



MINISTRY
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X904, Pretoria, 0001, HSRC Building 134 Pretorius Street, Pretoria, Tel: +27 12 312 7414, Fax: +27 12 325 7071, www.dsd.gov.za
Private Bag X9136, Cape Town, 8000, Tel: +27 21 465 3360, Fax: +27 21 465 1267, E-mail: ministerialservices@dsd.gov.za

**Remarks by the Deputy Minister of Social Development, Mr Ganief Hendricks, MP on
the occasion of the launch of the Social Security Review Volume 2**

Monday, 28 October 2024 | Cape Town—Western Cape Province

Session Moderator, Mr Brenton Van Vrede;

Acting Director-General of Social Development, Mr Peter Netshipale;

CEO of SASSA, Ms Totsie Memela-Khambula;

Acting CEO of NDA, Mr Bongani Magongo;

CEO of HSRC, Professor Sarah Mosoetsa;

Distinguished researchers, authors, members of the academia here present and those joining us on virtual platforms; and

Representatives of civil society, development agencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

1. Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity of joining you here today for the official launch of the Social Security Review Volume 2 under the theme: "Social Security in the time of COVID-19". I would like us all to give a resounding round of applause to our distinguished authors, editors, reviewers, researchers and academics without whom the Social Security Review Volume 2 that we are launching today, would not have been possible.
2. This publication is the culmination of much hard work and close collaboration between the Department of Social Development, the HSRC, independent experts and researchers. Thank you all for your commitment and dedication to this very important

publication, which contains such a wealth of information. We anticipate that the Social Security Review will remain an important platform for independent experts to critique and review Government's interventions on various policy and legislative matters of national interest. May you find even greater strength and determination to do more and contribute to more publications!

3. The inaugural publication came out February 2022 at the time we were grappling with a crisis unlike anything in living memory. The COVID-19 crisis has brought social protection to the forefront as a crisis response tool. Across the globe and in both developing and developed economies, the advent of the pandemic generated the largest mobilisation of social protection measures ever seen, to protect not just people's health and lives, but also jobs, incomes and livelihoods.
4. Most importantly, the pandemic exposed serious gaps in social protection such as coverage, comprehensiveness and financing across all countries, including here in South Africa. For instance, the exclusion of vulnerable unemployed adults of working age between 18 – 59 years, disjuncture in national database systems and the issue of social safety nets for seasonal workers and those in the informal sector who are not adequately covered by the current safety nets. The majority of people concentrated in these sectors are women who are exposed to precarious conditions and income insecurity.
5. On the positive, the pandemic has made it possible for us to begin to open up national discourse on policy choices that were long overdue, including the universal basic income grant. That is what makes the release of this publication so crucial and timely as we build back better. The thematic areas of this publication resonate with the strategic priority 2 of reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living as outlined by President Cyril Ramaphosa during the opening of Parliament in July this year.
6. This is where the issue of evidence-based decision making in government comes in and becomes very relevant as we seek to understand what works under what circumstances. As most of you are aware, we are preparing for the much-anticipated

National Consultative Dialogue, which is expected to give us a pathway to establish a common vision for South Africa. The capacity of social protection to contain and reduce inequality and extreme poverty has been critical in our efforts towards nation building, social cohesion and renewing our social contract with the people of South Africa.

7. Without pre-empting the discussion and outcomes of the upcoming National Consultative Dialogue which is planned for 16 December, it is imperative that we keep the momentum, build consensus and push for finalisation of the core elements of the comprehensive social security system envisioned in the National Development Plan. This will ensure that we are not only better prepared to respond to future crises and shocks, including climate change related disasters that have now become more frequent and more devastating especially on the poor.
8. As we launch the Social Security Review Volume 2, we welcome today's insightful presentations and recommendations from some of South Africa's best minds in social policy, social protection and public financing. We look forward to discussing the recommendations of this publication to build a stronger case to take forward all outstanding matters relating to the comprehensive social security reforms in South Africa. But as can be expected, especially in South Africa, debates and policy making in the field of social protection are always highly contested. We therefore hope that the release of this publication will contribute to national discourse on the future of social protection in South Africa.
9. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is undeniable that in the past 30 years of our democracy, government had made great strides in reducing poverty by providing access to services in areas where little or none existed before. Key amongst these is the social assistance programme, which has lifted many households and individuals from the dehumanising conditions of abject poverty. Currently, over 18 million vulnerable South Africans, the majority of which is children, persons with disabilities and older persons receive income support every month without fail. In addition, more than 8.5 million unemployed persons between the ages of 18-59 years receive the Social Relief of

Distress (SRD) that was introduced as part of COVID-19 economic and social relief measures at the height of the pandemic in 2020.

10. Ladies and Gentlemen, while some economic indicators show that we are on the recovery trajectory, one thing that is already very clear is that social protection is a buffer in times of crisis. One cannot imagine the severe poverty and destitution that our people would have experienced without the social protection and additional relief measures that were introduced at the height of the pandemic. In fact, the pandemic has underlined the critical need for us to continue building a modern, more comprehensive, and shock-responsive social protection system.
11. This is what our Constitution demands of us. The central principles and provisions that are enshrined in our Constitution include democratic values, social justice, fundamental human rights, the commitment to improve the quality of life of all citizens, the commitment to equality, and the commitment to uphold the human dignity of every citizen. The vision of the type of society we want, our aspirations as a people, and the goals of all our efforts on social policy are contained and enshrined in the Constitution.
12. So once again, my deep appreciation to all the authors, editors and reviewers here today and those connecting virtually for lending your time and expertise to this publication, which is certainly a major contribution that will be a must-read to legislators, scholars and those who are interested in the prosperous future of our beautiful country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my singular honour and privilege to officially launch the Social Security Volume 2.

Thank you very much.