



The strategic goals for the Department of Social Development (DSD) are to:

- review and reform social welfare services and financing
- improve and expand early childhood development provision
- deepen social assistance and extend the scope of the contributory social security system
- enhance the capabilities of communities to achieve sustainable livelihoods and household food security
- strengthen coordination, integration, planning, monitoring and evaluation of services. South Africa has made good progress in building social cohesion and promoting a new single national identity. The biggest barrier to increasing social cohesion is the remaining inequality in society, which needs to be attended to.

More than half of all households in South Africa benefit from government's social assistance programme.

Comprehensive social security alleviates and reduces poverty, vulnerability, social exclusion and inequality through a comprehensive social protection system.

Empowering young and old people, those with disabilities as well as women in particular, helps rebuild families and communities.

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

Budget

A total of R113 billion (93%) of the DSD R120 billion budget went towards the payment of social grants.

The social assistance budget has increased by an average of 11% a year since 2008/09, in part due to the extension of the child support grant to the age of 18.

Legislation and frameworks

The department derives its mandate from the following legislation:

- Advisory Board on Social Development Act, 2001 (Act 3 of 2001)
- Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005)
- Children's Amendment Act, 2007 (Act 41 of 2007)
- Fund-Raising Act, 1978 (Act 107 of 1978)
- Mental Healthcare Act, 2002 (Act 17 of 2002)
- National Welfare Act, 1978 (Act 100 of 1978)
- National Development Agency (NDA) Act, 1998 (Act 108 of 1998)

Social Development

- NPO Act, 1997 (Act 71 of 1997)
- Older Persons Act, 2006 (Act 13 of 2006)
- Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency Act, 1992 (Act 20 of 1992)
- Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act, 2008 (Act 70 of 2008)
- Probation Services Act, 1991 (Act 116 of 1991)
- South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) Act, 2004 (Act 9 of 2004)
- Social Assistance Amendment Act, 2008 (Act 6 of 2008)
- Social Service Professions Act, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978). The Act also provides for the appointment of the Independent Tribunal in a way to be prescribed by regulation, and contains a number of technical amendments and corrections.

• In terms of the Social Assistance Amendment Act, 2010 (Act 5 of 2010), beneficiaries and other applicants may now ask Sassa to reconsider the relevant decision before appealing to the tribunal. All applications for appeal must now show that they have gone through the reconsideration process at Sassa.

In March 2014, the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill was passed in the National Assembly. The Bill calls for the progressive realisation of at least 50% representation of women in decision-making structures. It also aims at improving access to education, training and skills development. The Bill promotes and protects women's reproductive health, and eliminates discrimination and harmful practices, including gender-based violence..

National Family Policy

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

The *Green Paper on Families* emphasises the need for all to build strong families that protect the most vulnerable members of society.

The purpose of the Green Paper is to provide a platform for all South Africans to engage and exchange views on how to build stable families.

It also addresses some of the challenges faced by individuals in families, including the abuse of women and children, the elderly as well as people with disabilities.

Child care legislation

The Children's Act of 2005 sets out principles relating to the care and protection of children; defines parental responsibilities and rights;

and provides for matters such as children's courts, adoption, child abduction and surrogate motherhood.

The Act also:

- gives effect to certain rights of children as contained in the Constitution
- provides for the issuing of contribution orders
- provides for intercountry adoption
- gives effect to the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption
- prohibits child abduction and gives effect to the Hague Convention on International Child Abduction
- recognises new offences relating to children
- provides for matters relating to the trafficking of children and the implementation of the relevant protocol.

The Children's Act of 2005 provides for the establishment of the National Child Protection Register that records all people found unsuitable to work with children.

In terms of this law, child-care facilities, including welfare organisations offering foster care and adoption, are able to check prospective employees, foster parents and adoptive parents against the register.

The register is not open to the public and all requests for information must be directed to the DSD.

The Children's Amendment Act of 2007 provides for:

- the partial care of children
- early childhood development (ECD)
- protection of children
- prevention and early-intervention services
- children in alternative care
- foster care
- child and youth care centres, shelters and drop-in centres
- new offences relating to children
- the plight of child-headed households
- respect for parental rights by providing that no person may take or send a South African child out of the country without the consent of the parents or guardian
- the discipline of children.

