



DA Policy on Social Protection
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1. The challenge

The DA believes that *opportunity* is the vehicle through which *all* South Africans can be empowered to live lives that they value, to pursue their dreams and to develop their full potential. This belief lies at the core of our vision of an *Open Opportunity Society for All*.

To realise this vision, we understand that the government has certain responsibilities. First and foremost we see it as the responsibility of government to provide an enabling environment for job creating economic growth. This requires the government to provide a stable economic policy environment, appropriate incentives to guide business activity in support of growth and jobs, good infrastructure, and an education system that delivers a skilled labour corps that can propel the economy towards excellence.

But many South Africans remain excluded from opportunities. Where we govern, our long term goal will be to ensure that all people can be active participants in a vibrant, growing economy and enjoy the developmental benefits associated with growth. However, the reality is that some vulnerable citizens require immediate social protection provided by a government that is committed to ensuring that they have access to basic services and that they are protected from poverty-induced hunger.

In a society where nearly one if four people do not have a job, where 41% of the population lives below the poverty line and where 12 million people do not have access to adequate nutrition, there are many who require assistance from a caring government.

There is international consensus that countries should maintain a minimum “floor” of social protection¹. This should include access to health care and basic income security to ensure access to nationally agreed necessary goods and services. Protection must be primarily aimed at those who are not or cannot be employed to earn their own livelihoods. This includes the most vulnerable groups in society, namely children, the aged, people with disabilities and those who find themselves without jobs for long periods of time.

In the South African context the consensus around the need to work towards a minimum social protection floor is supported by a rights-based approach informed by the Constitution. This includes:

- Section 27 - which determines that every South African has the right to have access to health care services, sufficient food and water and social assistance if they are unable to support themselves; and
- Section 28 - which outlines the basic rights of children (including the right to care, nutrition, shelter, basic health care and social services).

¹ See the Social Protection Floors Recommendation 202 agreed to at the International Labour Conference of the *International Labour Organisation (ILO)* in 2012.

Social assistance in the form of grants comes at a great cost to the state. Between 1994 and 2010, social grant expenditure grew by 700% from R11 billion to R88 billion². In 2013/14, government will spend R113 billion on social grants, mostly going to old-age pensions (39%) and child support grants (37%). Research by the Bureau for Economic Research shows that in 2012 there were roughly three people on social grants for every person who pays income tax and almost two social grant beneficiaries for every person with a job³. Further, research from the South African Institute for Race Relations shows that there are now only 90 people employed for every 100 people on social welfare in South Africa.

It is clear that to ensure that the tax base can accommodate South Africa's social protection system, we must continue to make it our first priority to grow the economy and create jobs.

Social protection in the form of social grants has, however, been one of the most effective policy interventions in South Africa in terms of reducing poverty and vulnerability.

Between 1997 and 2011, social grants have helped to decrease the number of people in South Africa living on less than \$2 a day by 82%⁴. There has also been a marked decline in child poverty and in the number of children who do not have access to an adequate standard of living, including access to electricity, housing, water and sanitation⁵. Research shows that child support grants and old-age pensions are used to enhance the nutrition and schooling of children⁶ and that child grant beneficiaries are already more likely to be in school and achieve higher scores in critical subjects (such as maths)⁷.

Labour force surveys tracking social grant recipients over time have shown that workers in households receiving social grants “look for work more intensively and extensively and find employment more successfully” than workers in comparable households who do not receive grants.

Social cash transfers provide a coping mechanism for the least fortunate, supporting a minimum level of subsistence and allowing them to invest time and money to improve their chances of getting better employment.

(Samson, 2009 – OECD)

The DA therefore supports a targeted system of social assistance to vulnerable persons.

To retain our primary focus on job creation means that our social development system must go beyond the mere *protection of livelihoods* – where we seek to ensure that all South Africans can maintain a minimum living standard. We must pursue social development policies that achieve

² South African Institute for Race Relations. 2013. Democracy Support Programme Newsletter – Social Grant Expenditure in 2013 equals total tax revenue in 1994.

