwa ndzawulo namuntlha eka n'hwetile leyo saseka leyi yi hi tsundzuxaka leswikulu tanihi tiko ra Afrika-Dzonga na misava hinkwayo laha hi tsundzuxaka nhenha Tatana Nelson Mandela.

Tanihi murhumiwa kusuka eka ANC, hi ri mpimanyeto lowu nga kona lowu vekiweke wa R184,7 wa tibiliyoni ku ta antswisa vutomi bya vanhu, hi vona wu ri mpimanyeto wa kahle lowu nga ta pfuna hikuva leswi hi swi langutaka swinene a hi ku ta hi ta vulavula kumbe ku ta ta kaneta, kambe ku ta hi ta endla. Hi vulavula hi ku antswisa vutomi bya vanhu. Leswi swi nga pimanyetiwa hi leswi swi vonakaka. Ndzi pfumela leswaku MuAAfrika-Dzonga wun'wana na wun'wana wa swi tiva leswaku ku na vana lava kumaka mpfuneto wo huma eka Ndzawulo ya Nhluvukiso wa

Vaaki. Hi na vana vo ringana 12,5 wa timiliyoni lava pfumalaka, lava hi mali leyi va yi kumaka eka vona yi vulaka leswikulu hikuva va etlela va nga dyangi nchumu. Ku na vadyuhari va 3,5 wa timiliyoni lava na vona vs hlayisiwaka hi ndzawulo leyi. Ku na miliyoni yin'we ya vanhu lava hanyaka na vutsoniwa lava va hlayisiwaka hi ndzawulo leyi. Nakambe, ku na 17,6 wa timiliyoni wa lava va kumaka mudende kwala ka Ndzawulo ya Nhluvukiso wa Vaaki. Hinkwaswo leswi i mitirho ya ANC. *(Translation of Xitsonga paragraphs follows.)*

[Ms N K BILANKULU: Chairperson, the Minister and the Deputy Minister, we are conveying our condolences towards the situation that you find yourself in. May God the Heavenly Father assist you to cope. To all the hon members, South Africans, the department, the SA Social Security Agency, Sassa and the National Development Agency, NDA, good evening.

The ANC did not come here to say myths, but actions speak louder than words. I feel so honoured today to be part of the people who are participating in the Budget Vote that has been set aside for the department today in this beautiful month that reminds us of the great achievements as South Africa and the world at large wherein we remember the hero, Mr Nelson Mandela.

As delegates from the ANC, we are saying that the budget of R184,7 billion that has been set aside to improve the lives of the people, we perceive it as a reasonable budget that will assist because what

we look closely at is not to come and debate or to oppose, but to come and act. We are talking about improving the lives of the people. What has been budgeted for is tangible. I believe that every South African knows that there are children who get grants from the Department of Social Development. We have approximately 12,5 million children who are destitute and the grant that they receive means a lot to them because they go to bed on empty stomachs. There are 3,5 million elderly people who receive grants from this department. Furthermore, there are 17,6 million of them who receive pension from the Department of Social Development. All these are the deeds of the ANC.]

Nelson Mandela once said:

What count in life is not the mere fact that we had lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.

So, I'm saying to my colleagues on my left that if you cannot be a bridge to connect people, please, then do not be a wall to separate them. [Applause.] Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, but an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural, but men-made and it can be overcome and be eradicated by the action of human beings.

Hikokwalaho, mi nga yimayimi laha mi endla onge a hi swi tivi
leswaku hikokwalaho ka yini hi ri swisiwana. (*Translation of
Xitsonga sentence follows.*)

[This is why you should not stand around and pretend as if you do
not know why we are poor.]

When the ANC entered into a social contract with our people through
the Reconstruction and Development Programme in 1994, it was to
demonstrate our ability towards committing to the social
transformation of our people, towards improving their lives for the
better. [Interjections.] "Yingisa" [Listen.] That is why our social
transformation policies are underpinned by the principle of creating
a better life for all, and not for individuals. We are not looking
at the colour; we are talking about the South Africans.
[Interjections.]

AN HON MEMBER: What about corruption?

Ms N K BILANKULU: This we did as an understanding of what our past
has done to the dignity of the majority of our people and what had
to be done in the present for a future that is rid of the indignity
caused due to poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Premised on the 1955 Freedom Charter which expressed clearly our
fight for human rights and the dignity of all our people, the ANC

policy inputs into the final Constitution of the Republic expressed the ANCs commitment to a society that is free and open based on democratic values where the dignity and worth of every South African is protected by law. [Interjections.]