The national guidelines to protect and care for children include the Constitution, the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act 74 of 1983), as amended, the *White Paper for Social Welfare (1997)* and the Children's Act of 2005, as amended.

Section 137 of the Children's Act of 2005, proposes new protection measures for child-headed households.

This section defines children from child-headed households, provides for appointing an adult to supervise a child-headed household and allows children in child-headed households

to access social grants and other material assistance.

Role players Ministry of Women

The Ministry of Women is situated in The Presidency. Its mandate is to lead, coordinate and oversee the transformation agenda on women's socio-economic empowerment, rights and equality.

National Development Agency

The NDA is a public entity, listed under Schedule 3A of the Public Finance Management Act, (PFMA) 1999 (Act 1 of 1999). Its mandates are to:

- contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to civil-society organisations (CSOs)
- implement development projects in poor communities
- strengthen the institutional capacity of CSOs that provide services to poor communities
- promote consultation, dialogue and sharing of development experience between CSOs and relevant organs of State
- debate development policy
- undertake research and publication aimed at providing the basis for development policy.

The NDA supports the work of civil society in key areas of concern.

It is an important partner in the department's efforts to promote ECD by using its grants to strengthen the capacities of ECD community-service organisations, which support the department's efforts to reduce violence against women and children by providing key support to the gender-based violence sector.

NDA programmes include grant funding, capacity-building and research, policy dialogue and impact assessment.

Capacity-building interventions are geared towards ensuring that recipients of grant funding are not only given money to start and run their projects, but that they are empowered with the necessary skills to ensure sustainability.

The NDA has established the Programme Management Unit, which is responsible for offering project management services to private and public-sector stakeholders who wish to fund poverty-eradication projects.

Particular emphasis is placed on those in the NDA's primary areas of focus, namely food security, ECD, enterprise development and income generation programmes.

South African Social Security Agency

Sassa's core business is to administer,

finance and pay social security transfers. The agency is required to:

- develop and implement policies, programmes, standard operating procedures and systems for an efficient and effective social assistance benefits administration system
- deliver innovative and cost-effective services to beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries through multiple access channels
- pay the right grant to the right person at the right time and place.

Sassa ensures the provision of comprehensive social security services against vulnerability and poverty within the constitutional and legislative framework.

The agency's key functions include the effective management, administration and payment of social assistance, as well as:

- the processing of applications for social assistance, such as social grants, grant-in-aid and social relief of distress
- the verification and timely approval of grant applications
- the management and reconciliation of grant payments to eligible beneficiaries by contractors
- the marketing of social assistance
- quality service assurance by ensuring compliance with norms and standards, and fraud prevention and detection.

From January 2014, social grant beneficiaries, who use PIN codes to access their social grants at ATMs or till points had to verify each month that they were still alive through recording their voices as part of a voice activation system and then phone in once a month so that their voices can be verified, thereby proving they are still alive.

The voice activation process was done in two phases.

The first phase targeted 378 815 beneficiaries in Mpumalanga who were each sent an SMS in January 2014.

Phase 2 started in March 2014, and involved all other beneficiaries who were not sent an SMS in January, but are using a PIN to access their grants.

Efforts by Sassa to clamp down on social grant fraud are yielding positive results, with the agency saving R150 million a year.

Since the implementation of the project to re-register listed beneficiaries, Sassa received requests for voluntary cancellation of over 150 000 social grants, which had increased to 299 837 by February 2014.

A total of 18,9 million people were successfully re-registered onto the new system by

the end of March 2014 and had increased to 20,7 million. The re-registration resulted in life certification of all beneficiaries, children and procurators.

Through the Integrated Community Registration Outreach Programme (ICROP), 61 110 beneficiaries in 430 poverty wards had access to social assistance during 2014. The ICROP was established to improve access to and equity in services to beneficiaries in rural and semi-rural areas.

In 2014/15, Sassa paid 16 million social grant benefits monthly to about 9,5 million recipients.

Advisory Board on Social Development

The Advisory Board on Social Development's key functions include:

- advising the Minister on all matters related to social development
- identifying, promoting, monitoring and evaluating policy, legislation and programmes regarding social development
- facilitating dialogue with and the participation of civil society.

