SOCIAL SECURITY - CHILD CARE

1996

AUGUST - DEC
Cotlands cares for Aids babies

Staff at the sanctuary for ill and abused children believe that ‘babies are babies and there is no difference whether they have Aids or not’

BY PRISCILLA SINGH

The Cotlands baby sanctuary, home of South Africa’s first official Aids baby hospice, is celebrating 60 years of community service this year.

The sanctuary, situated in Turffontein in southern Johannesburg, provides a haven for abused and abandoned children, as well as care for babies infected with HIV and Aids.

A satellite home, “Ikusasa House”, was established in Yeoville in January last year and acts as a halfway house for children waiting to be fostered or adopted. It accommodates eight children.

The biggest project for Cotlands staff is the specialised Aids care unit which has facilities to care for 20 babies at a time. But about R100 000 is needed to keep this essential service running.

Judy Sexwale, wife of Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale and television and radio personality Eon de Vos are the home’s patrons.

One of the fundraising strategies has been the issuing of 5 000 invitations “not to attend the Cotlands phantom ball to be held at 2300 on Sunday 32 September 1996 at a make-believe venue, Cloud Nine”. The gimmick obviously worked, said Amanda Cunningham, who helped devise it, as R5 000 was raised within a week of posting the invitations.

Nurse Theodora Henry is based at the Aids unit and spends her days looking after afflicted babies.

Her latest patient is four-month-old Shamice Knight, who came to Cotlands a month ago.

“Me babies are babies. There is no difference whether they have Aids or not. They are just wonderful to hold and care for,” she said.

Little Tiepo (3), also stricken with Aids and abandoned at birth, spent all his life in hospital and was transferred from the H F Verwoerd Hospital in Pretoria to Cotlands in March with the diagnosis that he had only a week to live.

Four months later he is still fighting to live, chiefly because of the love and care of the Cotlands staff.

Anyone interested in contributing towards the Cotlands Aids unit can contact the sanctuary on (011) 683-7200.
Witness asks for protection

Nomavenda Mathiane

A WITNESS at the commission of inquiry into last week’s Tembisa railway station disaster yesterday asked for police protection following threats by strangers objecting to his saving commuters who had fallen onto the railway line.

Patrick Manele yesterday told the commission sitting at the Kempton Park Civic Centre that last Wednesday morning he had accompanied his girlfriend to the station and was abused by security guards even before he could buy her a ticket.

He said the security guards said they were going to fix the train’s doors which were troublesome and did not want to buy train tickets. After buying the ticket, he found himself trapped between the guards at the bottom of the stairs and the hundreds of commuters who were pushing their way down onto the platform.

As the train approached, pandemonium erupted between commuters and security guards who had started using electric prods to quell the crowd.

Some commuters had fallen onto the railway line. Manele had jumped onto the line and carried them out of harm’s way, he said.

Another witness, Cornelis Mabonya, said security guards had told him they did not want anybody at the top of the stairs and instructed him and other commuters to move to the train platform. But he could not move because of the crowds waiting to be allowed through. When the guards opened the gates, there was a stampede, he said.

Another commuter, Caiphus Mabanye, said he did not understand why he was electrocuted as he had a ticket. Witnesses said only two of the four windows where tickets were sold were open.

The hearing continues today.

Mandela’s fund earns R20.5m for children

Stephanie Bothma

PRETORIA — Yesterday was not only an exceptional day for President Nelson Mandela because he could announce that his Children’s Fund had reached the R20.5m mark. It was also the day on which he was arrested by security police 34 years ago, resulting in his 27-year jail term.

Releasing the first annual report of the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund at his official residence, Mandela recalled details of his 1962 arrest by Natal security policeman, a Sgt Vorster.

“The police were very polite. In those days the Natal police were the most polite in the country,” he told amused trustees and members of the media.

Mandela said the generosity and goodwill of all the communities of SA, including apartheid supporters, still surprised him — six years after his release from prison. “It appears I did not know my country well,” he said.

He started the fund by pledging a third of his annual salary (R150 000) for five years.

During the past financial year, ending March 31, 56% of total funds received were from overseas, including two donations by individuals Denzel Washington and Teddy Forstman of $1m each.

Large local pledges include those of R150 000 or more by members of the President’s Club such as the Donald Gordon foundation, the SG Menell Trust, Anglo American, Rembrandt, Sandler, Standard Bank, Sun International, Iscor, M-Net, Transnet, United Tobacco and others.

Smaller donations were a R1 a month pledge by a pensioner and R2 400 raised by three children who sold Labrador puppies.

To date, the fund had made grants totalling R3 44m towards the homeless, education, the disabled, young offenders, disaster relief and places of recreation.

It had to distribute or use at least 75% of its net income for the current year within the next 12 months, while 25% may be transferred to distributable reserves, CS trustee Jeremy Raithiffe said.

Govt may hold bogus degree inquiry

Farouk Chothia

DURBAN — The University of Zululand would welcome a government-appointed commission of inquiry into the scandal over bogus degrees being sold at the institution, university rector Prof Charles Dlamini said yesterday.

This was despite the fact that the university had appointed independent auditors to assist in an internal investigation.

Students had expressed fears last week that the internal inquiry would be a cover-up, and had called on Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu to intervene.
Children still lack basic rights — Madiba

ALL sectors of society should assist the Government in improving the lives of children, President Nelson Mandela said yesterday.

Speaking at a luncheon in honour of Lesotho's Queen Mother Mamohato at his official Pretoria residence, Mandela said children were the country's future and therefore deserved to be nurtured by society with love and care.

Too many children still lacked basic rights such as shelter, healthy living conditions, education, medical facilities and employment opportunities, he said.

MandelA noted that Queen Mamohato was a patron of numerous organisations in Lesotho working to improve the lives of children, adding he and the Queen Mother shared particular interests and concerns.

Lesotho and South Africa could work together to improve the lives of children because "our nations have shared so much history," he said.

Mandela said if organisations working in this field in both countries were to coordinate their efforts and learn from each other, this could benefit the children.

The President also praised the work Queen Mamohato did for the development of women and young girls in Lesotho.

"The denial of equal rights to women in the past and their treatment in so many instances as second-class citizens is both an historical injustice to women and a loss to our societies which have been denied the full benefit of their skills, talents and leadership," he said.

Leaders should ensure that the constitutional rights accorded to women were translated into reality, he said. — Sapa.
A South African delegation was overwhelmed with the warmth, generosity and humanness of the Aboriginal or First Nations people in Canada, says regional land claims commissioner Wallace Mqooq on his return from the fact-finding visit. A lesson we should learn from the Canadians, he said, was not to allow our land claims process to drag on too long.

"It is important for our land claims process to be over as short a period as possible for the purposes of promoting certainty and stability for the country," said Mr Mqooq.