AN HON MEMBER: What about the brown envelope?

Ms N K BILANKULU: This became enshrined in the Bill of Rights which affirms the democratic values of human dignity and equality.

[Interjections.]

Leswi a swi ndzi hlamarisi hikuva lava va nga mi rhuma va mi rhumile ku ta ta kaneta. Vandla ra ANC ri rhumiwile ku ta ta tirha.

(Translation of Xitsonga paragraph follows.)

[We are not surprised because those who sent you did so with the view that you should come and oppose. The ANC has been sent to serve.]

It is in this context that our task is to construct a socially-inclusive society that prioritises the elimination of poverty, inequality, unemployment and underdevelopment, which are elements that undermine the dignity of our people. The dictum that poverty will always be with us should be rejected as it is created by society and it can therefore be eliminated by society. The ANC resolved to address poverty and inequality, and has committed to

providing a social safety for the poor and the most vulnerable who include women, children, youth, families in need of care and older persons. The sum total and fulfilment of this commitment is broadly known as a social wage to these individuals and the provision of publicly-delivered transfers, goods and services are known as the social floor as provided by the state and demonstrated in Vote 17.

The above is important in enabling our people to access opportunities that enable them to partake in economic opportunities that will result in them uplifting themselves out of poverty and improving their lives. This will provide citizens with playing a collaborative role with government in enhancing their dignity. The right to human dignity becomes more meaningful with the effective and efficient provision of basic services to our people, which is meant to continuously better the quality of their lives.

After five successive ANC administrations, working with the people has over the 25 years put in place a progressive social wage that protects the dignity of the vulnerable children, the elderly and people living with disabilities. [Interjections.]

AN HON MEMBER: Smolanyana [Small] skeletons!

Ms N K BILANKULU: You, hon member, keep quiet!

This budget has again ensured that the social assistance programme, which provides social assistance, remains the main spending focus over the 2019 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. This means that there is going to be a R1,5 billion reduction on the medium-term allocation, although the allocation will increase to R27 billion from an allocation of R175 billion in 2019-20 to R202 billion in 2021-22. This translate into estimated growth rate of up to 18,1 million beneficiaries by 2021-22 from 17,5 million in 2018-19.

The importance of this is not to have an increase in our people depending on social grants, but to ensure that these grants enable them to be linked to economic activity to ensure that they use these grants to empower themselves and lift themselves from poverty.

We welcome the finalisation within this current financial year of the financing strategy of early childhood centres. The aim of this financing strategy is to provide a long-term approach to funding quality improvements and increasing coverage across age groups using different approaches such as learning, playgroups, toy libraries and home-visiting programmes for parents. An amount of R1,6 billion has been allocated to enable an increase for children to access early childhood development, ECD, services as well as funding existing ECD centres. This is in line with the ANC's commitment of working towards achieving universal access to two years of ECD.

Against the backdrop of the Statistician-General Risenga Maluleka who noticed that 25,2% of South Africans are food poor, the ANC in its 2019 national and provincial elections manifesto committed to tackling household food insecurity head-on. In this regard, efforts have been made to deepen food-relief programme and is funded to ensure that food security sustains the 84 community nutrition-development centres across the nine distribution centres. This means that between 2019 and 2021, the goal is to improve access to food by ensuring that annually four million meals reach impoverished communities. An amount of R109 million has been allocated to the food-relief programme for the next three years.

Significantly, the transfer of payments of R200 million annually over the medium-term to the National Development Agency will ensure that sustainable community-driven projects are implemented to support nonprofit organisations working on ECD ... [Interjections.]

U ta swi tiva njhani hikuva swi nga endleka n'wana wa wena a nga yi eka ECD? (*Translation of Xitsonga sentence follows.*)

[How will you know because your child does not attend ECD?]

... food security, employment creation and income opportunities.

All of these are mechanisms to uplift communities and are efforts to create better lives for them. We are looking forward to the

implementation of the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Upon implementation we urge communities to participate and support persons with disabilities and their families to empower and drive disability inclusion in the communities. This is an important measure to ensure that reasonable accommodation support measures are available in all social development services.

We boldly welcome the work that is being done to ensure that sheltering services for victims of crime and violence are strengthened. We will support over the medium term the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Gender-Based Violence. The ANCs commitment towards combating substance abuse is emphasised in our social programme which is aimed at improving the lives of all people. [Interjections.] I will not be intimidated by you. It must include the vigorous implementation of the drug master plan.