³ Biersteker, C. 2013. 'SA's welfare net keeps social stability', in *Financial Mail*. Available. [Online]: <http://www.fm.co.za/fm/Features/2013/07/18/sa-s-welfare-net-keeps-social-stability> (July 2013).

⁴ Institute for Race Relations. 2013. 'Social Grants Up But Jobs Down', in *Fast Facts*. No 06/2013.

⁵ Hall, K. 2012. 'Breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty', in Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, *Transformation Audit: The Youth Dividend*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.

⁶ Van der Berg, S.& Siebrits, K. 2010. 'Social assistance reform during a period of fiscal stress. Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers: 17/10.

⁷ Department of Social Development, SASSA and UNICEF. 2012. *The South African Child Support Grant Impact Assessment: Evidence from a survey of children, adolescents and their households*. Pretoria: UNICEF South Africa

livelihood promotion, where the assistance provided helps recipients to lift themselves out of poverty.

2. The DA's position on social protection and livelihood promotion

The DA believes that social spending should be focussed on the disadvantaged and that such spending should improve the life chances of individuals born into poverty. We also believe that citizens are capable of taking responsibility for their own destiny and should be viewed as partners, not subjects, in development.

Where we govern, the DA will ensure that:

- *Children* born into poverty are able to obtain the food, health care and education that they need to learn and grow.
- *Young people* are supported to develop their talents, get jobs and live lives that they value.
- *Youth at risk* are protected in terms of the Children's Act, Child Justice Act and other relevant legislative frameworks and that secure care and development are provided for these young people.
- *Poor adults* who are unemployed for long periods are able to survive with appropriate financial support and are assisted through targeted labour activation strategies to lift themselves out of poverty.
- *The elderly* have access to a support system which allows them to survive when they are no longer able to support themselves.

To achieve this, we will need an integrated approach to poverty alleviation and social support.

Such an approach must include a dedication to the efficient delivery of basic services to the poor. In the Western Cape, we have allocated 76% of our annual budget towards opening opportunities for people in poor communities, through education, health services, housing and social development programmes.

The results of our dedication to pro-poor service delivery were reflected in the findings of the most recent national census which showed that the Western Cape leads the way in basic service delivery - 99.1% of households have access to piped water, 93.4% have access to electricity and 96.9% have toilet facilities. In the 2013 Western Cape State of the Province address the premier was able to report that our health care services prioritise poor communities, that 80% of patients receive free services or pay a nominal fee and that we continue to expand access to no-fee schools. We will bring this same dedication to the delivery of basic services to all provinces where we govern.

The key cause of poverty in South Africa is unemployment. The DA's economic policy platform, as outlined in the Plan for Growth and Jobs, therefore identifies job creation as our key policy priority. The Plan for Growth and Jobs sets out how we plan to create an enabling environment for job-creating growth and to encourage job creation by supporting small businesses, ensuring that training and education prepares young South Africans for labour market participation, making changes to labour regulations and by providing the necessary infrastructure for economic expansion. This is

critical to ensure that, over time, we can break down the barriers between economic insiders and unemployed outsiders.

South Africans born into conditions of disadvantage or people with disabilities face enormous struggles to take advantage of opportunities that others take for granted. In government, we will therefore continue to expand the options available to all individuals to allow them to take advantage of an Open Opportunity Society for All. To this end, we support complementary systems of social grants and social support which both *protects* the livelihoods of vulnerable people and *empowers* them to lift themselves out of poverty over time.

The policy interventions and support mechanisms that we propose for various vulnerable groups are outlined below.

A note on poverty and poverty lines

Poverty lines: Poverty lines (the line below which individuals are considered to be poor) are not a perfect measure of poverty, but when carefully determined can give an indication of an individual or household's ability to fulfil certain basic needs. In South Africa, Statistics South Africa uses both an upper and lower poverty line derived from the food poverty line. The food poverty line is based on the cost of basic foods to ensure a minimum calorie intake (R211 per capita per month at 2000 prices). The upper poverty line is determined by observing the total consumption spending of households that spend R211 per month on food, derived at R593 per capita per month at 2000 prices. The lower poverty line is derived by adding the non-food expenditure of households who spend a *total* of R211 per capita per month to the food poverty line – determined to be around R322 per capita per month at 2000 prices. The food poverty line should be reviewed and adjusted regularly and should guide our social protection and economic development policies to ensure that no South African citizen lives below, at least, the food poverty line.

