



Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement
Western Cape Provincial Parliament
IPalamente yePhondo IeNtshona Koloni

11/4/1/1/2

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday, 5 April 2022, (at 09:00) Microsoft Team

PRESENT

Democratic Alliance

Plato, D (Chairperson)
Mackenzie, RD
Philander, WF

AL JAMAH

Brinkhuis, G

Additional Member

Windvogel, R (ANC)

Absent

BakuBaku-Vos, NG

Persons in attendance

(Attendance register available)

1. Opening and welcome

The Chairperson opened the meeting and allowed for brief introductions.

2. Briefing by the Department of Social Development on the Sexual Harassment Policy

Ms. Patel proceeded to brief the Committee on the Sexual Harassment Policy. She informed the Committee that the Western Cape Government Policy on sexual harassment is transversal and was adopted in May 2011 by the employer and trade unions. She defined sexual harassment as an unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that violates the rights of a person. An important provision of sexual harassment is that a recipient's perception and experience of the behaviour or conduct will largely determine whether the conduct is offensive and not welcomed to him or her.

The Department of Social Development has used the processes as set out in the transversal policy when dealing with incidents of sexual harassment that have been brought to its attention. The

Department has appointed Sexual Harassment Officers (SHO). There were Sexual Harassment Officers in all the regional offices of the Department. All appointees volunteered to act as SHOs. The Department has made provisions for the sexual harassment training on annual basis, and the last training was conducted in 2019. The communication campaign for sexual harassment was in a form of messages displayed in areas of high traffic, such as lifts, and email news flashes to all departmental staff.

In terms of the process followed in dealing with sexual harassment within the Department of Social Development, it was reported that once the complainant contacts the Sexual Harassment Officer, the SHO would at the earliest opportunity, convene a meeting with the complainant. This first engagement is often one where the goal is to put the complainant at ease, offer support, assure the complainant of confidentiality for the process, and offer the option of access to counselling.

The complainant is advised of the options available to deal with the matter, namely the informal and the formal route. The informal route was a mediation process between the complainant and the alleged perpetrator. In the formal route, consideration is given to placing an alleged perpetrator on precautionary suspension if deemed appropriate.

3. Briefing by the Department of Social Development on the Western Cape Gender-Based Violence Implementation Plan

The Department proceeded to brief the Committee on the Western Cape Gender-Based Violence Implementation Plan. The Department informed the Committee that Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a gross human violation with alarming high levels in South Africa. It carries significant personal and economic impact, the extent of which disproportionately affects women, children, and LGBTQIA + persons.

The purpose of the Western Cape Gender-Based Violence Implementation Plan is to strive towards the vision of having a South Africa free of GBV directed at women, children, and LGBTQIA+ persons through employing a multi-sectoral, coherent strategic framework to ensure a coordinated response to GBV and femicide, by the Western Cape Government.

The Department reported that interpersonal violence and crime remain a serious and complex challenge in the Western Cape. The extent and nature of violence against vulnerable persons such as women and children remain a major concern due to its continuous increase.

The Committee was informed that the Western Cape Gender-Based Violence Implementation Plan for the 2022/23 financial years is focused on all women across the lifecycle, children, LGBTQIA+ persons, women, and LGBTQIA+ persons in the workplace.

It was reported that the Western Cape Government (GBV) Implementation Plan presents the Western Cape Government (WCG) response to GBV and outlines the department's key interventions for the 2021/2022 financial year as well as ongoing interventions. Interventions are aimed to mitigate the GBV and strengthen the WCG's existing GBV responses within its socio-economic, cultural, and political landscape. These key interventions have been aligned with the six pillars of the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). The NSP was launched in April 2020, in response to escalating levels of GBVF observed nationally.

The Department reported that a total of 28 685 sexual assault cases were reported by males and females at public health facilities in the Western Cape between April 2015 and March 2019. Crime against women reported nationally in 2019/2020 were 83 202 common assault cases, 50 859 assault cases with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, and 31 100 sexual offenses cases were also reported.

In addition, 53 293 sexual assault cases against men and women were reported between April 2019 and March 2020.

The Department reported that provincially during the 2019/2020 financial year, 34 909 contact crimes against women and 8 849 contact crimes against children were reported to the police. 8.7 percent increase in reported sexual assault cases, representing an increase of 153 cases, resulting in a total of 1910.

It was reported that eight of the top 10 police stations where sexual assault is reported are located in the Western Cape. The police stations are Mitchells Plain Police Station with 84 cases, Delft with 54 cases, Manenberg with 50 cases, Mfuleni with 50 cases, Cape Town Central with 46 cases, Kleinvei with 45 reported cases, Bishop Lavis with 44 cases and Gugulethu with 43 cases.

The Department reported that all government departments in the Western Cape have been consulted and have provided input on their activities. The Provincial GBV Strategic Plan Implementation Task Team has been established. The Department reports quarterly on progress with the implantation of the strategy. The progress is reported monthly to the MEC of Social Development GBV Transversal group and the Wellbeing and Dignity work-stream.

The Committee was informed that the next step in the Implementation Plan will be reviewed annually to determine whether any aspect should be updated.

The Committee deliberated on the presentations.

4. The Committee considered and adopted the following Committee documents:

4.1 Minutes of 1 March 2022

The Chairperson tabled the Draft Minutes of 1 March 2022 which were considered and adopted.

4.2 Minutes of 17 March 2022

The Chairperson tabled the Draft Minutes of 17 March 2022 which were considered and adopted.

4.3 Committee Programme

The Chairperson tabled the Committee Programme which was considered and adopted with amendments.

5. Resolution

The Committee resolved to:

- 5.1 Invite the Department of Social Development to brief the Committee on the human trafficking and National Strategic Plan (NSP) on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide stats in the Western Cape Province.
- 5.2 Invite the Department of Social Development to brief the Committee on the allegations labelled against Mr. Fritz, the former MEC of Social Development. Mr. Plato, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Development undertook to engage with the office of the Premier on the matter before the Committee can schedule the briefing.

6. Information requested

The Committee REQUESTED the Department of Social Development to provide it with the following information by Monday 23 May 2022.

- 6.1 A copy of the Gender-Based Violence National Strategic Implementation Plan. The document was submitted to the Committee by Dr. Macdonald during the meeting.
- 6.2 Detailed information on the vacancies of Social Workers for GBV in the province.
- 6.3 A total number of officials that were criminally charged for sexual harassment within the Department of Social Development and other funded facilities in the past five years.
- 6.4 Detailed information on whether the alleged victims of former MEC Fritz received support from the Department, if so, the Department should give details of the support provided.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00.

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MR D PLATO, MPP
CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT