



that sustains us and fuels our determination to overcome even the greatest of difficulties” [Unquote]. Your self-less commitment to the South African collective reminds us of what our society is capable of when acting in common purpose. Yes, underlying our national character is our collective undefeated spirit.

3. Noting 2023 as the year of decisive action to advance the people's interests, individually and collectively, we are better off invoking the force that draws us together and deploy our respective resources towards carrying out our national mission. Our national mission requires that we draw contributions from each one of our most precious resources, namely each South African, towards the better building of our society. Your deeds must ignite the hearts of your immediate family, community and the people of this land. Your best deeds must be directed towards moulding the people’s collective aspirations into a South African reality that we all want.
4. Rise to build your country: your home. Who rises to calls for destruction during times of humanity’s greatest strife?
5. Pre-dating by centuries our modern-day global inequalities and the self-imposed hegemony of violence that was brought to these shores by the west winds, the path of un-development that colonial-apartheid thrust upon the majority of South Africans had already made eking a living unimaginably unbearable. It is by reason of the stubborn continuity of this past into the lived reality of the majority the people that the efforts of the African National Congress-led government in the past twenty-eight years were largely invested towards innovating redress through social policy and exponentially effecting social transformation.

6. Owing to the rising cost of living, and with the view to cushion the most vulnerable among South Africans from the effects of known and novel risks alike, the Social Development portfolio is in the process of devising a Basic Income Support. If ours were not a society and economy that were structured to benefit the absolute few, there would be fewer reasons necessitating this intervention. Noting South Africa's unique characteristics and circumstances, it is important that the design of a Basic Income Support should resonate with the fiscal space while supporting our intended social outcomes and future-targeted policy objectives.
7. While these historic conditions resulted in the innovative delivery of free basic services — including housing, health services, public amenities, and social grants — to the majority of South Africa's population, I remind you that last year the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Enoch Godongwana, informed us that government will be spending R3.33 trillion on the social wage over a period of three years. While we are entering the second year of the three, we should particularly be mindful that this allocation is targeted at leaving no one behind by supporting vulnerable populations as well as low-income households. In this was government's social wage intervention ensures that the greatest number of South Africans is receiving public services, and that, as much as possible, the cost of living that the vulnerable and needy in particular would have incurred is materially reduced.
8. While the Honourable Members can readily corroborate that the Sixth Administration promptly intervened in response to the advent of CoVID-19, the continued provision of the CoVID-19 Social Relief of Distress to a growing number of South Africans on a monthly basis is the living proof that this government stands ready to protect its citizens against economic, health, social, climate change and similar shocks.

9. The responsiveness of our government to novel challenges is courageously and visibly forthcoming while its long-standing commitments to continually pay the nearly 19 million disability, foster care and child support grants to eligible South Africans is unfaltering. Immediately-related to this is the observation that while we welcome the recent downpours in different parts of the country because our food production system depends on them, we equally note the hardships that they occasion the people who live in precarious and informal conditions in the affected areas of the country. We are working together with the provincial Members of the Executive Councils to attend to the needs of the affected communities.
10. Notwithstanding the sharp economic growth slowdown globally, and owing to the centrality of the role of the people in the reconstruction of our national life, the Sixth Administration continues to prioritise the provision all categories of the social wage. This government considers the dignity of each South African as indispensable. For this reason, all our efforts are targeted at realising a dignified life.
11. Pursuant of enhancing South Africa's social protection system and perfecting social development as a whole, the Social Development portfolio is supporting the participation of all communities in the social compacting processes by means of facilitating people-centred contributions through non-profit organisations and civil society organisations. On account of the complex nature of social ills, the Department of Social Development continues to support over twenty thousand non-profit organisations annually with more than R8.2 billion. In return, these social partners become the extension of the State's capacity and attend to varied social challenges in communities.

12. Added to this coordinated work is the contribution of traditional authorities to targeted programmes such as the fight against gender-based violence and femicide and substance abuse and the promotion of strong family units. Early suggestions from these processes indicate that communities wish for their members to live in a violent-free society wherein they can meaningfully partake in the economy. A few days ago, together with the National Youth Development Agency and the National Empowerment Fund, I exchanged critical views with youth empowerment non-profit organisations who challenged government to deepen social outcomes' enhancing partnerships with them.
13. Viewed from the Social Development vantage point, the epicenter of an inclusive and growing economy and common prosperity are resilient families and communities. Therefore, strong families are indispensable to a productive and inclusive South African society. In the quest to forge the most formidable defence against social ills and leakages that are caused by a weakened social fabric, the Social Development portfolio continues to invest in resilient families.
14. Last week I met with a handful from among 39 744 learners who were recipients of the child support grant. Against all odds, these passed their National Senior Certificate examinations at the end of the 2022 academic year in subjects such as Mathematics, Accounting, Physical Science, Economics and Business Studies. These learners expressed their gratitude to government for the intervention that we afforded them throughout their childhood.
15. The achievements of this sample of learners attests to the well-established fact that when favourable learning conditions are provided to talented and

capable learners surely their performance improves significantly. People are not poor, they live in conditions of poverty. When these conditions change, so do their outlook towards life and prospects. To this effect the Minister of Basic Education, the Honourable Angie Motshekga, and I decided that the two mandates should, from childhood onwards, deepen their investments towards enriching the learning process and outcomes of this population.

16. In the current year, the Social Development portfolio will particularly work together with departments that carry out the mandates of Economic Sectors and Employment as well as private sector partners towards defining a framework for the absorption of employable youth who are receiving social grants on behalf of their grant-eligible children. This should particularly set these grant-receiving youth on an economically-liberating and dignifying trajectory.
17. Noting that nearly all of the young people who receive grants on behalf of children are young women, it is imperative that these be meaningfully empowered to improve their dignity and remove most of the socially-constructed vulnerabilities that bedevil women. My discussion with Honourable Motshekga also entails programmatically devising sustainable solutions to deep-seated social challenges such as child pregnancies, absent fathers, etc..
18. In the quest to alleviate the load on the fiscus, part of this population can be gainfully-employed whereas another can be self-employed through entrepreneurship support programmes that are available in the public and private sector.

I thank you.