Using \$2 a day as a measure of poverty: The \$2 a day measure is used for international comparisons and, amongst others, the measurement of progress in terms of the Millennium Development Goals. This is a useful guideline to assess progress against our international peers, but must be supplemented with local measures against an agreed poverty line.

Household access to services: Access to basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation and housing have a significant impact on the living conditions of the poor. Our social protection strategy therefore includes a focus on basic service delivery.

The social floor: The National Development Plan describes the "social floor" as a "minimum social protection below which no one should fall" which would include "minimum income and livelihood security as well as essential basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation, health care and education". South Africa currently does not have a defined social floor. In national government, the DA would work with national and international researchers and academics to define a social floor for South Africa which could guide our decisions on social protection.

2.1. Children

A national DA government will pay Child Support Grants to poor parents or caregivers of children up to the age of 18. To ensure that grants are used to break the inter-generational poverty cycle through investment in the health and education of poor children, the DA will:

- Make use of developmental conditionalities in which non-adherence to soft (non-punitive) conditions trigger intervention through an effective social welfare system. For example: if a grant beneficiary is not attending school or has not received the necessary immunisations, intervention must be initiated by a social worker, NGO or community organisation.
- Introduce a community oversight mechanism through which community members or teachers can apply for a review of beneficiary spending when there is suspicion that grants are consistently not being used in the interests of a child. If there is clear evidence of grant abuse, arrangements can be made for a grant to be paid out to an alternative caretaker or social worker.
- Introduce incentives for behaviour that will allow children to improve their circumstances over time, for example: a bonus payment for grant beneficiaries for completing Grade 12 and incentives linked to performance in Grade 12 exams. Incentives can also be linked to the DA's proposed opportunity voucher programme, with grant beneficiaries who have adhered to certain conditions receiving increased benefits.
- Pilot the use of vouchers for service-delivery interventions where direct government delivery has proved ineffective. For example: a textbook voucher could allow parents to purchase textbooks from licensed suppliers if provincial governments fail to deliver.
- Use vouchers to incentivise critical behaviour during the early phases of a child's life. For example, grant recipients could get a voucher for an accredited Early Childhood Development (ECD) facility.
- When budgetary constraints allow, start eliminating the gap between Foster Care Grants and Child Support Grants, to remove the disincentive for formal adoption in poor communities.

The decision to focus on developmental conditionality, rather than hard conditions for child grants which could result in the loss of the grant by the caregiver, is based on the following:

- The growing consensus that conditional grants cash transfers aim to address *demand* side issues related to social service provision, but in South Africa it is the *supply* of social services and the *quality* of those services which are problematic⁸. For example: where children in South Africa do not receive the necessary healthcare, it is most often related to the unavailability of the service, rather than demand-side issues related to the poor choices of caregivers.
- The impact of conditional cash transfers linked to education is negligible in areas where school enrolment and attendance among poor children is already high. In South Africa, enrolment is almost universal (97%) and school attendance is high (a national survey showed that 86% of learners did not miss more than 5 school days a year)⁹.

⁸ See for example:

⁹ Hall, K. 2011. *The Child Support Grant: Are conditions appropriate? Children Count Brief*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.

- World Bank research shows that the *expectation* that grant beneficiaries must ensure that children are properly cared for can be sufficient to change behaviours without having to monitor or enforce conditions¹⁰.
- The case for conditionalities assumes that poverty is related to the *behaviour* of poor households and creates an incentive and penalty structure to encourage certain behaviours. Where poverty is related to *structural* conditions rather than decisions and behaviour by poor households (as is the case in South Africa where poverty is closely linked to large-scale unemployment), conditional cash transfers are not likely to have a significant developmental effect¹¹.