South African Council of Social Service Professionals (SACSSP)

The SACSSP is a statutory body with the primary focus of developing and protecting the integrity of the social service professions and the interest of the public at large.

The SACSSP is established in terms of section 2 of the Social Service Professions Act, 1978 (Act 110 of 1978).

The Council guides and regulates social workers and social auxiliary workers and other professionals for who a Professional Board has been established in aspects pertaining to registration, education and training, professional conduct and ethical behaviour, ensuring continuing professional development, and fostering compliance with healthcare standards.

The council has two professional boards under its auspices:

- The Professional Board for Social Workers.
- The Professional Board for Child and Youth Care

National Action Committee for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS

The National Committee for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS is a multisectoral structure made up of government departments, CSOs, development agencies and donor organisations.

It is a formal structure used for collaborative

planning and decision-making concerning issues pertaining to orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS.

It has a steering committee initiated through consultations between government departments, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and is currently composed of representatives of government and civil society.

The committee is chaired by the DSD, and co-chaired by a nominated member from civil society.

Relief boards

Four relief fund boards were established in terms of Section 16 of the Fund-Raising Act of 1978.

- Board of the Disaster Relief Fund: The key functions of the board are to assist people, organisations and bodies that suffer damage or loss as a result of a disaster.
- Board of the Refugee Relief Fund: The key functions are to assist refugees as the board may deem fair and reasonable.
- Board of the State President's Fund: This board's functions are to assist victims of any act of terrorism in respect of their medical treatment and rehabilitation, and assist such victims and their dependants during any financial hardship or financial distress caused directly or indirectly by any act of terrorism.
- Board of the Social Relief Fund: The key functions of the board are to make funds available to organisations capable of assisting people with psychosocial challenges, and rendering such social distress relief to victims of violence.

Non-profit organisations

The NPO Directorate of the DSD administers the Register of NPOs in South Africa.

It is a voluntary registration facility that enhances the credibility of the registered NPO as it reports to a public office.

Registration promotes effective, efficient and accountable management within the sector.

To strengthen the capacity of NPOs, the department will continue to build their capacity and monitor their compliance to legislation.

One of the functions of the department is to monitor all registered NPOs in terms of their compliance with the NPO Act of 1997.

The compliance rate has improved by 26%.

Training was provided to 1 200 NPOs and community-based organisations (CBOs).

Plans to strengthen the sector include:

- increasing the number of staff in the department who deal with registrations
- increasing the number of road shows to

provide information and listen to challenges faced by the sector.

Programmes and projects

16 Days of Activism of No Violence Against Women and Children

The 16 Days of Activism of No Violence Against Women and Children is an annual awareness campaign observed globally.

It addresses policy and legal issues and calls for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence.

In 2014, government launched the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign in Reiger Park, Gauteng.

The 2014 campaign coincided with the commemoration of 60 years since the signing of the Women's Charter on 17 April 1954 in Johannesburg, the 20 years of freedom and democracy in South Africa and 16 years of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign.

The 2014 campaign was held under the theme "Count Me In. Together moving a non-violent South Africa forward."

The campaign runs from 25 November, which was officially recognised by the UN in 1999 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

South Africa has added children to the campaign, as there is growing concern about the increasing violence against children.

The campaign ends on 10 December – International Human Rights Day.

Other important days commemorated annually during this 16-day period include World AIDS Day on 1 December and the International Day for Persons with Disabilities on 3 December.

Project Mikondzo

Project Mikondzo (which means "footprint" in Xitsonga) compels office-bound officials from the department, the NDA and the Sassa to join frontline officials to interact with communities in a bid to tackle social problems such as poverty, malnutrition, violence against women and child-headed households.

The 1 300 wards form part of 23 district municipalities from seven provinces, which Cabinet has prioritised for additional support.

The project includes an audit of ECD centres and the setting up of a command centre with a toll-free hotline open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It also includes a substance abuse awareness campaign targeting sports and music events, the targeting of gender-based violence and the strengthening of NPOs.

The project helps government reach the

about two million children who qualify for CSGs but who have not registered with Sassa to receive grants.

The project is funded by Sassa and the DSD.

The audit of ECD centres, which covered 19 971 registered and unregistered centres, establishes the kind of services these centres offer and the quality of infrastructure and resources available to them.

