



MINISTER  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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## **Speech by the Minister of Social Development, Ms Nokuzola Tolashe, MP on the occasion of the tabling of Budget Vote 19 of the Department of Social Development to the National Assembly**

**Wednesday, 17 July 2024 | Cape Town**

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Honourable House Chair;

Deputy Minister of Social Development, Mr Ganief Hendricks;

Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development;

Distinguished Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen, and

Fellow South Africans

1. Honourable House Chair, it is with a deep sense of responsibility and distinct privilege that I table the 2024/2025 Budget Vote 19 of the Department of Social Development, on behalf of the Government of National Unity for your consideration.
2. The Social Development Portfolio, which comprises of Social Development, the National Development Agency (NDA) and the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) leads government's efforts to forge partnerships through which vulnerable individuals, families and communities become capable and active participants in their own development.
3. The central theme of this Budget Vote is “**Reigniting the Role of Families**”. Through this Budget, we want to draw attention to the importance of strengthening vulnerable families by providing access to a range of essential support services that build resilience and self-reliance within families. These include parenting programmes, prevention and early intervention programmes and supported by cash transfers as guided by the Revised White Paper on Families, which Cabinet approved in November last year. It is through the strength and support of families that we can foster a society

where every individual, especially the vulnerable, can thrive with dignity and safety.

4. I want to thank President Ramaphosa for the great opportunity, which is a privilege to serve the people and our beloved country, South Africa. I table this Budget Vote deeply conscious of the weight of the expectations on the Social Development Portfolio, to take urgent measures to support vulnerable families facing the devastating natural disasters occasioned by climate change and soaring food prices.

5. We are not daunted by these pressing challenges because we stand on the shoulders of courageous and resilient women, who at the height of apartheid and colonial rule launched the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW), which culminated in the adoption of the Women's Charter. It is because of the unbreakable perseverance of these women that I stand here today in honour of their memories and to pick up the unfinished task of working together to build a caring society in which no one is left behind.

6. Honourable House Chair and Members, tomorrow, 18 July, we join the world in honouring Madiba's legacy as we

celebrate the Nelson Mandela International Day. As we table this Budget Vote here today, we remember these women pioneers and draw strength from their example, and hold firmly the words of the founding father of our democracy, uTata Nelson Mandela's wise words [*and I quote*]:

*Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom* [*close quote*]

7. Let us be reminded that the establishment of the Government of National Unity is an outcome of the will of the people through their vote. Fortunately, we do not start from zero. If we look back over the last 30 years, we can confidently say that there is every reason to celebrate our achievements. This Budget Vote therefore builds on the gains of the past three decades, when we have spared no effort in restoring human dignity and lifting the most vulnerable—children, women, older persons and persons with disabilities from the abject and dehumanising clutches of extreme poverty.

8. Today, I present this Budget Vote confident in the knowledge that my predecessors have laid a solid foundation of service, a legacy I am humbled and committed to take forward during my tenure in this portfolio. I would like to dedicate this Budget Vote to the two late former Ministers of Social Development, Dr Zola Skweyiya and Ms Edna Molewa.

### **2024/2025 DSD Portfolio Budget**

9. Honourable House Chair, this year's budget is presented against a backdrop of an increasingly constrained fiscal environment across the board, and this Department is no exception. The revenue decline comes at the same time when even the global economy is experiencing sharper-than-expected slowdown, with inflation higher than seen in several decades causing a cost of living crisis and tightening of financial conditions. This is also exacerbated by rising social ills that places a huge demand for social services which requires more [pause], not less funding.

10. These budget cuts have significant consequences for the social sector, most notably for the employment of social service professionals who are at the centre of service delivery for this sector. In addition, Non-Profit Organisations are also

negatively impacted due to significant reduction in funding. I will be engaging with the MECs in all provinces to determine how best we can resolve the two challenges. As mandated by the NPO Act, we will commence with the de-registration of non-compliant NPOs and further briefings on this will be held to advise on the details on how the phased-in-approach will be managed. We will do this, not turning a blind eye on the critical role many of these NPOs play as a service delivery partner of government.

11. The demand for our services has been made worse by weather-related natural disasters, which have now become frequent and more devastating than ever before. From the tornado in Tongaat, to the raging storms and floods here in the Western Cape, the human and economic toll of these disasters on the most vulnerable is enormous. I must point out that this area of our work remains inadequately funded in the sector.

12. Honourable Chair, I now focus on the budget. With regards to the 2024/25 financial year, our budget allocation is R275 billion. Of this amount, R266 billion is for the payment of 28 million social grants. Included in this number is around 9

million eligible beneficiaries receiving the Social Relief of Distress Grant.

13. Currently, social grants are a major source of income support for 45% of the South African population. The results of the 2022 census are further proof that our investment in the social assistance programme is working because it has lifted millions of our people out of poverty. This includes 13,2 million recipients of the Child Support Grant and over 4 million of adults receiving the Old Age Grant.

That is why we will continue working even harder in the coming months and years, with the cooperation of this house, to overcome poverty and to bring Madiba's words into reality.

