

Speech on annual report 2006/2007 main focus

Introduction

Honourable Speaker
Honourable members of the legislature
Officials in the department

Whilst it may sound like routine to put to the house an annual report from one year to the other, we from government do so not because we are just following standard practice. We do so with the full knowledge that this is a point in the year where government is called to report to the representative of our people.

We are fully mindful that you the representative of our people await these reports in order to assess whether what we have promised people in the name of your government is indeed been done. So to us this is not merely routine, but a critical moment where you are on behalf of our people determining whether their government is worth the office they are occupying.

Speaker, in June this year we reported to the house how after the migration of social grants to South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) we have mapped the way forward for the department.

We also reported to you what will constitute our main focal points leading to the end of the term of office of this government.

Among them we isolated children as one of our focal points. Being a province which is urban in the main, a province that intends to reach an even higher growth of a city region, the welfare of children who may suffer exclusion is a critical issue.

Children and Families

The department has in the year under review, paid special attention to the category of orphaned and vulnerable children. On the orphaned children we continue to process applications for foster parents through the justice system in even greater numbers. On average we complete about eight thousand cases a year. We now have just over 36 000 foster parents in our system benefiting more than 54 000 orphaned or abandoned children.

To those children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS we continue to provide services to them in our community home based care sites. In these sites we have care workers who see to it that those children who are on their own in house holds are taken care of throughout the day.

Those who are of the school going age or attending crèche are assisted by these care workers on a daily basis enabling them to start a day like any other child. They are assisted to wash, put on clean clothes, eat and then taken to school or crèche.

Later in the day after school hours these children are taken care of in the community home based care sites. There they have lunch, recreation and for those who are at school they are assisted with home work. In the late afternoon they are then provided with food packages for the evening. They are taken home and prepared that they later can retire and sleep.

During the course of this year we were able to add thirty more sites to the already existing hundred sites. We intend to roll out more for the next financial year.

Social Infrastructure

We are on track in honouring our undertaking to erect ECD facilities in the twenty townships. After a protracted struggle to secure land, to conclude memorandums of understanding in the different municipalities throughout the province, tenders have now being published by the different municipalities and the department of public transport, roads and works inviting interested parties to take up the building of these facilities. We are planning for more of the same facilities for the next financial year.

Older Persons

The welfare of our senior citizens also enjoys our priority focus now and into the immediate future. The legacy of apartheid and our focus in the past ten years on the important issue of social security has meant a continued lack of old age homes in black residential areas.

Government has accepted that none other than itself should take responsibility in redressing this imbalance. In so doing we have undertaken as a department to build one old age home in a given township every financial year. It will take some time to even the disparity, but it is a beginning. We have also undertaken to help renovate those few old age homes in the townships that are in a bad physical state.

Having recognized that old age homes have a narrow reach to the multitudes of elderly people out there, we are more and more gravitating towards a community home based care approach. To this end we are on track in honouring our undertaking of establishing day care centres for the aged in townships. Similarly with ECD sites we have secured land. Tender processes are underway to find interested parties who will build the facilities.

Through these community facilities we hope that we will engage the elderly in activities that give meaning to their lives. They will gather at will in these facilities during day time to engage in different activities among themselves.

Community Development

Our eyes are still set on the developmental approach that says we must empower communities to do it for themselves. On that score we are consciously assisting people in township to establish, run and sustain own organisations to run whatever community projects they choose.

We have established a unit whose main duty would be to monitor and help capacitate people involved in the work of these organisations so that they finally can manage the governance and administrative issues themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion Mr./Madam speaker we are confident that these priority programmes and the rest of the others that the department is undertaking will go a long way in making a difference to the lives of our citizens who for various reasons are unable to fend for themselves.