About 1 000 unemployed youths had been recruited and trained to carry out the audit.

The department began training caregivers to improve assistance to child and youth-headed households.

The department audited 92 000 child-headed households that are in the Statistics South Africa database to ensure compliance with the Children's Act of 2005 definition of a child-headed household.

Anti-Substance Abuse Programme of Action

Alcohol advertising is regulated by the Liquor Act, 2003 (Act 59 of 2003) which outlines the guidelines for liquor advertising. The alcohol industry is self-regulated by the Code of Commercial Communication of Alcohol Beverages, something to which most companies and advertisers adhere.

In August 2014, due to strong disagreements on the adverse economic impact of the Control of Marketing of Alcohol Beverages Bill, it was decided that, before it was published in the local journal for public comment, an Independent Regulatory Impact Assessment was conducted to investigate the economic and societal impact of the Bill.

The Central Drug Authority Board developed regulations for the Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act of 2008.

The Act complements both the National Drug Master Plan (2013 – 2017) and the Anti-Substance Abuse Programme.

The Act provides for a comprehensive national response for combating substance abuse in South Africa through:

- mechanisms aimed at reducing demand and harm in relation to substance abuse through prevention, early intervention, treatment and re-integration programmes
- registration and establishment of treatment centres and halfway houses
- the committal of persons to and from treatment centres and for their treatment.

Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

The EPWP is a nationwide programme under the auspices of government and state-owned enterprises.

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

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

Early Childhood Development

Government has identified ECD as a key focus area in its effort to improve the quality of basic education and care for children.

The department recognises that one of the ways of breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty is investment in children to aid their development, especially from the ages of 0 – 4.

There are plans in place to ensure that all ECD centres are registered and early childhood practitioners appropriately trained. Programmes for parental training are also in the pipeline.

War on Poverty Campaign

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

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

Child poverty in South Africa has declined but more still needs to be done, according to a report released by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) in June 2014. The SAHRC and the UN Children's Fund SA based the report, "Poverty traps and social exclusion among children in South Africa", on a study. It said according to three income and expenditure surveys, the estimated poverty rate decreased from 65% in 2000 to just below 40% in 2010. The child poverty rate dropped from 76% in 2000 to just below 50% in 2010.

Education, health, assets, social networks, family, and geography are highlighted as areas that

require intervention to escape poverty. According to the report, poverty-stricken households are at greater risk of contracting disease. Often, health problems lower productivity. Ill health can induce perpetual poverty from nutrition deficiencies and undernourishment can affect behaviour. Child hunger affected the ability to learn and function. Policy interventions that improve children's health can dramatically increase their chances of escaping poverty.

Food for All Programme

The department is tasked with facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Food for All Programme.

To this end, distressed households were being provided with food through the department and Food Bank South Africa programme.

While social relief of distress provides short-term relief for poor households, government recognises that longer-term solutions are needed.

Government is committed to improving its efforts at ensuring food security for all in the country, starting with vulnerable households and communities.

To this end, households have been assisted in establishing food gardens to produce their own food, thus participating in their own development.

Social security and assistance

From April 2014, the old age and disability grants increased from R1 270 to R1 350; the foster care grant to R830; while child support grants increased to R310 a month in April and R320 in October.

The number of people eligible for grants was expected to increase to 16,5 million in the next three years.

South Africa's social assistance system is one of the largest in Africa and is government's most direct means of combatting poverty. Spending on the social grant system accounts for 3% of the gross domestic product and is projected to rise from R118 billion in 2013/14 to R145 billion by 2016.

The child support and old age grants are the two largest grant programmes, constituting about 75% of total grant spending.

Over the past decade, the number of social grant beneficiaries has doubled from 7,9 million in 2003 to 15,8 million in 2014 largely due to an expansion of the child support grant.

Other initiatives include making it compulsory for retirement funds to identify appropriate preservation funds for exiting members when changing jobs.

Retirement funds are required to guide their members through the process of converting

savings into a regular income after retirement and to choose annuity products that meet appropriate principles and standards.

The tax treatments of pension, provident and retirement annuity funds will also be simplified and harmonised.

Governance reforms of retirement funds were implemented and measures put in place to ensure that trustees of retirement funds were trained once they have been appointed.

