

Media Advisory

MINISTER LINDIWE ZULU TO REFLECT ON IMPORTANCE OF FAMILIES AND THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THEM

The apartheid government had a deliberate strategy to disintegrate families, especially black families through various laws. These included migrant labour laws, spatial laws that separated families by making heads of families work in cities leaving their families in rural areas.

The Immorality Act also prohibited black and white people to have sexual relationships.

When the democratic government came into power in 1994, one of the biggest responsibilities was to strengthen the South African family.

Through its progressive Constitution; various laws were promulgated.

One of these pieces of legislation was the White paper on families which is premised on strengthening the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect children.

The white paper is also about the well-functioning of families that are loving, peaceful, safe, stable and economically self-sustaining.

It advocates for this new family to be supported to provide care, physical, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual, and intellectual support to their members.

When South Africa was hit by HIV/Aids, many children were left orphaned and vulnerable.

Many grandparents became second time parents while many children became heads of families forcing the democratic government to recognize child-headed households to prevent secondary trauma.

Children requested government not to separate them, either through institutionalization or families that were willing to look after one but not every child.

Government had to strengthen its services to children so that children could stay within families.

Foster care and adoptive families needed to be supported through legislation like the social assistance act which financially supported these foster care families and families that cannot fully support their children.

The social assistance programme is one of the biggest programs of this government as it gives cash transfers to children who come from poor families.

As our democracy matured, South Africa passed the same sex marriages act in 2006 which meant that same sex couples could marry and in turn adopt, foster or have various options at their disposal like surrogacy.

Recently, the Constitutional Court confirmed the constitutional validity of Section 294 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 which only permits commissioning parents to engage in surrogacy arrangements in instances where they are able to provide a genetic link to their future offspring.

This provision then excludes other infertile individuals, who due to the cause of their infertility are unable to provide genetic material, from engaging in surrogacy as a means of becoming parents, often at times when adoption as an alternative is not available to them.

Section 294 states that:

“No surrogate motherhood agreement is valid unless the conception of the child contemplated in the agreement is to be effected by the use of the gametes of both commissioning parents or, if that is not possible due to biological, medical or other valid reasons, the gamete of at least one of the commissioning parents or, where the commissioning parent is a single person, the gamete of that person.”

Therefore, the essence of Section 294 is that there should be a genetic link between at least one of the commissioning parents and the child to be conceived via surrogacy.

South Africa is a country with diverse families such as child-headed, women headed, single father headed, polygamous families and older person headed families.

The South African family now has to contend with new challenges like climate change.

Many families in various provinces, including, KwaZulu-Natal were recently affected and displaced by climate change, which impacted negatively on women and children.

Focusing on keeping families together even during climate and demographic change to build stronger families, the Minister of Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu, will on Friday, May 24, reflect on the significance of families, their role and diversity as well as the impact of climate change on families.

The families' engagement will be held under the International Day of Families theme: "Families and Climate Change: International Year of the Family + 30".

This theme focuses on amongst others families in building social cohesion through social and behavior change programmes.

Members of the media are invited to attend and cover the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family planned as follows:

Date: Friday, 24 May 2024

Venue: 129 Adam Street, Orlando East Community Hall, Soweto

Time: 10h00

Catch the programme live on:

DSDTV: <https://dsdtv.org.za/live-stream/>

Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/SocialDevelopmentZA/live_videos/

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/live/HuYJjplcBVs?si=fD3ODCcHo9LX7YeJ>

X: <https://twitter.com/i/broadcasts/1vOGwjkWapVKB>

Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/socialdevelopmentza?upcoming_event_id=18126336190347859

Media can RSVP by contacting Ms Nomfundo Lentsoane on 066 480 6845 / NomfundoLe@dsd.gov.za

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