### **South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)**

14. Honourable Chair, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of digital technologies to improve service delivery. In this regard, I am pleased to inform you that we are not left behind. SASSA has embarked on an initiative to digitise and automate its operations to ensure that customers have seamless access to online services in the comfort of their own homes.

15. To date, we have piloted the queue management system in 66 SASSA offices nationally. We intend to roll out this system to an additional 45 offices in the current financial year. To augment these initiatives, we will roll out 60 self-service kiosks in local offices across the country.
  
16. The cornerstone of these initiatives is the business process re-engineering, which involves the integration of cutting-edge digital technologies, streamlining operations, enhancing efficiency, and leveraging digital tools to redefine service delivery standards.
  
17. Since 2012, SASSA has progressively modernized the social grants payment space by ensuring that every social grant beneficiary has access to a bank account. From 2018, we've gradually phased out cash pay points reducing their number from approximately 10,000 in 2018 to the last 500, which were closed toward the end of the previous financial year. The shift away from high-risk payment instruments like cash, aims to enhance financial inclusion for social grant beneficiaries within the National Payment System—the primary payment system used by everyone in South Africa.



18. This means once your money is deposited into your bank account, it's yours, and we encourage SASSA beneficiaries to use their bank cards for payments. Only withdraw small amounts of cash for purchases that can't be made with your card to minimize risk

### **Institutionalisation of Basic Income Support**

19. The extension of the SRD Grant until March 2025 has given us adequate time to finalise the Draft Policy on Basic Income Support, which will be tabled in Cabinet this financial year. This forms part of our social security reforms towards establishing the comprehensive social security system envisioned in the National Development Plan.

### **Operationalisation of the Inspectorate**

20. To give effect to ensuring the integrity of the social assistance framework and systems, we have set aside an amount of R15 million rand this financial year towards the operationalisation of the Inspectorate.

## **National Development Agency (NDA)**

21. An amount of R212 million rand is allocated to the National Development Agency this financial year to implement its mandate.

22. In this regard, I have directed its Board to expedite the implementation of the NDA Turnaround Strategy and new operating model, with a special focus on resource mobilisation.

## **Gender-Based Violence and Femicide**

23. Our families are greatly impacted by gender-based violence and femicide, as it often leads to fractured relationships, emotional trauma, and lasting effects on children, victims as well as other family members. As a country we are implementing the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide which is anchored on six pillars. The Department is leading on Pillar 4: Response, Care Support and healing while contributing to the others. Our efforts this year is on the expansion of shelters, the Khuseleka One-Stop Centre and the provision of psycho-social support services. I

have received a full briefing on the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre and we are strengthening the operations to make it more efficient and effective.

### **HIV and AIDS; Persons with Disabilities; Substance Abuse**

24. HIV and Aids infections still remain with us especially among young people and we are working to upscale our prevention and social behavior change programmes throughout the country.
25. A person with a disability may require special care and protection to ensure their well-being and full inclusion within the family. In realising their inclusion and ensuring that their rights are promoted and protected, a policy on social development services for persons with disabilities will be implemented.
26. The country is facing high prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse, which has devastating effects on families and communities. In this regard, the National drug master plan serves as a blueprint for addressing the scourge of alcohol and

drug abuse. The DSD is working tirelessly on reducing substance abuse and its related social problems through prevention programmes in higher education institutions, TVET colleges, and communities. This year, the DSD aims to reach 40 institutions of higher learning nationwide.

### **Legislative matters**

27. On the legislative front, we intend to revive and finalise key pieces of legislation that lapsed from the previous Parliament. These include the Victim Support Services Bill, certain sections of the Children's Amendment Bill and the Older Persons Amendment Bill, amongst others.

28. Honourable House Chair and Members, the abuse of older persons, such as the one we have seen recently trending on digital platforms, is an outrage and has no place in a caring society such as ours. As families and communities, we have a legal and moral duty to report such to law enforcement and the National Helpline for Elder Abuse. The perpetrators of these crimes acts against our older persons must face the full might of the law and their details be entered into the Older Persons Abuse Register.

29. In line with this year's Budget Vote theme of "**Reigniting the role of the family**", I call on all families across our country to spare no effort to ensure the care and protection of our older persons by giving them love, care and support to live decent and dignified lives.

### **Administrative matters**

30. One of the most urgent tasks that is receiving my attention since I took up office is the finalisation of the organisational structure and ensuring the filling of all critical posts, including the filling of the Director-General post in the current financial year. Working with the Board of the NDA, we will equally prioritise the finalisation of the process for the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer for the NDA in the coming months.

### **Conclusion**

31. Honourable House Chairperson and Members, please allow me as I conclude to once again, express my gratitude to my predecessors who have laid the foundation for the important work I have presented here today. I thank the Acting Director-General, the Chief Executive Officer of SASSA and Acting

Chief Executive Officer of the NDA for their warm welcome into this portfolio.

32.I also want to thank the Portfolio Committee under the leadership of Honourable Bridget Masango for wasting no time in speedily processing this Budget Vote. I ask you to join me and unite with common purpose and shared resolve to be live up to be the generation that build Madiba called upon to end poverty. It is in our hands to take South Africa Forward-Together.

I thank you.