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

DRAFT COMMITTEE REPORT

**Report of the Standing Committee on Social Development on the Annual Report of the
Department of Social Development for the 2022/23 financial year**

The 2023/24 strategic objectives of the WCPP linked to the Speaker's priorities, which have an impact on committees, are as follows:

Priority 1: Building a credible WCPP; and

Priority 3: Strengthening the core business.

The Standing Committee on Social Development, having deliberated on the Annual Report of the Department of Social Development for the year ended 31 March 2023, reports as follows:

1. Introduction

The Western Cape Provincial Parliament's (WCPP) Annual Report programme for the 2022/23 financial year was advertised in newspapers, as well as the WCPP's social media platforms, inviting stakeholders and members of the public to attend and participate in the discussions.

The Standing Committee on Social Development (the Committee) deliberated on the Annual Report of the Department of Social Development (the Department) on 13 October 2023, as part of its oversight function. The Minister and the Head of Department were allowed to make opening remarks.

The Department was examined on:

Part A: General Information,

Part B: Departmental Performance Information; and

Part D: Human Resources Management of the Department's Annual Report.

Members of the public were also allowed to pose questions and make input during the discussions.

2. Overview

The Minister of Social Development, Ms. S Fernandez provided an overview of the performance of the Department during the 2022/23 financial year.

The Minister reported that the period under review has been tough for the Department due to the budget cuts, huge constraints, and high demand for services. The Department was doing more with less. Communities across the province have been severely affected by the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department had to respond to increased socio-economic challenges in a constrained fiscal environment. Despite this, the Department remained committed to serving the most vulnerable communities in the province. The focus areas during the period under review were Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Child Protection, Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) Older Persons, and Persons with Disabilities.

Dr. R Macdonald, the Head of Department (HOD) also made opening remarks. He reported that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was still felt across all government departments and the NGO Sector. The Department had to make extremely difficult trade-offs to maintain, and where necessary, expand the most critically needed areas of service delivery to the people of the Western Cape. The HOD reported that communities have become more vulnerable to poverty, homelessness, crime, violence, and GBV. The economic conditions have also affected the resources available to the government, most notably with budget cuts implemented across the province. The Annual Report of the Department of Social Development under review represents the Department's response to assisting the most vulnerable communities in the Western Cape in a constrained economic and fiscal environment.

3. Key points from the discussion on the Annual Report of the Department

- 3.1** The Department remained committed to the care, well-being, and protection of children as well as their family members.
- 3.2** During the 2022/23 financial year, the Department responded to 6 916 reported cases of child abuse and neglect.
- 3.3** Alternative care services were strengthened with the full implementation of the web-based Foster Care Monitoring System.
- 3.4** During the financial year under review, various GBV interventions were implemented by the Department as guided by the 2019-2024 Provincial Strategic Plan and the GBV Implementation Plan.
- 3.5** The eight Thuthuzela Care Centres in partnership with the National Prosecuting Authority and the Department of Health and Wellness have also contributed tremendously to the immediate care of GBV victims and survivors.
- 3.6** The Department has seen an increased demand for people requiring psychosocial support service and court support services, with 24 388 accessing services during the 2022/23 financial year, a significantly higher figure than the planned target of 18 525.
- 3.7** During the 2022/23 financial year, the Department has taken the lead in introducing the Western Cape Government's transversal GBV media campaign, "Break the Cycle" into hotspot areas like Khayelitsha and Delft.
- 3.8** Children with disabilities remain a priority for the Department. The Department is planning to increase bed spaces for children with disabilities in alternative care at Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) during the 2023/24 financial year.
- 3.9** The Department strengthened its care and support to children and youth at CYCCs during the 2022/23 financial year.
- 3.10** During the financial year under review, 10 685 children accessed practical and therapeutic services through the Risiha Model.
- 3.11** It was reported that the 26 funded GBV shelters provided access to psychosocial and therapeutic support services to 2 369 women and their children who were victims of crime and violence.
- 3.12** In addition to temporary accommodation, these shelters provided skills development programmes to 421 women on home-based care and computer literacy supporting them to become economically independent when exiting the shelters.
- 3.13** During the financial year under review, the Western Cape Government hosted a provincial Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) Summit, which was attended by 1500 delegates.
- 3.14** The Department's food relief interventions provided over 109 300 qualifying beneficiaries access to cooked meals at the Department's 111 Community Nutrition and Development Centres (CNDs) and 512 community kitchens across the province.
- 3.15** The Department continued to implement programmes aimed at youth at risk. This included the expansion of school-based crime prevention programmes which focused on life skills mentoring, anti-bullying, SUD, personal anger, and stress management to address risky behaviour amongst learners.
- 3.16** During the financial year under review, 14 566 youth were able to access and participate in academic and life skills programmes offered at the Youth Cafes managed by Community-Based Organisations (CBOs).

- 3.17 The Department continued to fulfill its statutory obligation to empower, protect and promote the rights of older persons. Services to vulnerable older persons were supported with the full implementation of the national electronic Older Persons Abuse Register and the training of 101 social service practitioners to record and report cases of neglect and suspected abuse.
- 3.18 The Department's vacancy rate has remained at 8% below the 10% norm of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).
- 3.19 Vacancy rate within certain occupational groups, such as child and youth care workers, educators, and professional nurses at CYCCs, however, remains a challenge. In addition, budget constraints, and staff attrition because of resignations, promotions, and retirement in the last financial year have affected the Department's ability to render services.
- 3.20 The Department reported that it has identified posts that will be prioritised in mitigation of the impact on service delivery.
- 3.21 During the financial year under review, the Department was able to provide temporary work opportunities to 1 048 EPWP participants.

4. Public input

Ms. L Elliham, a member of the public, was offered an opportunity to make an oral submission on the Annual Report of the Department. She raised concerns about the Walking Bus, Women for Change, and the Safety Youth Ambassador Projects in the Western Cape. She informed the Committee that these projects, which used to employ people, especially women, have been discontinued, leaving them unemployed. Ms. Elliham sought clarity on the status of these projects. The HOD reported that the projects were managed by the City of Cape Town and not by the Department.

5. Information requested

The Committee requested the Department of Social Development to provide the following information by 31 October 2023:

- 5.1 A detailed report on the recruitment process of the Department and reasons why it takes 6-9 months to fill vacancies. The report should include the role that the DPSA plays in these delays.
- 5.2 Detailed information on the latest malnutrition rate in the province.
- 5.3 Detailed information on how the Safety Plan addresses the current rape figures in the province.
- 5.4 A breakdown of staff exits by region and its impact on the vacancy rate of the Department.
- 5.5 Detailed information on the number of NGOs that provide GBV services and the kind of assistance the Department provides to the NGOs.

6. Conclusion

The Chairperson thanked Members of the Committee, the Minister, the Head of the Department, and the departmental officials for their preparation, and responses to the questions posed by the Committee.

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MR D PLATO, MPP

CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT