



## **Policy Debate Statement by the Minister of Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu, MP on the occasion of the tabling of Budget Vote 19 to the National Assembly (NA)**

**Friday, 24 July 2020**

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Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly;  
Honourable Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee on  
Social Development; and  
Fellow South Africans.

### **Introduction**

I table the readjusted Budget Vote 19 of the Department of Social Development for the financial year 2020/2021 before Parliament for your consideration and support. This Budget takes cue from President Cyril Ramaphosa's address last night and in which, once again, he reassured the nation that this administration will spare no effort to save lives and livelihoods.

Honourable Speaker, in his address yesterday night, His Excellency, President Ramaphosa may have been summarising this Budget Vote when he said **(I quote) "... it provides direct support to households and individuals for the relief of hunger and social distress"** **(Unquote).**

The Department of Social Development provides social protection services and leads the government's efforts to build partnerships through which vulnerable groups and communities become capable and active participants of their own development. In other words, the South Africa we want, by the South African we want.

The measures outlined in this Budget are directed at responding not only to the pandemic, but will further enable our people to rebound to productive lives faster. These measures are about giving hope to our people and reaffirming our unflinching belief that together we shall overcome this pandemic.

As we present this Budget, we do so mourning the loss of the last surviving Rivonia Trialists, uBaba uAndrew Mokete Mlangeni. In the same breath, we pay tribute to the indomitable spirit of the late Comrade Zindzi Mandela. This Budget honours their selfless contribution to build a just, fair and developmental society in the face of our challenges.

### **Budget Allocation**

The Department had a budget reduction of 15.48 Billion Rand from the initial baseline budget. This means our budget was reduced from 197.72 BILLION RAND to 182.24 BILLION RAND. As part of the Supplementary Budget, we received an additional 25.5 BILLION RAND, which was supplemented by 15.48 BILLION RAND from the reduced baseline. This brought the total budget allocation for the COVID-19 response to 40 955 Billion Rand. Subsequently, the annual budget was readjusted upwards to TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE BILLION ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-TWO MILLION AND ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVEN THOUSAND RAND for the current financial year.

This is a significant budget increase of 8.13% when the inflation rate is at 4.6%. The increase was caused by budget reallocations to three budget items, namely: Social Assistance Grants — FIFTEEN BILLION AND FOUR HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN MILLION RAND. Early Childhood Development (ECD) Conditional Grant — SIXTY-FOUR MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND RAND and Operational Funding — FIFTY-SIX MILLION RAND.

As we table this Budget and navigate these uncharted territories, we recall the poignant words of the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres when he delivered the 18<sup>th</sup> Nelson Mandela Day Annual Lecture a few days ago. He reminded us that the pandemic has helped to expose the persistence of inequalities, poverty and racism in our society. This pandemic is further serving to reinforce these undesirable phenomena as well as our people's adversities.

### **National response**

The battle we are fighting demands a constant and honest evaluation of what we are doing and how we are doing it. In other words, we need to strive to do better with better. Most of the old responses are simply not effective in meeting our people's aspirations in the face of the challenges that accompany the pandemic. Therefore, today's "normal" demands that we must let go of yesteryear's responses.

Led by the African National Congress (ANC), the Sixth Administration of our democracy is seized with having an agile COVID-19 national response that allows for innovations and meeting our people's aspirations. Under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa, our government stepped up to the occasion when the COVID-19 pandemic arrived on our shores. We

proactively institutionalised our COVID-19 responsive measures. This is where the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) was established towards protecting our society and economy. The NCCC has equivalent structures at the provincial, district/metropolitan municipality and local municipality levels. All of government is being coordinated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our COVID-19 measures sustain hope and human solidarity in our unprecedented fight against this pandemic. Practically, our government has invested five hundred billion Rand (R500 billion) with which, among other objectives, we are: South Africans are being cushioned against the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the lives and livelihoods of our people are being saved. This investment is our society's most significant financial outlay in many decades.

## **DEPARTMENT**

### **Basic Income Grant**

Honourable Members, as we consider multiple ways to extend the social protection coverage to those aged 18 to 59 years in the period beyond October 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic is bringing back the discussion about the Basic Income Grant. The lack of social protection coverage for this group calls for an acceleration of efforts to put in place an inclusive and responsive social security system that we envisaged in the National Development Plan (NDP).