To build a nation of confident, capable, self-reliant adults, the DA will also invest in the following programmes in support of child health and development where we govern:

- Use interactions at clinics and social grant payment sites as a platform to disseminate information on childcare and nutrition to pregnant mothers and the mothers of young children.
- Bring back school visits by nurses and social workers to ensure that health problems and malnourishment are identified early and addressed appropriately.
- Expand the school nutrition scheme to include learners up to Grade 12. In 2013 the school feeding schemes funded by the provincial government fed half a million children every school day.
- Roll out the Mass Participation, Opportunity and Development (MOD) programme to all provinces where we govern. MOD centres in the Western Cape are run as a partnership between the provincial departments of Social Welfare and Cultural Affairs and Sport. The centres offer sports, cultural and recreational facilities after school hours. Focussing on disadvantaged communities and underserved schools, the Western Cape's 180 MOD centres provide a safe and stimulating environment where learners can spend time doing structured activities, with adult role models, in a disciplined environment.
- Invest in and improve the efficacy of Early Childhood Development programmes. This is critical in the South African context where many children start their formal schooling already at a disadvantage in terms of basic skills and where mothers are often prevented from working because they cannot afford childcare. The government must increase the number of children that get access to registered ECD Centres, which are compliant with safety, health requirements and meet the educational development needs of a child. Initiatives to achieve this should include:
 - Maintaining an updated provincial register of ECD Centres;
 - Ensuring that all DA-run local governments include ECD planning in their Integrated Development Plans;
 - Training ECD practitioners in the national norms standards required to manage ECD centres and facilities;
 - Assisting ECD centres to become compliant and register;
 - Supporting ECD forums to capacitate communities to participate in the early childhood development of their children; and

¹⁰ Fiszbein, A. *et al.* 2009. 'Conditional Cash Transfers: Reducing Present and Future Poverty. Washington: World Bank.

¹¹ Samson, 2009.

- Collaborating with and supporting non-government organisations that provide home-based ECD programmes (such as home visits by trained Family Community Motivators).

2.2. Youth and young job-seekers

The current social grant system leaves an important gap in the social protection floor. Young people (over the age of 18) who have never been employed are excluded from basic income protection leaving them particularly vulnerable.

We believe that social assistance aimed at livelihood promotion should not be limited to cash-transfers to young people and should focus on engaging the youth as agents in their own development.

Programmes in support of livelihoods can take the form of assistance to job seekers or policy interventions that encourage job creation for young South Africans.

In national government, the DA will:

- Ensure the full implementation of a targeted Youth Wage Subsidy for young and low skilled people aged between 18 and 29 and earning below the personal income tax threshold. It will be available for a maximum of two years and will be operated through the tax system. We believe this programme can benefit 423 000 young people over three years.
- Roll-out of an Opportunity Voucher Scheme to provide funding to young adults who would like to start their own businesses or further their education and skills development. The voucher would entitle a graduate to (i) a partial subsidy for study at a university or FET college, (ii) seed capital to establish a small business, or (iii) a state guarantee to cover loans extended by commercial banks to graduates to establish small or micro enterprises subject to a coherent business plan and other requirements.
- Reward social grant beneficiaries who have completed Grade 12 or have performed above a set standard through increased benefits linked to the Opportunity Voucher Scheme.
- Introduce a comprehensive Government Internship Programme across all government departments to bridge the 'study-work' divide and equip recent graduates with valuable professional knowledge and skills.
- Provide the opportunity for young South Africans to do voluntary service in the South African Police Service or South African National Defence Force. The volunteer programme would be available to students who have recently completed Grade 12. Volunteers would earn a small salary consistent with what is offered to employees in an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). Upon completion of the programme, volunteers would have the option of being considered for the permanent police service or to qualify for an opportunity voucher to further their studies or start a small business.
- Expand the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to provide full funding assistance to cover tuition, books, accommodation and a maintenance stipend (which may include additional loans and bursaries) to all qualifying students. Develop a programme of state sureties for students who do not qualify, and who seek student loans from commercial banks.

- The strategic direction of national policy will be reflected in provincial policies with regard to social protection.