The delegation included the chief land claims commissioner Joe Sere- neke and members of the African National Congress. The group also attended the annual session of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

"What was striking was the extent to which First Nations hold on to their traditions and customs in spite of years of domination and even attempts at cultural assimilation which failed. "Like African people here, they love traditional songs with the accompaniment of a drum, beating rhythmically. They attach a lot of value to the land, calling it Mother Earth, the bearer of resources, such as plants, water and minerals," he said.

The South African delegation also visited a few Indian reserves, and Mr Mqooq.

We were informed time and again that in the 1960s South African officials went to Canada to study the system of the Indian reserves, for purposes of designing the homeland system back home," said Mr Mqooq.

"In some of these reserves conditions left much to be desired. For example, at the Mathias Colomb community in Pukwagan, they have serious health problems, housing shortage and overcrowding and they are cut off from communication. "It is accessible only by charter flight, and it is surrounded by hundreds of lakes."

"In other reserves such as Opaskwayok Cree Nation, conditions are relatively better and there are projects which are community-driven, including a huge shopping mall. "At the time the delegation visited they opened a new hotel which is also community-owned," he said.

Other reserves had interesting economic development ventures, such as breeding buffalo, said Mr Mqooq. "Every reserve we visited had a care centre for the elderly, as First Nations place a high value on their elderly. "They are regarded as the bearers of knowledge and wisdom and a link with the ancestors. "They undertake regular teaching of community norms and values," he said.

Canada is handling two types of land claims at present, said Mr Mqooq. The one involves "comprehensive claims" based on traditional native use and occupancy of land, he said.

"They involve a group of bands or native communities within a geographic area and are comprehensive in their scope, including for example, land, hunting, fishing and trapping rights and other economic and social benefits," said Mr Mqooq.

The “specific claims” are claims made by First Nations against the Federal Government which relate to the administration of land and other First Nations assets and the honouring of First Nations treaties with the crown.

"First Nations people believe firmly that the treaties signed with the crown are to last for as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow and the grass grows green" Hence their relentless pursuit of their land claims 125 years after they were promised a return of their lands," said Mr Mqooq.

The delegation attended a two-day conference hosted by the Indian Claims Commission and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

The Indian Claims Commission is a temporary body set up in 1967. It has been carrying out its mandate to inquire into and report on specific land claim disputes between First Nations and the government.

Mr Mqooq said the delegation learnt much on its trip, including the importance of linking restitution with economic development of communities.

"Restitution of land rights in itself may be bare, if unaccompanied by development projects, in respect of which government and the private sector should play a significant role," he said.

Whether disposessions arose from conquest, as in South Africa, or cession through treaties in Canada, what is certain and a common denominator is that there can be no lasting peace, reconciliation, growth and development, without "balancing the scales," he said.

This would correct the evils of the past and create a solid foundation to enable South Africa to build a future shared by all, and Mr Mqooq.

He said he had seen how land claims in Canada could drag on.

"Hopefully here we are blessed with a government which is responsible for introducing these measures and will show the political will to see to it that justice is not only done, but also seem to be done," he said.
Outs hurt in mini-hit as 50 break out of place of safety
Go wild for a child

Children are suffering because of the funding crisis in child

The society is making a desperate

"Go wild for a child" campaign is aiming to raise awareness and funds to support children who are in need.

Children's welfare societies are appealing to the public to participate in this campaign to ensure that every child has a chance to live a fulfilling life.

The society is highlighting the importance of child welfare and the need for financial support to provide basic needs, education, and healthcare to children in need.

The Children's Welfare Society is calling on everyone to contribute to this campaign to ensure a better future for children.

#Children #Welfare #Fundraising #GoWildForAChild
New police units to fight child abuse

By JESSICA BEZUIDENHOUT

POLICE are planning two new child protection units to stem the alarming increase in child abuse reported in the Western Cape over the past two years.

Plans are underway to set up one unit at Mitchells Plain and a second one in the Northern Suburbs.

The Mitchells Plain unit will serve surrounding areas, including Guguletu and the Wynberg district.

The second unit, proposed for the Bellville area, will also look after suburbs such as Kraaifontein and Khayelitsha.

Conceding that even this might not be enough to cope with the increase in child abuse, the Western Cape Child Protection Unit commanding officer, Superintendent Johan Meyer, said: "We are simply relieved at government's indication that additional staff will be deployed at these units once they start operating."

The entire Peninsula, as well as a number of small rural towns, has had to rely on a single under-staffed child protection unit for years.

Meanwhile, the number of sexual abuse cases involving children has almost doubled from 10 000 in 1993 to 16 000 nationwide in 1995.

Last year, the Western Cape unit investigated about 1 500 cases, of which more than half have still not been prosecuted. Meyer said he had 24 officers burdened with a workload of up to 60 cases at a time.

He said the increased abuse figures stemmed from the fact that more people were prepared to come forward.

His staff had been shrinking over the last few years and could not be replaced due to the government moratorium on filling vacant posts.

His officers had to cover the entire Peninsula and sometimes got referrals from rural areas as far afield as Worcester, Atlantis, Paarl and Stellenbosch.

This unit was now supposed to cover the Helderberg substructure following its incorporation into the Cape Metropole in May, but there was simply not enough staff.

Government officials and police were working on a plan to beat the problem, said Meyer. "We hope the plans will come togeth-

er within the next two months and that it would ease the workload."

But without more staff an effective service to the community would be impossible, he added.
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The Minister of Finance

The Minister of Education

The Minister of Health

The Minister of Environment

The Minister of Home Affairs

The Minister of Trade

The Minister of Agriculture

The Minister of Industry

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The Minister of Transport
The Ministry of Finance

The table below shows the details of various financial transactions for the year 1995.

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Note: All transactions are recorded in US dollars.
Johannesburg social workers who have been sleeping outside the provincial legislature to demand that the social welfare budget be doubled. They plan to march through Johannesburg today to highlight the financial plight facing the social service sector.

Social workers plan to march

Bernard Sathekge

JOHANNESBURG social workers, who have slept outside the Gauteng legislature for two nights to demand the social service sector gets sufficient funding, plan to march through the city centre today to further highlight the financial limitations they face.

A spokesman for the Greater Johannesburg Social Welfare Organisation Priscilla Gerrard said that the provincial government had to address the “crisis with sufficient funding, otherwise the social service sector will collapse”.

She said the social service sector was made up mainly of private welfare organisations, responsible for providing daily care, support and protection services for millions of people, including abused and neglected children, families in crisis, the aged, the physically and intellectually disabled, those struggling with drug and alcohol dependency and HIV-infected people.

Subsidies were government’s responsibility, she said. Also, salaries were poor, with a continual drain of experienced staff.

Gerrard said Gauteng's social services budgets were hopelessly inadequate and under threat of being cut back even further. The cuts to services would hit the disabled and aged, and lack of funds made it difficult to respond even to cases such as child abuse.
Lobby to give youth a voice

PRETORIA. The National Youth Commission is lobbying the government to set up a department of youth affairs to facilitate youth representation in Parliament.

