

White Paper Review

The Minister for Social Development launched the Comprehensive Report on the Review of the White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997 on 4 November 2016. Professor Vivian Tylor, Chairperson of the Review Committee gave a brief overview of the Report at the launch and highlighted:

Prof Taylor briefly outlined the structure of the Report which contains information from organisations, DSD and beneficiaries from all national and provincial levels.

- The consultation process was comprehensive and inclusive of many stakeholders and role players across a wide spectrum. The Report is the result of a rigorous process and contains both quantitative and qualitative data
- In terms of transformation: racial equity in terms of users and providers of services has improved; the geographic disparities of service provision have lessened but the gap between the worst and best provinces remains large; there is much confusion amongst practitioners regarding what developmental social welfare services entails
- DSD introduced the Integrated Service Model but it is not working in practice. There is a growing need for specialised services but need to ensure that people can access services at one point.
- There is a lack of reliable and meaningful data on service users which makes it difficult to plan.
- There is a gap between policies and implementation
- In terms of intersectoral co-operation there is duplication and lack of clarity and proposals have been made.
- There is an urgent need to draft and finalise an overarching act for social development [similar to the Health Act, Education Act, etc.]. The absence of such an Act, is a stumbling block. It must specify, for example, the roles and powers of all role players. Use the amended White Paper as the basis for the Act.
- There has been a loss in services due to the financing of NGOs. Urgent attention is required regarding transfers to NGOs to rectify the inadequate and erratic payments..
- There has been a steady decrease in the percentage of the SD budget allocated for social welfare services and a loss of services due to the financing of NGOs
- There are variations in funding across provinces, which reflect provincial political choices.
- The budget for social welfare services should be increased in real terms [over and above inflation]. An increase of 1.9% per annum for 5 years is suggested which will double the number of services.
- The budget for older persons has fallen by 50% - mainly residential services – but the number of older persons has increased. There is widespread elder abuse but inadequate prevention programmes to combat this.
- There is a serious shortage of social service practitioners but the focus is on DSD and not NGOs. Urgent action is required.
- The administrative burden on organisations is unacceptable and must be addressed and simplified.
- A Social Protection floor should be established which includes social welfare services.
- Propose that a social development component should be included in the equitable provincial share and provide guidelines which will facilitate more funds being available for social welfare services.

The Minister spoke and stated:

- The Report will help with an organogram for DSD and make sure services are uniform. SA is not a federal state but a unitary state.

- The Community Development section at DSD is busy with the recommendations from the Summit
- There are too few substance abuse treatment centres available
- Need to re-engineer the use of community strengths
- Report empowers DSD to develop a Social Development Act
- Report assists DSD to strengthen bids to Treasury
- In some provinces there are social workers in local government but not aligned to DSD
- Systems are not properly designed and M&E is too complicated

In conclusion it was stated that:

- A small group will be established to draft an amended White Paper by 31 March 2016. There are 5 persons including Prof Vivian Taylor as the Chairperson. This will form the basis for an overarching act for Social Development.

Copies of the 383 page Report were made available and there is also a summarised version. The full report and summary are available on DSD's website – dsd.gov.za.

National Advisory Board for Social Development

In 2001 the National Advisory Board for Social Development Act was enacted. However, despite calling for nominations in 2002, to the best of NACOSS' knowledge, no such Board has ever been appointed to advise the Minister for Social Development.

Together with other organisations, NACOSS has written to the Minister for Social Development and the Portfolio Committee for Social Development enquiring about such a Board. We await developments.