Discussions are currently in the early stages and we look forward to working with the Members of this House to shine a spotlight on this important issue and thereby advancing solutions to ensure that no one among our people is left behind.

### **Food Security and Accessibility**

We are deploying every tool, resource, and power at our disposal to protect the most vulnerable against food insecurity and inaccessibility. To date, we have provided food and nutritional relief to 3.3 million beneficiaries across the country. We could not have achieved this without the generous support of our partners and donors who have helped us to reach those households that are in need during this difficult time. Among others, I would like to thank:

- Solidarity Fund
- Spar Group
- Church of Christ of the Latter Day Saints
- Old Mutual
- Unilever
- United Nations Development Programme
- Khula Milling
- SA Sugar Association
- South African Breweries
- Procter and Gamble

Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic is underscoring the need for public private partnerships in the months and years ahead of us. It is humbling

to witness how this pandemic has brought all of us together for the common good of our society. Pursuant of this, later on this afternoon I will be meeting with some of our donors and partners to convey our government's gratitude for their generosity.

## **ECD**

With regard to Early Childhood Development (ECD), we have repurposed an amount of 61 Million Rand from the ECD Infrastructure Conditional to support ECD centres. On a related matter, we have partnered with the Nelson Mandela Foundation to roll out the Vhangasali campaign throughout the country. The aim of this campaign is to ensure that all existing ECD programmes and services, including partial care facilities are registered in terms of the Children's Act. To date, we have reached over twenty-six thousand (26 000) centres.

## **Gender-based violence**

As we wage a war against this invisible enemy, we must not overlook the suffering of women and girls due to the shadow pandemic of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). In this regard, we welcome the review of the Domestic Violence Act and other pieces of legislation that are meant to protect women and girls. Amongst others, the Social Development Portfolio is investing 95 Million Rand through the National Development Agency (NDA) towards supporting civil society organisations in the GBVF sector.

We have increased the capacity of the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre (GBVCC) to deal with an increased demand for services. We have also recruited 1 800 social work graduates for a period of three months to

deal with societal behavioural change programme, including anti-substance interventions.

We recently launched the National Drug Master Plan and we will finalise the appointment of the Board before the end of the current financial year.

We are grateful to the President and Cabinet for reinstating the ban on the sale of alcohol as alcohol consumption correlates with the increases in the number of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) occurrences.

### **Legislative Programme**

We intend to table key pieces of legislation to this House in the current financial year. These include the Children's Amendment Bill, Fundraising Bill, NPO Bill and the Social Assistance Bill. We are finalising the White Paper on Social Policy which will serve as the cornerstone of the Social Policy Act to speed up change in the lives of our people.

### **SASSA**

#### **Social Assistance Programme**

Our social assistance programme has enabled over 11 million social grant beneficiaries to weather this unprecedented storm. **Inani labantu abemukel'izimali zama-grant lingaphezulu kwezigidi eziyishumi nanye.**

Cabinet decided on the two hundred and fifty Rand (R250) emergency top-up for all social security grant types, including the once-off top-up of three hundred and fifty Rand (R350) for the Child Support Grant (CSG).

Likewise, the payment of five hundred Rand (R500) to primary caregivers of eligible children was approved.

These emergency responses represent government's continued provision of significant relief where and when it is needed most. In meaningful ways, these measures are affording beneficiaries a significant amount of dignity and the ability to provide for their families during these times of unprecedented adversities.

In addition, our government took a bold policy position of introducing the Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant of R350. This grant is targeted at providing support to unemployed individuals as well as those who have lost their livelihoods as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With regard to the Disability Grant, I have directed SASSA to explore ways in which we can safely and progressively reintroduce these services without compromising on the safety and health of both employees and applicants. We have contracted 465 doctors across the nine (9) provinces to expedite all outstanding assessments in line with the relevant legislative provisions.

I am currently considering a further extension to the period for which temporary disability grants will be paid to ease the administrative burden on applicants.

### **South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP)**

Key among the roles of the Council is the professionalisation of the social service professions. Recognising that South Africa is in need of more



social service professionals now more than ever, support towards the programmes of the Council need to receive growing funding.