The chairman of the commission, Miss Mahlengi Bhengu, said yesterday discussions with the government were at an advanced stage.

"Our mission is to work out an integrated youth development policy," Bhengu said. "We will focus on key issues like education and training, unemployment, violence and drug abuse."

The commission would set up a secretariat in Pretoria and two satellite offices in Cape Town, one of which would concentrate on Parliament. — Own Correspondent
Police to guard Bonnytoun place of safety after escape

ERIC NTABAZALNA

POLICE will be called in to guard the Bonnytoun place of safety in Wynberg from which 99 boys escaped last week.

Members of the Portfolio Committee on Welfare visited Bonnytoun yesterday to investigate the establishment of secure facilities following the breakout.

Mr Cassim Saloojee, chairman of the Portfolio Committee on Welfare, said: “If we have a transit facility like this, it must be secured.

“it is necessary for the departments of Welfare, Correctional Services and Justice to collaborate to ensure that these facilities are secured in a way that would serve these children,” Saloojee said.

One of the portfolio members, who asked not to be named, said there was a lack of assessment and management at the place of safety because some of the boys were 24 years old.

“These boys were 17 in 1989 and are still 17. The old boys influence the younger ones,” he said.

During the escape, three staff members and 12 boys were injured. Their injuries were not serious.

An assessment of the boys who absconded but were recaptured and are being held in Pollsmoor Prison started yesterday with a view to readmitting them to the place of safety.

Those who were recaptured will appear in court today.

Asked whether the escapes had joined gangs, Saloojee said: “It’s been confirmed that there were elements here who had contact with gangsters. A message came through that they (the gangsters) are mobilising against Pagad (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs), so these people who had contact with the gangsters put pressure on the boys here to get out to respond to the call.”

Tomorrow psychologists from the Victims of Violence and Trauma Centre will start counselling the boys and staff members who were present when the boys absconded.
Task team must act on child centre

Kathorus Children's Foundation urgently needed for three communities

By Mokgadi Pela

THE TASK TEAM set up by communities of Kathorus, Thokoza and Vosloorus to look into the formation of a child and family centre in the area, has until August 31 to present its progress report.

Some of its briefs are to evaluate documents presented by the Kathorus Children's Foundation as well as the future for the victims. Documents by KCF have identified priority areas in Kathorus in terms of abused children, displaced, destitute and orphaned children.

The team is also expected to look at documents still to be presented by the Kathorus Anti Child Abuse Forum. It is expected to identify the possible location of the main centre which will then work in conjunction with satellite stations in the area. KCF felt that the centre to be formed should have a "homely environment where children will be afforded the love, warmth and health they deserve".

District surgeon Dr Maggie Mojapeco says a proper child and family centre needs to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach. "It should be able to provide an environment where social workers, child protection units, community, doctors and nurses work together to resolve problems afflicting society," Mojapeco says.

Those elected to serve on the team are: Messrs M Molefe, Ken Moetsi and Goodness Dlamini (Katlehong), Dr Maggie Mojapeco, Messrs Mahlomola, Mabotse and N Sekitis (Thokoza) and Messrs Kehla Mshibe, Sandile Lerutle and Nontlanhla Ntsha (Vosloorus).

The team was conceived after a workshop organised by the Greater Kathorus United Against Abuse and Family Violence in Vosloorus on July 20. Among those who attended the event were mayor of Greater Boksburg Mr Eric Oseiaya and representatives of the social services unit of the Reconstruction and Development Programme who have impressed upon the Kathorus communities the need to act fast in the implementation of the idea.

Speakers at the workshop say the idea of the centre has the support of everyone in Kathorus.
Numsa action follows metal sector deadlock

Reneé Growitzky

The National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) has adopted a programme of action in protest against the Natal Engineering Industries' Association (NEIA) failure to sign the metal wage agreement last week, which its fellow Cosatu affiliate — the CWIU — has yet to sign.

Numsa spokesman Elias Monage said yesterday that a KwaZulu-Natal regional shop stewards' council meeting at the weekend resolved that the estimated 20,000 Numsa members in the province would participate in lunchtime demonstrations this week.

Monage said this action formed part of a broader campaign to defend the new wage agreement in KwaZulu-Natal and to ensure its implementation.

KwaZulu-Natal shop stewards would approach employers this week on whether they supported the position adopted by NEIA or whether they supported the agreement.

NEIA refused to sign the agreement after Seisa agreed to withdraw from the main agreement a penalty clause relating to public holidays.

Seisa has indicated that NEIA has 246 member companies employing an estimated 17,000 workers. However, this did not mean that all Seisa members in KwaZulu-Natal would not be party to the agreement as many belonged to a number of the 39 associations affiliated to Seisa.

Monage said employers would be requested to send letters to NEIA and to Numsa indicating their positions.

On Friday the union would assess the responses of the KwaZulu-Natal employers and, depending on the outcome, members would ballot for a legal strike to ensure the agreement was implemented in the province.

Monage said before the ballot was held, members in KwaZulu-Natal would hold a one-day action which would also be decided on Friday.

Seisa indicated after the signing of the agreement that it anticipated the agreement would be extended to non-parties, as was the usual practice.

Meanwhile, it is understood that the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union — also party to the negotiations — has not yet signed the agreement.

Seisa spokesman Dave Cartoons said the union had asked employers to increase their offer of 9.7% to 10%. Seisa had refused to do this.

It is believed that the union did not have a mandate to accept an increase below 10%, as the agreement provided for a 9.75% increase on the minimum rate.
Child labour shame revealed
in shock survey

MARIO WYNGAARD (29B)
Staff Reporter
ARG 22/8/96

HUNDREDS of thousands of South African children are being used in "sweat shops", including some in Cape Town, says the latest survey of the Network Against Child Labour (NACL).

Many of these children were employed as virtual slaves in the homes of prominent people, it was alleged at a conference in Cape Town yesterday.

The survey said that more than 200 000 children between the ages of 10 and 14 and another 200 000 between the ages of 15 and 18 were engaged in paid labour.

The survey indicated that most of the children worked in commercial agriculture, while many worked as hawkers and newspaper sellers in most parts of South Africa.

The NACL, formed in 1990, said that children should be free to develop their full potential through education and recreational opportunities. It said many children were employed as domestic workers.

The increase in the number of street children had resulted in some being used in criminal activities. Many were exploited through child prostitution.

Michael Peters of the Domestic Workers Union said children came to Cape Town from rural areas to find work.

He said in most cases, the children's parents sent or sold their children to employers in the city.

"The employers usually make all kinds of promises and assure the parents that they will take good care of the children," he said.

He said employers promised parents between R100 and R500 a month. Because the parents were usually poor, they had no choice but to accept the offer.

Mr. Peters said the parents usually received a first payment of R50 and then never heard from their children again.

He said most of the children involved who came from rural areas were illiterate.