Creative and effective programmes which assist in preventing vulnerable people from being dependent on these substances must be pursued. [Interjections.] I understand why you don't want to listen to this because it doesn't affect your people; it only affects our own people. [Applause.] Thus, we welcome the intensified efforts by the department to prevent and treat substance abuse through the implementation of the Antisubstance Programme of Action.

Over the medium term R224,6 million is allocated to the completion and construction of public substance abuse treatment centres in the Eastern Cape, Free State, Northern Cape and Bokone Bophirima.

Hi ku pfala ... *(Translation of Xitsonga sentence follows.)*

[Lastly ...]

... the ANC has remained firm and consistent in that our social development programmes have been and are aimed at addressing primarily poverty amongst our people. We welcome how this budget will progressively address the challenges of underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment and inequality. We will continue to conduct oversight to monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes to ensure that impact and change is made to improve the lives of our people for the better. Today's economic, social and environmental challenges demand collective action. I don't know whether you will be part of that collective. Solutions come only when the private sector, public sector and the civil society join hands.

Rintiho rin'we a ri nusi hove. *(Translation of Xitsonga sentence follows.)*

[Work requiring time cannot be achieved by one man only.]

We can always be each other's keeper. Let us resolve to heal the world and make it a better place to be. We can! "Thuma mina" [Send me]. "Khawuleza" [Hurry up] ANC and the department.

ANC yi seketela vhoti ya mpimanyeto leyi. Inkomu. [Va phokotela.]
(*Translation of Xitsonga sentence follows.*)

[The ANC supports this Budget Vote. I thank you.] [Applause.]

Mr M GUNGUBELE: Hon Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): I note you, hon member.

Mr M GUNGUBELE: Yes. I want to draw your attention to the worst primitive behaviour shown by hon Paulsen. He showed a sign of a finger while he was coming in. I would request that the cameras be checked and actually he be called to account because this is not an environment ... [Interjections.]

Mr M N PAULSEN: Chairperson, I think this is the guy who insinuated.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): You have not been noted, hon Paulsen. Take your seat.

Mr M GUNGUBELE: This is an environment of professional, decent and ... [Interjections.]

Mr M N PAULSEN: No, I waited for you ... [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): You have not been noted.

Mr M GUNGUBELE: We request that it be checked, hon Chairperson, so that it can go where it belongs.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Hon Paulsen!

Mr M N PAULSEN: Chairperson!

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Hon Paulsen, before you say anything, stand up.

Mr M N PAULSEN: I am standing!

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Switch off the mic. Remain standing! Listen to me, hon Paulsen. I want to find out if the gestures that you have made ...

Mr M N PAULSEN: [Interjections.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Hon Paulsen! Hon Paulsen! I want to find out if you have made the gestures alleged. I am asking you.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Let me explain this to you. While walking in, he called my name, and I waved at him. [Interjections.] But I don't know if that is drunkenness or something, that he's hallucinating and accusing me of a behaviour that ... He called me primitive. He must withdraw. He called me primitive! I nicely waved at him and he ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Hon Paulsen, I am the one presiding over the session. Speak to me. Right now I have asked you if you have made those gestures. [Interjections.]

Mr M N PAULSEN: And I have told you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): The answer should be yes or no.

Mr M N PAULSEN: I waved, that's it!

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Did you make those gestures? Yes or no!

Mr M N PAULSEN: I waved to that guy. No, I didn't.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Thank you. You can take your seat.

Mr M N PAULSEN: But primitive! But how can you ask me to withdraw. He called me primitive.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Hon Paulsen! Hon Paulsen! Please, take your seat and switch off the mic.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Yes, yes, I will do that, but would you indulge me? He called me primitive in front of all these hon members.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Hon Paulsen, I am not going to argue with you.

Mr M N PAULSEN: So, he can call me primitive? That drunkard can call me primitive?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Hon Paulsen, can you respect the House.

Mrs S P KOPANE: Chair, on a point of Order: I think people at home want their lives to be better. It is really disgusting that as Members of Parliament this is how we behave. Really, I think you should enforce discipline in the House. I would like you to take a decision on this matter. People are poor; people are hungry; and we come here and behave like kids.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Thank you, hon member. Unfortunately, I did not see the gestures hence I had to ask hon Paulsen if he had made them. Based on that, his response was, no.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Chairperson!

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Hon Paulsen, I did not recognise you. Can you switch off the mic? No, I'm not going to note you. Can we proceed with the debate? [Interjections.]

Mr M N PAULSEN: No, we can't!

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): I now call on the hon Minister of Social development to close the debate. [Interjections.]

Mr M N PAULSEN: Chairperson!