Noting the growing need for social services professionals relative to the complexity of the challenges that accompany the COVID-19 pandemic (especially the development of COVID-19-related post-traumatic disorders), the Council will henceforth receive meaningful support into the medium-term strategic framework (MTSF).

### **NDA**

The National Development Agency (NDA) depends largely on government grants and remains dependent on the Department's additional funding to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the Department's supplementary budget allocations, the NDA did not receive additional funding for its COVID-19 response programmes.

Therefore, out of its transfer budget of two hundred twenty-four million five hundred thousand Rand (R224.5 million), the NDA reprioritised an amount of thirty-nine million Rand (R39 million), from its allocated budget towards funding its COVID-19 priorities.

Of this, thirty-two million Rand (R32 million) has been set aside for the Volunteer Intervention Programme, whilst five million Rand (R5 million) has been set aside for purchasing COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPEs) for NDA's staff. Additionally, the NDA has dedicated an amount of two million Rand (R2 million) towards digitising its delivery of services to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The provision of the services of the NDA by means of e-solutions will assist to capacitate the NDA to levels where it can optimally deliver its legislated mandate.

From its original budget allocation of seven million Rand (R7 million) the NDA targets to benefit Cooperatives and CSOs, especially those involved in the production of COVID-19-related PPEs.

The revised budget has enabled NDA to create two thousand (2 000) job opportunities for the youth. This is done through the NDA's Volunteer Programme that is being implemented in partnership with 200 CSOs.

The volunteers have been instrumental in supporting the Department's community programmes in areas such as: the distribution of food and nutrition packages to vulnerable households through the Community Nutrition and Development Centres (CNDCs); and the dissemination of COVID-19 information in local languages to build community awareness and data collection on poverty status. CNDCs are part of Outcome 13 of the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030, which seeks to address poverty dimensions through protective measures such as nutrition and food security.

To augment its budget, during this financial year, the NDA will pursue and enter into partnerships through which it will unlock one hundred million Rand-worth (R100 million) of CSO development interventions and resources. While these partnerships will be at a local, regional and global levels, they will be informed by the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of CSOs.

## **CONCLUSION**

In his address to the nation yesterday, President Ramaphosa provided detailed guidance relating to **(I quote)** "... the management of the

resources that we have dedicated towards the fight against COVID-19”  
**(Unquote).**

To this House, the President of South Africa, the taxpayer, and the nine state institutions that the President mandated to deal with the theft, abuse, misappropriation and mismanagement of the COVID-19 response funds, I immediately slam the doors of the Department of Social Development wide open for the relevant authorities to investigate allegations of corruption in, for instance, the distribution of food parcels, social relief grants, the procurement and alleged overpricing of personal protective equipment and medical supplies, etc..

I am determined now more than ever to assist the authorised institutions to, thoroughly and without impediments, investigate all and every wrongdoing. Those who should face the full wrath of the law, should do so.

In closing, my appeal to you Honourable Members is for you to welcome and adopt this budget. This will enable government to continue to work hard in the midst of the COVID-19 storm.

I would like to call upon the beneficiaries of the Department and its entities to assist us in assisting them. NgeSizulu sithi “**Masakhaneni!**”

I reiterate our collective call to all South Africans that we partake in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Adapting our behaviours and attitudes, wearing masks, washing our hands and maintaining a healthy physical distance will keep us alive. We must continue and strengthen our

support for those who are infected and affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In developing our social (meaning our people) during these times of COVID-19, let us be reminded of the words of the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, when he said (**I quote**) “...*while we are all floating on the same sea, it’s clear that some are in superyachts while others are clinging to the floating debris* (**unquote**).

Honourable Chairperson, let me conclude by extending my heartfelt appreciation to the Deputy Minister Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu; all the Members of the Executive Committees for Social Development in all the provinces; the Acting Director-General, Mr Linton Mchunu; the CEOs of SASSA, Ms Totsie Memela Khambula, and the NDA, Ms Thamo Mzobe; the Registrar of the South African Council for Social Services Professions, Ms Langi Malamba; the social service professionals in the frontlines; and to all hard-working staff in the department and its entities.

I thank you.