He said young women and children brought to the city were first paraded and then put through extensive questioning.

Prospective employers then collected the girls whom they liked.

"In most cases the girls are sexually abused or become prostitutes."
Uncle adviser says priority is SA children

CHRISTINE MESTRE

BY PHYSICAL SICK
CHILDREN in jail are not those who are being “dumped” illegally and inadequately into security jails in South Africa. They are those who are being “dumped” legally and adequately into security jails in South Africa.

The statement was made by the Correctional Services Minister, Sisulu Nene, who disclosed in an interview with SATURDAY Argus that the number of children being held in prison has escalated rapidly since amendments to the law in March. The amendments allowed for the detention of children without trial.

Children between the ages of 14 and 18 can be placed in prison while awaiting trial and the conditions they were being held in were “just as bad” as those of adults.

“Just as bad, just as bad,” the minister said.

There were currently 280 juveniles awaiting trial in prison and the conditions they were being held in were “just as bad” as those of adults.

“Just as bad, just as bad,” the minister said.

The minister did not provide any further information about the conditions in which the children were being held.

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child sexual abuse symptoms and workers lack of co-ordination and education on
Minister's fury over kids in jail

BY GLYNNIS UNDERHILL

"The act stipulates very clearly that the ages of the children must be from 14 to 18. But there is just no regard, they just dump them. Nobody really cares and they are going to be waiting there indefinitely." Many of the children interviewed by Mzimela at Durban-Westville Prison were barefoot and dressed in threadbare clothes. A few said they were 13 and were being held for minor offences such as breaking into vehicles. Others said they were street children. One of the children had a sash of sori on his leg

The 398 awaiting-trial children were being held indefinitely, said Mzimela. "There are enough places of safety, trade schools and industrial schools where children can be housed. But the people who work for the Department of Welfare, particularly in these places of safety, are untrained, incompetent and just totally unreasoning," said Mzimela, who is also a theologian.

On May 4 last year President Nelson Mandela signed a proclamation declaring that awaiting-trial juveniles may no longer be kept in jails. At midnight on August 5, at a total of 620 juveniles awaiting trial were released into the custody of places of safety or allowed to go back to their communities. If there was no appropriate accommodation available the Government was required to provide the necessary facilities.

The moves to amend the Juvenile Correctional Services Act -- which prohibits the holding of juveniles in prisons regardless of the circumstances -- unleashed a storm of protest from Mzimela.

However, the move was also widely welcomed by frustrated politicians, child care workers and police because burglaries, street muggings by gangs of youths, and car break-ins had soared. Police claimed they had a major headache with juveniles escaping from places of safety, only to commit further offenses.

"What was highlighted after two 16-year-old Cape Town youths facing multiple counts of murder had to be freed because no accommodation could be found for them at places of safety,"

The bill proposed by the ANC's Carl Niehaus to allow for the detention in prison of awaiting-trial juveniles suspected of serious crimes was fiercely contested by Mzimela, who is a member of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

However, the bill was approved by the portfolio committee on correctional services in March, despite the opposition of Mzimela, who said at the time the bill should be "shredded and thrown into the fires of hell where it should burn eternally."

Niehaus emphasized the bill was an interim measure until measures of safety could be built to house juveniles securely. Mzimela said much of the blame could be laid at the door of Niehaus.

"If he were to show just a fraction of the concern he pretended to have, he should be visiting these places regularly to make sure that the legislation is being adhered to. But he has forgotten and he has turned his back on that. He is now pursuing other interests."

Mzimela said he was sure Mandela would be "very very disappointed" by the turn of events since he issued his proclamation to release the children from prison last year.

"The president puts his money where his mouth is and formed the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund to contribute. He really wants to see the lot of children improve and I am sure these horrendous stories will just break his heart."
Child Welfare slates minister over children held in jail

JOHAN SCHRÖDEN
Cape Report

ARG 27/8/96

A LEADING welfare organisation for children has lashed out at a minister's suggestion that juvenile offenders be kept in places of safety that it says are totally inappropriate.

This follows Correctional Services Minister Sipo Mzimela's discovery that 60 percent of the 396 children awaiting trial in prison were not suspected of serious crime and so should not be in jail.

It also came as the government announced new plans for places of safety for young offenders, although Cape Town was one of the last to benefit.

Dr Mzimela suggested that places of safety for children, run by Child Welfare Society, had the facilities and should accommodate the juvenile prisoners.

Child Welfare director Allan Jackson said that the minister was contradicting himself.

He said Dr Mzimela accused the authorities of "dumping" the children and getting them out of the way by putting them in prison, but in the same breath he was "very ironically" pushing for children to be released from prison when suitable alternatives were not available.

Mr Jackson said Dr Mzimela was "washing his hands of this very sad situation".

Meanwhile Western Cape places of safety were facing a bigger storm by having to accommodate more juvenile offenders from up country, where reform schools do not exist.

A study by the University of the Western Cape community law centre has found that juveniles awaiting trial in Kimberley were destined for places of safety in Cape Town, where the situation is already in a shambles and contributing to the regular escapes and mass break-outs by serious and dangerous criminal youths.

The announcement by Welfare and Population Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi that secure accommodation for children awaiting trial for serious offences would be available from November in Gauteng, Northern Province and Mpumalanga, also means no immediate relief for the Western Cape's youth custody problem.

Ms Fraser-Moleketi said facilities being provided under the the welfare department's Secure Care Programme, initiated in October last year, would benefit these three provinces before Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth.
New plan for prison children

PRETORIA: Secure accommodation for children awaiting trial on serious offences will be available—in some parts of the country—from November, Welfare and Population Development Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said in a statement yesterday.

Fraser-Moleketi was referring to facilities being provided under the welfare department's Secure Care programme—introduced in October 1995 with the aim of keeping awaiting-trial children out of prisons.

The first of these facilities will be available in Gauteng and Northern Province, followed by Mpumalanga.

Similar facilities were being established in Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.

"It is hoped that the full programme, an important component of the National Crime Prevention Strategy, will be completed by May 1997," said Fraser-Moleketi. "By June 1997, there should be no reason to hold young people in prisons to await trial." — Sapa
New place of safety for youth

By Pamela Dube

The recent escape of 99 youths from Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town to join gangsters in the fight against People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (Pagad) had highlighted another problem for the authorities, Niehaus said.

He said there was need for properly secured facilities for these youths.

Above all, Niehaus said, the Government intended keeping children away from hardened criminals in crowded prisons.

Niehaus' announcement comes a few days after Correctional Services Minister Sipho Mzimela lashed out at both portfolio committees, accusing them of not speeding up the process of providing places of safety for juveniles.

"I find it strange that Dr Mzimela is making all these accusations when his department is supposed to be responsible for the conditions of these children," said Saloojee.