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): Hon Paulsen, I did not note you.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Chairperson, will you note me?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubela-Mashele): You cannot come here ... Hon Paulsen, take your seat and switch off the mic. Order, hon members! Hon Minister, take us forward by closing the debate.

The MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Chairperson, I stand here in front of you all members of this House and proudly say to you, I did not come here to do any politicking. I came here to speak about the budget. I came here to express what I experienced in the portfolio committee the first time all of us we met, as members of the portfolio committee irrespective of which political party we came from. What motivated me to be here today, hon Chairperson, is the community that I went to visit also this afternoon. Those are the people whom I believe, as government, we have to partner with.

Hon Chair, I also was motivated and the reason why I am saying I did not come here to politic because politicking belongs somewhere else. When the time comes for us to do that we will do it and we will do it very well. My being here, I am motivated by a quotation which I came across along the way which has an unknown author and it says:

A person's most useful asset is not a head full of knowledge, but a heart full of love, an ear ready to listen and a hand willing to help others.

[Applause.] So, the communities that I visited today, clearly said to me, we must have the heart, we must have the ears to listen, and we must also be able to reach out to them and support them.

I also wish to thank all the hon members who have supported this budget, both from the ANC - first and foremost - but also from the

opposition benches and say to you, I might not necessarily be able to answer all the questions that were posed here today because we have five years, God willing, to work towards changing the lives of our people. I am sure we will be able to do that.

I have no intentions of abdicating responsibility nor putting blame on anyone when it comes to what we are supposed to do as government, as we clearly indicated here what our programmes are and what our budget is.

I also need to answer just a few of those questions basing myself obviously on the fact that many of those questions repeated themselves across the different party political lines. I know that some of the hon members here did support this budget, but some of the of course time went too fast for them. I do wish, Chairperson, to request that whenever we are here people must be able to say whether they are supporting the budget or not, so that I can be able to clearly know to whom I must respond.

The first one that I really need to deal with is with regard to gender-based violence. You are obviously aware of the Presidential Summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. Also, we recently had a report by the Commission on Gender Equality titled, "State of Shelters in South Africa". It highlights the inadequate funding, poor infrastructure and support.

We are determined as the government, generally, but also as a department in particular, not only to read the reports, but also to take those issues that the Commission wants us to take forward to ensure that we stabilise the situation.

We will be tabling the Victim Support Services Bill as a key policy response to address some of the challenges. Also, one of the questions that really came across from everybody related to the nonprofit organisations, NPOs. The department has developed a partnership model to strengthen the relationship between NPOs and the department. In addition, we are going to table the Nonprofit Organisations Bill to Cabinet to reform the registration process of NPOs. However, I do want to call on our NPOs themselves, to continue engaging with us so that we can be able to deal with this.

Another issue that was raised related to backlogs of appeals.

Obviously these appeals must be dealt with very quickly, because if appeals are delayed, that means the services that need to be given to our people are delayed. The Ministry has appointed a team of professionals to assist in reducing the backlog. Actually, I think that part of what we need to do is to look at the people out there who have either came out of university, who have the capacity, and whom we can train to assist us in this.

There was another issue that was raised by many of the members here that relates to vacancies of regional managers. Those posts will be

filled before the end of the financial year in line with SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, reviewed business processes.

Also important was the issue of social workers. as I was concluding earlier on, I did indicate that one of the things that the hon Mbalula said to me was that it would be so good to have more social workers than you would have policemen and women because they are able to deal with the issues right away. Both men and women police come at a time when something has already happened and something drastic has happened particularly against women. I do want to say that I will work very closely with other departments and in particular, the Department of Police because this weekend, for instance, relating to some of the challenges that we have seen here in the Western Cape, body bags were carried away from our communities.

This weekend, the relevant Ministers and I will be in a meeting, to see what it is we can do because we believe that the law enforcement must take its course, because it is our responsibility to protect our communities. However, having said that, I also would like to call on our communities to really try and work as close as possible with us because for me, the first protection has to be the people around you; it has to be your neighbours; and it has to be your street. Hence, we are talking about social workers. We want to make sure that those social workers, particularly the ones who have been trained by the department are flooded into our communities. It also

pains me that in a school there is only one social worker, especially in the schools where there is violence against teachers and the pupils.

Something is not right in our communities where a child wakes up in the morning and he or she does not mind putting a knife or something in the bag that is going to hurt somebody else. This means we must take a step back and say what are the things that we need to do to make sure that we improve the conditions of our pupils.

