

DEBATE ON VOTE NO 18: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
UCDP : MN MATLADI
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UCDP would like to applaud the Department for the extension of the Child Support Grant to 18 years, indeed this is in line with the constitution which defines a child as any person under the age of 18 and thus entitled to social services. Also to be applauded is the finalization of Regulations on the Children's Act which has been long overdue.

It is disheartening however to note that SASSA still has so many irregular practices in executing its duties. It appears on the annual report that there have been erroneous duplication of grant payments, that it could not be confirmed in all instances that the correct person received the correct amount of relief aid at the correct time and place. These errors are petty and we should not be still discussing such things.

It is unacceptable that the department must report an irregular expenditure in excess of six million rands regardless of whether this was SASSA's or the department's. The department plays a critical role in intervention services and therefore irregular expenses cannot be tolerated where such amounts could have been used to literally save a soul.

The Department needs to table a workable plan on how they intend dealing with vast shortage in their human resource, in particular social work. Their previous recruitment strategy does not seem to have worked as we are still sitting with the very same crisis.

We are impressed by the eight strategic focus areas that the department has chosen for service delivery, policy formulation and programme development but without an efficient work force, this shall remain just a dream.

To be empowered are the community based organizations that continue to be registered but do not get any funding. The department must put its money where its mouth is, it is rather useless to register tens of thousands of Non profit organization when there is no proper plan of empowering them.

The UCDP supports the budget vote.