Around one in two South Africans between the ages of 18 and 25 are unemployed. Unemployment is a threat to the wellbeing of our young people as well as to our social and political stability.

The DA believes that South Africa's young people are positive, creative and energetic, that they want to make good decisions about how they live their lives. We must support them to make the most of the opportunities available in our country.

2.3. Youth at risk

The DA believes that the family unit should be the primary care provider for youth and family preservation will be our key priority. There are, however, instances where due to poverty, crime or specific family circumstances, youth are at risk and statutory interventions are necessary.

Where the DA governs, we will develop a Youth at Risk Strategy for youth that are in alternative residential based care – as we have done in the Western Cape.

This will include the establishment of an appropriate spread in each province of properly resourced, co-ordinated and managed Child and Youth Care Centres providing the required range of residential care programmes. The continuum of care will include the following levels:

- Specialist facilities such as youth substance treatment centres and specialised assessment centres for youth with psychiatric and behavioural challenges;
- Level 4 facilities, such as centres for sentenced youth and awaiting trial youth;
- Level 3 facilities, such as centres for youth with severe behavioural challenges;
- Level 2 facilities, such as children's homes and centre-based places of safety; and
- Level 1 family-based care, such as safety parents and foster care.

Integration back into family care will received focussed attention through specific support for out of school youth, through Further Education and Training Colleges and through community-based skills centres.

2.4. Poor adults

The social protection floor in South Africa is also weak in terms of the support provided to adults who do not have children, who have never been employed or who have been unemployed for long periods.

Existing social assistance programmes, including the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and Workmen's Compensation Fund are only available to persons who have contributed to the funds and UIF benefits can only be claimed for a period of 34 weeks (around 8 months) in a four-year period. The UIF covers only an average of 2-3% of the unemployed at any point in time.

In our support for this group, our primary priority will be to get people into jobs. We believe that the gap in the social floor can be addressed through targeted labour activation strategies that support the long-term unemployed in equipping themselves for the job-market or getting the necessary experience to facilitate entry into employment. The fiscal impact of these programmes can be contained by managing it on a project-basis with dedicated budgets, rather than on the basis of grants that are universally available to all unemployed persons.

To support vulnerable adults, the DA believes that a national government must:

- Focus assistance on labour market activation, targeting unemployed workers who are able to work.
- Introduce a Business Voucher Support Programme (BVSP) in all municipalities, to be administered by the municipality concerned. The BVSP will offer support services to small start-ups, or small enterprises employing fewer than five people. The BVSP consists of a voucher that can be exchanged for a business skills, management, financial skills or relevant technical programme at an accredited business skills provider. Recipients must be over the age of 21, must produce proof of residence and must be able to produce a feasible business plan.
- Support the minimum protection floor for the unemployed by speeding up the roll-out of Community Works Programme sites in areas where unemployment is high. These sites provide temporary work to unemployed persons for up to 8 days per month, providing a basic source of income. Work programmes are designed to fulfil useful tasks as identified by the community. Examples can include: food security projects, involvement in home-based care, support to schools, support for community safety, small infrastructure projects, maintenance and clean-up activities and environmental rehabilitation.
- Progressively up-scale the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) to employ 2.5 million people on a contract basis by 2025. These programmes can be scaled down as the number of formal and informal sector jobs expand.
- Support job-search and employability by providing integrated support services to job-seekers at Jobs Centres across the country. These centres can serve as a central point to provide information and assistance to job-seekers, including:
 - Information on private sector job opportunities, EPWP and Community Works Programmes;
 - Accessing education and training opportunities (including: Adult Basic Education programmes and support programmes for post-school education);
 - Writing CVs and applying for jobs;
 - Getting assistance with transport and communication related to job-search activities;
 - Placement on an apprenticeship scheme or government internship programme;
 - Accessing support through small business one-stop shops; and
 - Information on support programmes for informal traders.

2.5. Protecting the elderly

A caring government has a responsibility to ensure that elderly people are financially supported and cared for when they reach an age when they can no longer work. This can be achieved both by funding care for elderly persons, encouraging those who can afford it to save for their retirement and by creating a safety net for those who are unable to provide for themselves.