Niehaus called on Mzimela to refrain from making "emotional statements that do not reflect the complexity of the situation."
Mimela seeking cheap publicity over jailed juveniles, say ANC MPs.
Mandela commits SA to war against child abuse

'cries of sexually exploited children must no longer fall on deaf ears'

SAPA
Stockholm

The cries of South Africa's abused and sexually exploited children must no longer fall on deaf ears or closed minds, President Mandela said yesterday.

''The time has come for our children to be seen, and to be very clearly heard,'' he said in a speech read on his behalf by Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi at the world congress against commercial sexual exploitation of children.

''I commit my country and its resources towards ensuring that each day fewer children in our world, in each of our countries, are treated as insignificant objects to be bought, mangled and mocked.

''On behalf of myself and the Government of South Africa, I would like to convey our unequivocal support for the intentions and objectives of the congress, and pledge our willingness to take appropriate steps to implement the outcome of your deliberations,'' the president said.

Child sexual abuse was an abuse of power, he said.

Commercial and other forms of sexual exploitation were some of the most disturbing forms of abuse.

South Africa's National Plan of Action for Children had been designed particularly to attend to the abuse of children, including sexual, physical and mental abuse; pornography; and child exploitation.

Poverty could not be underestimated as a contributory factor to sexual exploitation of young people who were often forced to the streets to make a living, or sometimes sold or pimped by their parents.

''As we approach these problems, we do so with an understanding that poverty is a harsh reality throughout our African continent, our region and our country,'' Mandela said.

To counter this would require legislative action, a practical programme on gender sensitivity, and empowering and protecting women and girl children.

South Africa was proud to have signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and was working towards full implementation through a comprehensive National Plan of Action for Children, Mandela said.
Task force to tackle child sex crime in SA

The Argus Correspondent

CHILD sex slavery in South Africa is now firmly under the world spotlight through an international joint task force to be set up in this country.

The special investigative group – to be set up later next week – is expected to include Interpol, the South African Police Service, foreign and national politicians, United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and non-governmental organisations.

The task force will also call on foreign experts, include officials from Brazil and Sri Lanka, to deal with exploding child sex-exploitation problems.

At the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Sweden, South African delegation spokesman Brian Sokutu said it was a "hidden phenomenon" in South Africa.

"We just cannot relax and think that it is not going to happen in South Africa," he said.

The task force is expected to be launched on Monday.

Mr Sokutu said South Africa had noted inputs by other countries for the establishment of a public registry for child sex offenders.

"We will be guided by the Constitution and Bill of Rights on whether this will be feasible," he said.

The Argus 30.8.96

The case for national registers for convicted paedophiles – because of their propensity to repeat and magnify offences – was strong.

In Britain, authorities have information on about 4,000 paedophiles but data is patchy.

National Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said often people in positions of authority, such as teachers, policemen and clergy, abused the privilege of their position with children.

The congress is debating introducing a more-comprehensive list of sex offenders.

It is also proposed to make it a crime for convicted paedophiles to work with children.

"In South Africa, national police spokesman Reg Crewe said he supported moves to set up a task team.

The Crimestop division had more than 800 unsolved cases of missing children on record.

At the congress, African panelist Wambui Njuguma said yesterday that South Africa had to be "ready and armed" to fight sex tourism. This problem has been highlighted by reports this week of child sex rings.

The International Federation of Journalists' representative at the congress, Mr Aiden White, stressed how the media played a vital role in educating people.
Former street children are building a new life with bricks

BY BORISENE MLANGENI AND JAMES-QONDILE KHEDAMA

A beam of hope was already shining in Thomas's life when The Star interviewed him 10 months ago despite being branded a "street kid" with no future.

Now this 21-year-old Soweto-born youngster is earning respect among his peers as a survivor against all odds.

Thomas is one of seven young men who have found a source of livelihood through a brick-making project started by the Twilight Youth Centre.

When the project started in September last year, the youths could make only about 6,000 bricks a month.

Now, production has increased to 124,000 a month, which is still less than the demand, according to project manager Lucas Mlawane.

"The support of the community has been overwhelming," he said.

Mlawane said they were planning to buy another yard and employ seven more youths from the community and the centre to meet the demand.

"It is amazing how these young men have changed their attitude towards life," Mlawane added that Thomas and his peers would soon be trainers and supervisors of new recruits.

For Thomas, the project has transformed his life in a way he never imagined when he hit the streets of Johannesburg at the age of 13. He now earns about R150 a week and feels more independent, he said. "I now look forward to the future," he said.

Mlawane said he would be recommending the present group to sponsors so that they could start their own brickyards.

"I am confident that people like Thomas are ready to go on their own. We appeal to sponsors to help them build a future."
Many children under 14 years old in jails with adult criminals

Police and welfare blamed for ‘not applying rules’ regarding the handling of juvenile suspects

BY TROY LIND

The Department of Correctional Services has called on its welfare counterpart to “get its act together” and provide places of safety for the 557 unsentenced children currently locked up with adult criminals.

This follows a shock announcement by Correctional Services Minister Sipo Mzimela that the number of juveniles awaiting trial in SA’s prisons had almost doubled from last month’s count of 300.

A further announcement on Wednesday by Mzimela’s spokesman Bert Slabbert revealed that many juveniles are being held illegally. They are under 14 years old, are charged with petty offences and have been jailed for up to 40 days without appearing before a magistrate.

Although the Correctional Services Act prohibits unsentenced children being placed in jail, it was changed in May this year at the instigation of Correctional Services parliamentary committee chairman Carl Nichaus.

Authorities found the existing places of safety to be inadequate to keep juveniles awaiting trial and Nichaus brought a bill before Parliament allowing juveniles to be jailed for a period of 12 months, until appropriate places of safety had been established.

These children, however, must be over 14 years old, be charged with schedule two offences (more serious crimes) and have appeared before a magistrate within 14 days of their arrest.

Correctional Services places the blame for “the rules not being applied” mainly with police and welfare department.

“The rules of handling juvenile suspects are not being applied because it is far easier to dump them in jail than find a place of safety and risk them running away because of inadequate security,” said Slabbert.

Slabbert said some police are filling in children’s ages on dockets as 14 when they are younger.

They are also interpreting petty crime as schedule two crimes “to get children in”. Slabbert also said that many children have been waiting a month or more without appearing for petty offences.

In a statement, the Department of Welfare shared Mzimela’s concerns, saying it would address the problem according to findings of the investigation into the availability of places of safety and reform schools.

Welfare said, however, that there are “no quick fixes solutions”. Staffing and structural changes are anticipated as areas that may hamper the “vast and complex” process of providing adequate facilities most.

National police spokesman, Josel Ngubeni said it would be a gross irregularity if police were acting as Correctional Services officials. He added the SAPS would not condone any acts by officers which are contrary to the law or gave an indication of corruption.
Jailed juveniles: plot thickens

Revelations last weekend by Minister of Correctional Services Sipho Mzimela about the appalling conditions of juvenile prisoners have added new scrutiny on the nation’s prisons.

