

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON THE SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET VOTE
SPEECH, BY THE MEC FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT IN LIMPOPO, MRS. H.J
MASHAMBA.**

23rd July 2014

**Honourable Speaker;
Honourable Members;
All protocol observed.**

In the past week South Africans listened in horror as a mother described how her 4-year old child was dragged to death next to a car, by hijackers. This terrible act has left people speechless, angered and sad and has placed violence against children in the spotlight once more.

Honourable Speaker

All that our children need, to become responsible; intelligent and progressive adults, is a safe haven where they can grow, play and learn from an early age. The social effects of child-headed households and that of children growing up without the active involvement of their parents are evident in the uncaring and sometimes violent uncaring society we live in.

It is therefore imperative that we activate a sense of responsibility and patriotism in our children from a very young age. Government's gallant efforts in enhancing Early Childhood Development can therefore never be over-emphasized. Continuous improvement of the system and assistance from our stakeholders are needed to ensure the success of this programme.

This cooperation can be achieved and one such example is the Early Childhood Development Centre that was established by Kumba Iron Ore Thabazimbi Mine Limpopo, in March of this year. This form of corporate social investment should be encouraged by the private sector in every community.

It is no secret that the effects of an unjust system enforced on our people prior to the birth of our democracy, is still evident on the periphery of South Africa. The situation, however, is reversible and the investment made in our children and youth, through the Department of Social Development's programmes, will go a long way in healing a nation in its entirety.

We therefore welcome the Minister's announcement of an increase in the number of social service professionals such as social workers, social auxiliary workers, community development practitioners and child and youth care workers. These workers have to cover a lot of ground in their daily activities, to reach all the intended recipients of our services and they need all the assistance they can get. They are the fundamental role players in ensuring the social wellbeing of the most vulnerable members of society. This initiative also supports the intention to create decent jobs.

Honourable Speaker

We have recently celebrated the life of our late former President Nelson Mandela.

On 18th July 2014 we took up our working tools and spent 67 minutes doing something extraordinary to “clean up for Madiba”. However, the healing of our nation will also involve the cleaning up of certain scourges that adversely affect the responsible social behaviour of our people and sustainable livelihoods.

Drug and alcohol abuse in South Africa, especially among the youth, remain a cause for concern.

According to the South African Revenue Services the known use of illicit drugs was roughly one hundred and one million rand [R101m] in the past financial year.

Statistics from the South African Police Service indicate that most violence crimes occur in crime hotspots that usually has a high concentration of taverns in their immediate surroundings. SAPS statistics show that most violent crimes also occur with the perpetrator being under the influence of a substance.

Honourable Speaker

Substance abuse further leads to the youth engaging in unsafe sexual activities, which in turn lead to teenage pregnancy and the contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. While rehabilitation facilities are a necessity in this regard, we should also continuously find ways in which to combat the onset of abuse and addiction. This is not an evil that the Department of Social Development can fight alone. It will involve the commitment and strategic thinking of government, communities, religious institutions, NGO's and all other structures concerned about cleaning up those societal ills that will deflect us from the creation of progressive and self-sustaining communities.

Honourable Speaker

In conclusion it is our belief that Budget Vote 19 addresses all the avenues that will lead to the attainment of our aspirations for the National Development Plan Vision 2030 as well as creating a true democratic state, based on the values of social cohesion and sustainable livelihoods.

Let us then join hands together to move South Africa forward.

I thank you!