In national government, the DA will:

- Provide specialised care facilities for elderly persons who need it. The aged will, however, only be admitted to care facilities in exceptional cases of frailty. Emphasis will be placed on caring for the aged *in communities* through subsidised meal schemes, community health care services and home-based support.
- Ensure that older persons do not become the forgotten members of society and that there is a sufficient focus on funding to community organisations and non-government organisations that provide support to the elderly.
- Phase out the means-test for Old Age Pensions. Around 80% of the age cohort qualifies for the grant. The administrative process related to registering for the pension is likely to discourage take-up from the small percentage of persons who would not have qualified for the pension in a means-tested system. This could significantly reduce the administrative costs related to this grant. Phasing out the means test will also counteract the current disincentive for private savings created by the income- and asset ceilings attached to the state pension.
- Ensure the safety of the elderly at grant distribution sites. The safety of grant beneficiaries should be ensured through appropriate infrastructure and increased security. Safety concerns can also be mitigated through greater use of electronic payment systems.
- Ensure that every South African earning an income makes provision for his or her retirement. Household savings are currently estimated at approximately 1% of GDP, whilst household debt as a percentage of household income is about 70%. This shows that many South Africans are living beyond their means and will face significant financial constraints when they can no longer earn an income. To encourage saving, we will make membership of a retirement scheme compulsory for all working adults. Access to services enabling retirement savings can be facilitated through a National Social Security Fund (NSSF). Individuals must, however, be able to opt out of the NSSF if they belong to an approved private sector fund.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Financial Services Board (FSB) to monitor regulatory compliance by the advisors, administrators and asset managers of private pension funds.
- Consider stronger regulations related to early withdrawal from pension funds, for example: by increasing the tax benefits of withdrawals at retirement age.
- Strengthen the legal environment for care of the aged by:
 - Strengthening the capacity of the Human Rights Commission to respond to complaints of abuse against elderly persons and conduct regular investigations of aged care facilities.
 - Place a legal obligation on anyone who comes across a case where there is reasonable suspicion of abuse against an elderly person to report the matter.

2.6. Support for people with disabilities

There are about 5 million people with disabilities living in South Africa. The majority of people with disabilities in South Africa are unemployed. Amongst the deaf, the incidence of unemployment is as high as 65%¹². More than 10% of people with disabilities in South Africa have no education. The Right

¹² Development Institute for the Deaf and Blind, 2011.

to Education for Children with Disabilities campaign recently revealed that more than 165 000 disabled children are out of school¹³.

The DA fully supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including:

- Article 28 on the right to adequate standards of living, basic services and social assistance; and
- Article 19 on the right of people with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community.

Social grants offer an important mechanism to provide people with disabilities with basic income protection and to allow them to invest in their own health and education. People with disabilities often have difficulties in obtaining medical documents to support their applications, getting information on the necessary reviews and accessing grant payment sites. As a result, many disabled people are excluded or go many years without access to a grant that is rightfully theirs. Only around 1.2 million people currently receive a disability grant (either a Care Dependency Grant or State Disability Grant)¹⁴.

To provide the necessary protection to people with disabilities whilst recognising and supporting their ability to be active agents in their own well-being and development, the DA will:

- Develop models for the flexible application of means tests which would counteract potential disincentives for labour market participation – e.g. through the gradual phase-out of benefits rather than scrapping benefits when incomes rise above a certain level.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of disability grants to monitor the penetration of the grant amongst disabled South Africans. Information can be used to address delivery issues and to inform research and decisions on the penetration level at which it would be preferable to phase out the means test for disability grants.
- Ensure the efficient administration of grant reviews – including ensuring that recipients receive ample warning of pending reviews and, where necessary, are well informed of the steps they must take to renew their grants.
- Limit the regulatory burden for persons with severe and permanent disabilities by exempting certain categories of disability from the review process. At the moment persons with temporary disability grants must participate in reviews every year and persons receiving permanent grants must undergo a review process every five years.
- Ensure that state-funded schooling options are available for learners with a wide range of special needs.
- Provide for transport subsidies to organisations in the disability sector to help people with disabilities to access services and support.
- Continue to promote the accessibility of buildings, public services, transport and other facilities for people with disabilities.
- Promote employment and skills development opportunities for all people with disabilities through the broad-based empowerment scorecard.
- Support the national roll-out of service centres for people with disabilities to access support programmes – including: social services, skills development and entrepreneurship programmes.