Minister of Correctional Services Sipho Mzimela about the appalling conditions of juvenile prisoners have added new scrutiny on the nation’s prisons.

The main players were: Mzimela, who is a member of the IFP, and chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services Carl Niehaus, who is a high-profile ANC member.

Mzimela had opposed the legislation which forced Niehaus to follow the private member’s route, for which he had the support of most parties in the committee. Thus, as the ministerial spokesperson pointed out, last weekend’s exposé was the minister’s way of proving that the legislation was not working. In weekend newspaper reports Mzimela attacked government departments for imprisoning hundreds of children, many awaiting trial for minor offences, under the most appalling conditions.

Niehaus responded to the reports by calling for urgent talks between the departments of correctional services, justice, welfare, and safety and security.

On Tuesday the Correctional Services Department will brief the portfolio committee on the implementation of Section 29 of the Correctional Services Amendment Act.

According to a correctional services minister spokesperson, a report has already been submitted to the committee detailing Mzimela’s snap visits to several prisons where children as young as 12 share accommodation with hardened adult criminals serving sentences for such crimes as rape and murder.

Rules require departments to submit bi-monthly reports on policy or legislative implementation to portfolio committees.

But repeating the legislation, Niehaus says, should only be a last resort. What the portfolio committee will do at Tuesday’s meeting is “look at the implementation of the legislation, and the problems encountered in the process”. This is in keeping with the powers given to committees by the constitution and the standing rules of the National Assembly — to act as parliamentary watchdog on all aspects of a particular portfolio. According to Rule 32, committees must “monitor, investigate, inquire into and make recommendations relating to any aspect of the legislative programme, budget, rationalisation, restructuring, functioning, organisation, structure, personnel, policy formulation or any other matter it may consider relevant, of the (respective) government department”.

Niehaus says the committee, in its overseeing role, will have to see if the department is doing its job properly. Similarly, the justice and welfare departments will have to explain why magistrates send young children to prisons without ensuring the proper guidelines are followed. Reasons should be given why welfare workers have failed to manage places of safety for awaiting-trial juveniles properly, thus making legislation for their imprisonment necessary.

According to Niehaus, the committee’s overseeing role is limited to identifying problem areas and then applying pressure to the administrative structures to carry out policy, offering recommendations and guidelines.

On his visit to Dieploof prison, near Johannesburg, with welfare committee chairperson, ANC MP Ibrahim Salote, to see conditions for themselves, Niehaus said they had found it was one prison where proper guidelines for children had been implemented and that proper implementation of Section 29 was possible.

The committee meeting will take place at 9.30am on Tuesday in committee room 2, ground floor, 120 Plein Street, Cape Town. For further information call (021) 403-2911.
Further shocks on kids in jail

SCHOCKING information about children in prisons in the Western and Northern Cape emerged this week.

Julia Sloth-Nielsen of the Community Law Centre at the University of the Western Cape visited Kimberley Prison and found most of the children there were not being held for serious crimes. In terms of the law, they should not have been held in prison.

There is no reformatory in Kimberley and three children in the prison were waiting to be transferred to a facility in Cape Town, hundreds of kilometres away from their families.

“A 16-year-old girl awaiting transfer to a reformatory was brought to the prison at the request of her mother. The reason for the request was that the girl had allegedly been raped by a policeman while in police custody. The matter is being investigated by the local Child Protection Unit,” Sloth-Nielsen said.

She said not a single child had been visited by a lawyer while being held in the prison, and some had reported that they had not seen a social worker or probation officer before being sent to prison.

At the Kimberley police cells, she found 10 children, two of whom would next appear in court on October 28. There were no recreational or educational facilities available.

Amendments to the Correctional Services Act in May stipulate that juvenile court cases cannot be postponed for more than 14 days. But Sloth-Nielsen found they often were, with magistrates making arrangements for children to be brought to court every 14 days without their dockets. “It is somewhat cynical to postpone a case for three months, with informal arrangements to bring the child back to court for a pro forma appearance.”

Another Community Law Centre researcher, Nomfundo Nbloko, visited Pollsmoor prison in the Western Cape this month and found 86 juveniles in detention. They were locked in their cells from 3.30pm until 8.30am. There was only one TV set for juveniles, which circulated from cell to cell.

Disturbingly, many of the children were aware of prison gangs and some had gang tattoos on their hands. “One of the boys we spoke to had carved a tattoo on his hand and the wound had only just started healing. The boy was 14 years old,” said Nbloko.

The children complained of a gang which encouraged sodomy, and some said they had witnessed a boy being raped two weeks before Nbloko’s visit.

Minister of Correctional Services Sipo Mzimela has accused the Department of Welfare of “dumping” children in prisons to get them out of the way. He discovered recently that 62% of the 395 children awaiting trial in prison should not be there because they were not accused of committing serious crimes.

Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi has responded by announcing that secure accommodation for children awaiting trial will be available from November in Gauteng, Northern Province and Mpumalanga.

The Department of Justice has been accused of not interpreting the Act correctly and allowing magistrates to keep awaiting-trial juveniles in prisons for lengthy periods.
11-year-old boy waits in jail despite new law

GLYNIS UNDERHILL
Chief Reporter

All 11-year-old boys awaiting trial for homicide and theft at Malmesbury prison are being held in a small cell of the prison. The children sleep two to a bed in the cramped cell - there are 10 children who have been sent here by magistrates to await another trial date. Newly washed ragged clothing hangs over the bars covering the windows in the dusty cell.

A lack of accommodation at this overcrowded prison, juveniles awaiting trial for serious offences sleep side by side with those awaiting trial for serious crimes. The 11-year-old boy, who cannot be named to protect his identity, said he has been in prison for over two years and that the prison is like a prison for adults.

The young boy was wearing a light-brown jacket which was torn in the front and had a black, soiled face. He said he was hungry and that he did not have anything to eat.

Amendments to the prison legislation were approved in March to allow for the detention of awaiting-trial juveniles aged between 12 and 16, subject to serious crimes.

Last week, Correctional Services Minister Simon Mthethwa informed SAGAYA that untried children and the social workers about the 11-year-old boy, who should not be held in prison, but to be released to the care of his family.

On May 4 last year, Mr Mandela, the president, signed a proclamation declaring awaiting-trial juveniles as those under 14 years of age, subject to serious crimes.

But the public’s reaction against the death of 10-year-old children who were found in a small cell is not being taken to seriously, according to the Department of Correctional Services.

Deputy Minister Mzimela said that the untried children were the responsibility of the Department of Welfare, which runs the welfare services and the safety, but also looked at the Department of Justice, the South Africa Police Services and the Correctional Services.

The political row surrounding the imprisonment of untried children is gathering steam as an untried 11-year-old boy languishes behind bars in the Western Cape Swartland.

President Mandela and the government departments involved with the untried children, including the Department of Justice, Safety and Security, and the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, said the committee would be holding a hearing next week to establish the facts on the subject.