One of the things that I think we need to do effectively is to have a co-ordinated approach because the Department of Social Development can have the National Development Agency, NDA, Sassa and the different programmes that we have. However, if we want to build a better South Africa, this means each and every department must appreciate and understand what they need to do in order for them to assist us in creating an environment for our people conducive ...

I do want to thank the department. I think I must say that I arrived to a very enthusiastic group of people who are prepared to work. I have already had a meeting with the entire staff of my department. I have already been to be to Sassa and the NDA. I have already had meetings and I do not believe in just meetings. I believe in people being out there in the streets. The first person to show the importance of being out there, so that we can get the felt needs of our people, has to be me. [Applause.]

If I do not get out there and hear what the people are crying for, but I am also sure that the people I work with have to appreciate and understand that I cannot run faster than them, they have to run faster than me. Running, I do. Running I know I can get to each and every community.

I also would like to say that what social development is about is very important to me. It is said social development is about improving the wellbeing of every individual in society so that they can reach their full potential. The success of society is linked to the wellbeing of each and every citizen.

So, even we, as we sit here, must not consider ourselves as people who are outside of social development. We must look at ourselves and say to ourselves: What do we need from social development? The difference with us is that we are privileged and we are better than others. So, we put ourselves in that category of people who are privileged, but the ones on whom we need to focus most are the most vulnerable who do not have the capacity, the luxury of waking up in the morning in a comfortable house, from a comfortable bed. And when I say this, I am not just talking about black people. I am talking about poverty alleviation and poverty reduction; and killing poverty across all racial lines. [Applause.]

We have seen for ourselves that you find people are out on the streets. It is no longer the colour of those people, but it is about

the fact that many of our people are finding themselves in very difficult situations. It is for that reason, Chairperson, that I stand here and say, let us find the right place for playing politics. [Applause.]

When it comes to social development, there is no time for politicking because that politicking will not enable us to deliver for our people. In the portfolio committee, I have guarantees. I thank the hon Masango and all the members of the portfolio committee who have been very positive, from the EFF to ACDP, and to everybody who have been very positive today. [Applause.]

This is what I want to leave with you. The past years of apartheid are past years of apartheid and we did everything we could to make sure that we kill it. The past 25 years of democracy have been years of trying to build a base from where we all have to move. The next 25 years, when my grandson who is nine months old now, whether I will still be alive or not, the people who will see him and his generation will say, there was something called apartheid. Our people killed it and created the conducive environment for us. I do not want to see any of the children who are in school today, who will, 25 years down the line, still be living in the same environment.

It is for this reason that I call upon my own government, my own ANC members, to say we can make a change. It is possible for us to make

the change. To the members of the portfolio committee, Chairperson, you said you are going to have a robust engagement with us. I stand here and I can tell you, I am not afraid of that robust engagement because it will help me, my department and everyone including the agencies to try their best and do the best that they can.

So, I will not remove the oversight role that the portfolio committee has to play across political lines, because when all is said and done, we will not be asked about which political party we belonged to. We will be asked about what we did for our people.

[Applause.]

We will be asked by the electorate who gave us a mandate. The electorate gave all of us the mandate. They gave the ANC the mandate to govern because it gave them more, but it also gave the opposition parties a mandate to be part and parcel of the equation. They will also ask the opposition what they did when they sent them to Parliament. So, I look forward to working very closely with you and I really request you that, when we are not doing right, stand up and say it. Tell us we are not doing right. Let us not wait to come here and make the noises. The noises belong somewhere else.

In conclusion, hon Chairperson and hon members, and in particular those who are in the gallery, my family who are also here today with us, I want to thank you all. I particularly thank my family because some people do not understand and appreciate those who are not here.

I know that all the members who are here appreciate and understand what it feels like to leave your children, be in Cape Town and somewhere else, and they all have to take care of themselves. I wish to thank them for their support. I also want to thank all others - friends, acquaintances and everyone - who make it possible for me to wake up in the morning and deliver on what is expected of me.

Lastly, to the department and the two agencies, we are in this together. We are going to show South Africa that we work together especially with the MECs whom we have already met. The people of South Africa, we have heard your cry and that is what motivates us. Keep on pushing us so that ultimately your lives are changed. I thank you. [Applause.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms L S Makhubele-Mashele): Hon members are reminded that the combined debates on trade and industry and economic development Budget Vote will take place at 18:30 in the National Assembly Chamber. The debate on environmental affairs Budget Vote will take place in the Old Assembly Chamber and the debate on National Treasury in Committee Room E249. That concludes the debate and the business of the mini-plenary. The mini-plenary will rise.

Debate concluded.

The mini-plenary session rose at 18:45.