¹³ Community Law Centre, 2012. Right to Education for Children with Disabilities.

¹⁴ South African Social Security Agency, Annual Report 2010/11.

3. Strengthening institutions to strengthen support

To ensure that appropriate support is provided to all South Africans who need protection and care, social development must occur within an efficient institutional framework. This must include:

- A strong corps of multi-disciplinary support staff (including social workers, occupational therapists and psychologists) who are able to maintain a presence in communities and schools, whose efficacy is not undermined by an overload of cases and who can support individuals and households in accessing the care and assistance that they need.
- A civil society and non-government organisation sector that is appropriately supported through public funds and empowered and effectively regulated to access donor funding.
- A corruption-free department and related agencies whose primary priority is the protection of vulnerable South Africans.
- Effective co-ordination between the various departments and agencies that provide services and support to the poor, to ensure that services and support are complementary and collectively provide a comprehensive social safety net.
- A concerted effort to reduce administrative costs associated with social grant payments – both for government and for grant beneficiaries who often pay exorbitant bank charges.
- A strong commitment to the full implementation of legislation aimed at protecting vulnerable citizens – including the Children’s Act, the Child Justice Act, the Older Persons Act and the Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse Act.
- Strengthening research, monitoring and evaluation capacity within the Department of Social Development to monitor the efficacy of interventions, make recommendations for programme improvements and continue to seek for innovative solutions to development challenges in South Africa.

The DA will:

- Conduct a review of the organisational structure of the Department of Social Development and fill critical vacancies as a matter of urgency.
- Make use of longer funding cycles to encourage long term financial and operational planning by NGOs and civil society organisations.
- Prioritise the training of social workers. In a reply to a DA parliamentary question in August 2013, the Minister of Social Development acknowledged that there is currently a 77% shortfall in the number of social workers needed to implement important welfare and social legislation (including the Children’s Act, the Older Persons Act and the Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act). In tackling this challenge, our focus will be on:
 - (i) Establishing dedicated training colleges for social workers (possibly linked to universities) – with the aim to establish two such colleges in every province within ten years.
 - (ii) Offering generous bursaries for social work students and encouraging private sector investment in bursaries for social workers.
 - (iii) Improving the image of social work and bringing greater alignment between the salaries of social workers in the public sector and those working for NGOs.
 - (iv) Actively recruiting social workers from the African continent and the rest of the world.
 - (v) Maximise government outsourcing of services to good NGOs working in the field (accompanied by strict contract management to ensure accountability).

- Strengthen inter-departmental co-operation and the co-ordination of programmes in the social cluster. This will include a specific focuses on developing an integrated social protection policy which considers the contributions and roles of various government stakeholders in maintaining the social floor.
- Maintain a zero-tolerance approach to grant-related fraud and corruption.
- Ensure that bank charges for social grant beneficiaries are kept to a minimum. This would require, amongst other things, that the capacity to deliver affordable access to bank services is considered a key requirement when awarding contracts for the distribution of social grants.
- Maintain a dedicated research, monitoring and evaluation unit within the Department of Social Development.

4. Conclusion

A caring government must protect vulnerable citizens from hunger and extreme poverty. The DA supports a social protection system that combines the efficient delivery of basic services with social assistance measure in support of a social floor and active efforts to enable South Africans to lift themselves out of poverty.

We believe that our first priority must be to get more people into employment and to continue growing the economy to make sure that the government can afford the kind of social protection that people need.

Through developmental conditionalities and targeted vouchers and support, we hope to encourage investment in human capital and support labour market participation and self-employment.

We will aim to stabilise grant expenditure between 3% and 4% of GDP and will continually seek to reduce direct social assistance whilst boosting investment in job creation and support for entrepreneurial activity.