Mr Mandela’s spokesman, Parks Maposa, said the president had decided to refer to the committee on the matter of untried children in prison.

‘‘I have spoken to him about this and he wants the minister to sort it out himself immediately,” he said.

While Mr Mandela was keeping a close watch on the development, a ‘‘report’’ from the prison ‘‘shows that everybody knows children are close to his heart,” the government said.

Until Wednesday afternoon, there had been two 11-year-old men untried at Malmesbury prison, ordered there by the court in July.

But the prison authorities sent a reminder to the courts about the law indicating children to appear in court after 14 days, and one of the 11-year-old children appearing to court on Wednesday. The magistrate sent him to a ‘‘Department of Welfare place of safety in the interests of the children.”

It is unfortunate that we do not have information about the children here. We just don’t have that information available for them,” said a spokesperson for the prison, who added that the information is not available.

The children were in prison and they were not going to go to school in the court. They were not going to see them. They are not going to have enough time to work and to attend school. They need to be prepared to be ready to leave after them. You try and keep them busy with exercise and games but it is not enough,” he said.

One state warder said he had regular information from the department and the social workers about the 11-year-old boy, who should not be held in prison, but to be released.

On May 4, 2016, the court had to decide whether the children should be held in prison or be released.

When asked whether or not the children would be held in prison, he said, “I believe they should be held in prison.”

The legislation stipulates clearly that no child under 14 years should be sent to prison.

‘‘I therefore regard the act of whoever or responsible for sending these children to prison criminally irresponsible,” said Mr Mzimela.

He is preparing an urgent report for the committee to consider.

ILLEGALLY IMPRISONED: This 11-year-old boy has been held in prison in an offence.
ILLEGALLY IMPRISONED: This 11-year-old boy, whose face has been blacked out to protect his identity, has been thrown into prison in breach of the law to await his trial for a minor offence.

SHARING CELL: These awaiting-trial children are sleeping two to a bed in this cramped cell at Malmsbury Prison.
Drive against child labour, failing
...
Jobs lost, but new factories open

Clothing industry survives strike over wages

ESTELLE RANDALL
Labour Reporter

NEW clothing factories opening in the Western Cape outnumber those that have closed since last month’s clothing industry strike, but nearly 5 000 jobs have been lost in the past year.

Fear that the clothing industry’s first national wage strike last month would cause large-scale factory closures in the Western Cape do not appear to have materialised.

Employers admitted wages were low, but said the increases being demanded could not be met in an industry threatened by cheap imports from Asia. But they later agreed to the 10 percent package increase.

The Clothing and Textile Workers Union had demanded, and back-dated it to July 1. Only four Western Cape factories employing about 22 workers have closed since the strike.

Clothing Industry Council secretary Davie Ackerman said the closures resulted from applications for liquidation.

“Small places come and go all the time,” said Mr Ackerman. “It’s very easy to open a clothing factory.”

He said that during the same period 22 new factories opened, providing jobs for 148 people.

There had been an estimated 10 percent drop in the number employed in the clothing industry in the year ending June. In June 1995, there were 415 clothing manufacturers with 40 000 employees registered with the industrial council, and in June, there were 383 manufacturers with 44 232 employees.

Mr Ackerman said the law required manufacturers to give the council seven days’ notice of their intention to apply for provisional liquidation. But this did not stop manufacturers from going ahead with closures.

“We would like to see changes as soon as possible to the existing legislation on insolvent,” Mr Ackerman said.

The lack of proposed changes to the Insolvency Act, and the council would help employers and trade unions about making joint representations.

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Show ‘harmed AIDS workers’

JENNY VIAL
Health Reporter

THE musical Sarafina 2 has done immense damage to people working in the AIDS field, says chairman of the National AIDS Convention of South Africa, Peter Busse.

“The lack of transparency as well as the controversy surrounding the play has demoralised them, he said yesterday.

Mr Busse was a member of a delegation from the convention which briefed the National Assembly portfolio committee on health.

He said people with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), which can lead to AIDS, faced a lot of unfair and irrational discrimination. A ban on testing people for HIV without their consent and a ban on pre-employment testing were two areas in which legislation was urgently needed.

“AIDS is not a health ‘issue. AIDS is an issue for every citizen of this country to address.”

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Groceries for child sex ‘rife’ in W Cape town

CLIVE SAWYER
Political Correspondent

A LARGE number of schoolgirls in a Western Cape town were involved in a sex ring where abusers bought them groceries in return for favours, a parliamentary committee on welfare has been told.

Many parents, especially mothers, were aware of the situation but allowed it to continue, said Alan Jackson, director of the Cape Town Child Welfare Society.

Some teachers and even police were aware of what was happening but turned a blind eye because it had been happening for many years.

This illustrated the extent of child abuse in semi-rural areas, Mr Jackson said.

The name of the town was not disclosed in the submission to the committee.

Mr Jackson told the committee that in 1995 the police Child Protection Unit had reported an increase of more than 20 percent in cases compared to 1994.

A number of factors could be contributing to the reported increase, including greater publicity about child abuse and a recently increased capacity on the part of organisations, the police and the courts dealing with the problem.

“RECOGNITION of the problem is not enough... the conspiracy of silence surrounding this issue means we might never know the extent of the problem,” Mr Jackson said.

The situation in the Western Cape town was one in which the difference between right and wrong had become blurred and where sexual abuse had become accepted as the norm.

It was also a situation which was unlikely to be solved by the usual legal methods alone.

Mr Jackson said an awareness campaign and a debate at community level were essential to combat the problem.
Dramatic increase in number of child abuse cases forecast.
Crowded cells see children housed with<br>adults, prison officials say.
Police, teachers ignored child sex ring, claim

CAPE TOWN — Police and teachers in a Western Cape town turned a blind eye to a child sex ring, Cape Town Child Welfare Society director Alan Jackson said.

In a presentation to the welfare portfolio committee, he said a large number of girls in a school in the semi-rural community — which he did not name — had made statements indicating their involvement in sex rings where "perpetrators" gave groceries in return for sexual favours.

Many parents, especially mothers, had been aware of the situation but allowed it to continue. Teachers and even the police had turned a blind eye because, they said, "it has been happening for many years".

Jackson said the "conspiracy of silence" surrounding child abuse might mean the true extent of the problem was never known.

He called for computerised child abuse registers linked provincially and nationally.

Many residential care centres and schools had become "places of severe abuse", committed by staff and children on younger children in particular.

Simple measures could help avoid these problems. It should be compulsory to hang posters with emergency numbers in such facilities, and any allegations of abuse should be reported to the state welfare department and investigated by it, not the institution.

Jackson said one case involving allegations of sexual abuse made by children in residential care against the principal had reached the courts but been adjourned repeatedly for the past two-and-a-half years. The accused had not been asked to plead yet and he had still been allowed contact with the children involved.