Tax deductions of pension and retirement annuity funds, as well as contributions to provident funds and employer contributions that constitute fringe benefits, were increased to 27,5% of remuneration or taxable income – whichever the greater may be.

This simplifies the way deductions for retirement annuities, fringe benefits and pension funds are calculated. An annual cap on deductible contributions of R350 000 is applied.

Job creation and alleviating poverty National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)

In November 2014, the DSD published the 2014 State of the World Population Report, revealing that countries must invest more in the youth.

The theme of the 2014 State of the World Population Report was “The power of 1,8 billion: adolescence, youth and the transformation of the future.”

The report provides the latest trends and statistics on adolescent and youth populations worldwide, which gives the department an opportunity to reflect on South Africa and how it is doing (compared to the rest of the globe) concerning the issues contained in this report regarding young people.

The Mid-year Population Estimates by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) show that South Africa still has a relatively young population. Two thirds of the population is younger than 35 years old. Those aged 15 to 35 years, which are defined as youth, comprise almost 40% of the total population. The youth are also the fastest growing age group in the country.

This trend creates the prospect for a so-called “Demographic Dividend”, in which resources are invested into activities that promote social and economic development and growth.

South Africa, like most countries, is grappling with the challenge of youth unemployment. Youth unemployment in South Africa is estimated to be 36,1%, which is significantly higher than adult unemployment at 15,6%.

Government has recognised the problem of poor economic participation of young people and has put in place numerous policy interventions geared towards bringing youth into the

mainstream of the economy to enhance social inclusion and cohesion.

Through the National Treasury and Department of Labour, DSD introduced youth unemployment policy options for South Africa with the aim of incentivising entities to employ young people.

The NYDA has provided the Integrated Youth Development Strategy (IYDS) with the key mandate of implementing interventions geared towards the economic participation of young people, namely, youth work, national youth services, and education and skills relevant to economic empowerment.

Government strives to provide an opportunity to raise the share of youth-owned businesses and to support youth to engage in cooperatives in the country.

Social entrepreneurship is being explored.

The NDP is clear about the need for skills development in promoting economic growth and reaching related goals and the country has done well in the past 20 years of democracy to ensure that practically all children who should be in primary school are there.

Food banks

FoodBank South Africa, aimed at strengthening the Food for All Programme, is meant to feed three million people by 2015/16.

The Food Banks Programme, which is part of the Zero Hunger Strategy, is an important channel through which vulnerable people access food.

The department also developed a training and mentoring programme for CBOs.

HIV and AIDS support

The National Strategic Plan on HIV, AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Tuberculosis (TB) 2012–2016, which addresses the social drivers and social impact of HIV and AIDS, is a key component of the department’s fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS.

HIV and AIDS Youth Programme

Most funds continued to be disbursed to loveLife, enabling it to increase and extend its HIV and AIDS awareness programmes, and scholarships for social work students.

By 2015/16, the number of students benefiting from these scholarships is expected to be 4 248.

Youth-care workers from local communities are recruited and trained for the Isibindi Model at 260 sites throughout the country.

The aim is to recruit 10 000 child and youth-care workers over the next five years. It is expected that the recruitment and deployment of this cadre of social service professionals

will go a long way towards upholding government's constitutional obligation to protect and provide care and support for orphans, vulnerable children and youths affected by HIV and AIDS in South Africa.

HIV and AIDS advocacy, awareness and outreach programme

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

The awareness programme has the following main pillars:

- disclosure
- communication
- rights
- facilitation.

The programme also deals with the physical and emotional consequences of HIV and AIDS.

It addresses the following challenges:

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

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

Care and support partnerships

The DSD developed a new National Action Plan for orphans, vulnerable children and youth affected by HIV and AIDS (2012 – 2016), which is aligned with the National Strategic Plan on HIV, STIs and TB (2012 – 2016).

The action plan calls for meaningful involvement and participation by all stakeholders in the national response to orphans, vulnerable children and youths affected by HIV and AIDS.

Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP)

South Africa's Victim Empowerment Policy is based upon the concept of restorative justice.

Victim empowerment is a means of facilitating access to a range of services for all people who have individually or collectively suffered harm, trauma and/or material loss through violence, crime, natural disaster, human accident and/or through socio-economic conditions.

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

National Directory on Services for Victims of Violence and Crime

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

Prevention and treatment of substance and drug abuse

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

Sobriety Week incorporates the International Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) Day, which is observed internationally on 9 September every year to highlight the irreversible damage caused to unborn babies when their mothers consume alcohol during pregnancy.

Government recognises challenges such as unemployment, which result in people using and abusing liquor.

Children and youth

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

Most services to orphans and vulnerable children are rendered through the HCBC programme and include early identification of vulnerable children and their families, referrals, training of community caregivers and psychosocial support and material assistance.

This approach is geared towards keeping children within their families and communities. It is aimed at providing comprehensive care and support, which is complemented by proactive action at community level.

This includes linking families with poverty alleviation projects and other services in the community, such as food security initiatives and ECD services.

Child Labour Programme of Action (CLPA) Report

The CLPA is South Africa's roadmap to the prevention, reduction and eventual elimination of child labour, which affects an estimated one million children in the country.

It serves to focus and guide the efforts of an array of government departments and civil society groups, including business organisations, labour federations and organisations serving the interests of children.

The key elements of the CLPA include targeting the implementation of government and

other stakeholders' programmes and policies on poverty, employment, labour and social matters more effectively in areas where the work children do has serious negative effects on them.

The CLPA promotes new legislative measures against the worst forms of child labour and strengthen national capacity to enforce legislative measures.

It is aimed at increasing public awareness and social mobilisation.

Childline South Africa

Childline offers a 24-hour toll-free crisis line (08000 55 555) to children and families across South Africa. It provides immediate assistance to children and families in crisis who need counselling and information.

Childline is an NPO that works to protect children from all forms of violence and create a culture of respect for children's rights.

Programmes delivered through the provincial offices include:

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

People with disabilities

In November 2014, the DSD finalised the National Disability Rights Policy.

The policy includes a monitoring and evaluation framework that will allow the department to track progress made in eradicating inequalities and reducing poverty among people with disabilities and their families.

Through the policy, South Africa ensures to honour its obligations under the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which it is a signatory.

The policy is also a means to promote the active participation of people with disabilities in the country's economy.

Government remained committed to ensuring that people with disabilities were not left out of the Post 2015 Development Agenda and that the Africa 2063 Agenda took everyone on board.

South Africa had to collectively contribute to the empowerment of people with disabilities through accessible disability information services, inclusive ECD opportunities and accessible rehabilitation services.

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

In 2014, there were 11 members of Parliament and 72 local councillors with disabilities.

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

The South African experience has also helped to shape the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Continental Plan for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities.

In November 2014, South Africa hosted an international conference to tackle the challenges experienced by deaf and blind people.

South Africa has been celebrating the International Day for Persons with Disabilities annually since 1997.

Blind SA

Blind SA is an organisation for the blind, and is governed by the blind. Situated in Johannesburg, it is aligned with other member organisations throughout South Africa.

Blind SA's main focus is to improve the quality of life of all South Africa's visually impaired people by empowering them through education.

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

Orientation, mobility and skills development to blind and newly blinded people is an important aspect of the work undertaken by Blind SA.

The organisation provides, among other things, study bursaries for visually impaired students for further education, Braille publications in all of South Africa's official languages, Braille training that entails writing and reading, and orientation and mobility training.

South African Braille Authority (Saba)

Saba's purpose is to set and maintain standards for Braille in all 11 official languages of South Africa.

These standards relate to the development and maintenance of Braille codes; production

of quality Braille; the teaching of, access to and promotion of Braille; Braille examinations; and many other Braille-related matters.

Through Saba, South Africa is a member country of the International Council on English Braille (ICEB).

ICEB membership enables South Africa to stay abreast of and participate in international Braille-related matters.

South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB)

The SANCB is the coordinating body for over 100 member organisations that span the full spectrum of services offered for and to blind and partially sighted people throughout the country.

The SANCB comprises four core business areas, namely Social Development, the Bureau for the Prevention of Blindness, Education and lastly fund-raising and public relations.

To combat as much as 80% of avoidable blindness, the council regularly undertakes tours with its mobile eye care clinics to rural areas for eye screening, referrals and to perform cataract removal operations.

The SANCB provides entrepreneurial training, adult basic education and training, and facilitates skills training such as computer literacy and call centre programmes through its Optima College.

Support for the deaf

South Africa's national organisation for the deaf is the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA).

DeafSA has nine provincial chapters throughout South Africa.

Two other national organisations for the deaf are Deafblind South Africa and SHHH South Africa, the South African organisation for the hard of hearing.

An estimated 500 000 to 600 000 South Africans use South African Sign Language. As sign language has grown in South Africa – particularly baby sign language – an NPO, Sign Language Education and Development, has been formed to promote sign language.

Signing with hearing babies and children is being promoted through the Signsational Kids website.

South Africa has a long-established deaf education system.

Statistics indicate that there are more than 40 schools for the deaf in South Africa. They include:

- De la Bat School (run by the Institute for the Deaf)
- Fulton School for the Deaf
- Kutlwanong School for the Deaf (Rustenburg)
- Kwa Thintwa School for Hearing Impaired

- St Vincent's School for the Deaf (Johannesburg)

- Vuleka School for the Blind and Deaf

The Institute for the Deaf in Worcester operates Deaf College South Africa, which trains deaf people for jobs.

In addition, the Bible College for the Deaf in Gauteng trains people to work in deaf ministry.

The University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg has a Centre for Deaf Studies.

The centre offers programmes in deaf education and focuses on teaching, research and community service.

Among other services, the National Institute for the Deaf provides services for multiple disabled deaf, runs two deaf churches and provides audiological and mental health services.

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

The Carel du Toit Centre, based in Cape Town, provides early childhood auditory-oral education.

In addition, the centre engages in community outreaches, helping families with hearing-related needs and more practical needs such as food.

A similar centre is the Eduplex in Pretoria. It provides auditory-oral pre-school and primary school educational services, teaching hearing and deaf children together and provides training to prospective teachers, audiologists and therapists.

Older people

The DSD promotes a holistic approach to active ageing and well-being among the country's senior citizens. A number of initiatives have been rolled out by the departments of social development, health, tourism, sport and recreation South Africa and other stakeholders to promote general health among older persons, especially through sports to promote general well-being.

In October 2014, the Minister of Social Development opened the National Older Persons Golden Games at the Mbombela Stadium in Mpumalanga.

The games, hosted in partnership with Sports and Recreation South Africa, saw older persons participating in sport and recreation activities such as the duck walk, dress-up race, football, athletics and others.

In June 2014, Cape Town allocated R16 million for the construction of more early childhood development (ECD) centres across the city in 2014/15. The city wants to build more ECD centres in Delft, Mitchells Plain, Dunoon, Ocean View, Heideveld and Lotus River. In 2013/14, the city spent over R7 million on building ECD centres in Leonsdale, Scorpio, Elsies River and Ocean View, and Strandfontein.

Since 2008, the Government implemented a national active ageing programme in line with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing of 2002.

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

The Older Persons Act of 2006 aims to enhance the quality of life and improve the health of older persons by engaging them in programmes that promote social, physical, mental and emotional well-being to prevent or delay the onset of ageing challenges and keep old age related illness at bay. [SAnews.gov.za]

The old-age grant means test would be phased out by 2016, accompanied by offsetting revisions to the secondary and tertiary rebates.

All citizens over a designated age will be eligible for the grant, which will simplify its administration and address the disincentive to save that arises from the present means test.

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

Training and skills development Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers

There are 9 456 social workers in the employ of government.

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

This is in response to the issue raised by communities and the media that there are qualified social workers who are unemployed.

The Draft Scarce Skills and Policy Framework of 2003 recognised social work as a scarce skill.

Government mandated the development of strategies to facilitate the recruitment and retention of such scarce skills.

The DSD has been the main driver in the implementation of this social policy.

In addition, the NDP indicates that 60 000 social workers will be needed by 2030 to serve the population.

Professionalising community development

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

The key functions are:

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

Social work scholarships

As part of its efforts to develop skills and empower the youth, the DSD invited Grade 12 learners to apply for scholarships.

While recruiting, preference is given to deserving learners in rural areas, including those from child-headed households, those living in places of safety, dependants of war veterans and learners in no-fee schools.