Jackson said a lack of funds was responsible for many of the problems faced by child welfare organisations. His society scrapped 12 posts last year because of limited funds. — Sapa.
Child Welfare reels from budget cuts

Kathryn Strachan

WHILE the plight of children needing protection and support steadily worsens, Child Welfare’s deep budget cuts are making it difficult to provide this assistance. Child Welfare Cape Town director Alan Jackson says the situation is made worse by the uncertainty surrounding the government subsidy.

Eight months into the year, welfare organisations are still not clear what their 1986/87 subsidy will be, and this has made it very difficult for them to operate. Planning is also complicated by the fact that only “very murky” information has been given on the criteria for the 1987/88 subsidy, which makes it difficult for organisations to make plans which will put them in line with the mystery criteria.

Child Welfare’s state subsidy of R4.5m has stayed the same over the past four years, which means that in real terms it has dropped dramatically.

In light of the declining subsidy, Child Welfare has increased its own fund-raising through promotions by 17%, which takes its fund-raising income up to R1m. Compared to what other organisations have been able to achieve through fund-raising, this is a huge amount, but it does not make up for the R3m loss in real terms in government subsidy.

“We’re pulling out all the stops from our side but funds are still declining,” says Jackson. Since July the Western Cape branch has cut seven of its 48 social work posts, as well as managerial and assistance posts. Two years ago, there was a large staff cut when the organisation underwent major rationalisation.

With this year’s cutback there was no room to manoeuvre and the cuts went very deep. Some smaller societies have had to close their doors completely.

The state subsidy makes up 45% of Child Welfare’s overall budget, the rest coming from private donors and fund-raising. At the same time, the workload is increasing, and with indications of 250,000 public servants being retrenched in the next year, welfare organisations are gearing up for a massive increase in unemployment — together with all the social dysfunctions it brings.

While the state department has been caught up with its own transformation, even those state personnel who were giving direct service to communities have now had their services cut back — and as private organisations take on their load, they are finding their work has increased rather than decreased since the advent of the new welfare department.

Child Welfare is also frustrated that, despite the many changes it has made in recent years, it is still treated unequally to organisations which have not made the changes required of them by government.

The organisation has made great strides to shift its focus to black communities and to orientate itself towards developmental and preventative work, says Jackson. Six years ago Child Welfare Cape Town did 10% of its work in African communities, and 80% in white. This has changed to 45% in African communities and 10% in white. The work in coloured communities has fallen from 50% to 45%.

While the white population in the Western Cape makes up far more than 10%, Child Welfare has recognised that socio-economic factors work in the interests of whites, and there are other organisations they can call on. But poor white people have not simply been dumped, they have been referred to other organisations and self-help groups have been set up.

The organisation is also focusing on community-based educate, supporting mothers in their homes with sickle and resources to provide better care to children, and training mothers in a community to visit other mothers whose children have been diagnosed by clinics as “at risk”, thereby helping to avoid neglect and even death of young children.
Where do we draw the line on abuse?

Should the state have any say in how parents raise their kids?

By Rady Rohan
Political Correspondent

Where there are no proper child care facilities, the risk of children being abused is greater, the Johannesburg Child and Family Welfare pointed out. It suggested a number of methods that should be looked at to address the crisis. It referred to the case of a young Johannesburg girl who was sexually abused by her father. After he was arrested, however, the mother dropped charges against the father because he was their breadwinner. "Where a family is totally dependent on a perpetrator of child sexual abuse for accommodation and income and no alternatives are available, it cannot be assumed that a mother will acknowledge the abuse and act to protect her child," the Johannesburg group pointed out.

Essential services
"It is necessary to systematically attend to those factors which impede the ability of parents, families and communities to act protectively towards children. Essential services and basic support systems must be in place in every community in order for intervention strategies to operate effectively." Neighbourhood support systems should enable communities to develop their potential for the prevention of child abuse, while financial and other resources should be made available to assist communities to develop their own preventative strategies, the Johannesburg group said.

It also suggested "safe-house" schemes, support groups, communal living and working arrangements which could provide viable options for women who need to leave abusive partners, and cooperative day-care arrangements for children during their parent's working hours, to help curb the problem.

Those who have the capacity and time could also be drawn in. "Ways can be sought to involve fit elderly or retired people in the provision of emergency care and support," the Johannesburg Child and Family Welfare recommended.

The criminal justice system is also at fault and needs to be addressed. Mr Alan Jackson of the Cape Town Child and Family Welfare told the committee. "The wheels of justice move painfully slowly in some cases, often leading to cases being dropped. Jackson referred to one case which was officially reported on March 4 1994. "The investigation started at the beginning of the following week. The accused first appeared in court on March 9 1994 and bail conditions were set. "The case was remanded to April 1994, then to June 1994, October 1994, January 1995 and March 1995. "In December 1994 the accused appeared in court for breaking bail conditions. "New bail conditions were set, but they still allowed him to make contact with the children.

Again and again
"The case was remanded again in March 1995 because the defence wanted to apply to the Supreme Court for more information to be made available to them. The next court appearance will be October."

This case has now dragged on for two years and five months, and has simply added to the trauma of the children involved and their parents. In such long delays, said Jackson, the children's memories of the abuse are likely to grow dim and they will eventually retract their statements.
Available child abuse figures just the ‘tip of the iceberg’

BY PATRICK BULGER
Parliamentary Correspondent

Cape Town – Available figures on child abuse represented the “tip of the iceberg” and understated the problem, Parliament’s portfolio committee on welfare heard yesterday.

National Council for Child and Family Welfare resource officer Ros Halkett said there were no reliable statistics on the scourge of child abuse. As child welfare organisations extended their activities into previously unserviced areas, she expected there to be a “dramatic increase” in the statistics. Figures provided by the South African Police Service Child Protection Unit showed that there were 19 805 cases of reported child abuse in the first six months of the year compared with 28 484 for the whole of last year.

Child welfare societies were attending to 9 398 children each month. Of these, 7 268 children fell into the “severely neglected” category. Neglect was “the most serious child protection issue” facing South Africa.

Staff were becoming increasingly despondent at the growing workload and this was likely to increase.

At present there was one social worker to every 20 400 children and this was a major limitation. The survival of the voluntary child welfare sector was under threat and the Government needed to rethink its approach to welfare services. Until now, the system had focused on the perpetrators of crime against children rather than on the abused children.

Halkett’s presentation coincided with figures released in Parliament and which provide a breakdown of the cases she referred to.
7 000 children abused in 3 years

Government has no plan in place to deal with cases of child sexual abuse

By Rafiq Rohan
Political Correspondent

CASES OF CHILD ABUSE – sexual and physical – have reached shocking proportions countrywide. Latest figures show that more than 7 000 children have been sexually abused during the past three years.

Figures released to Sowetan show a steady increase of abuse among all races. For example, in 1993, 2 075 cases of sexual abuse and 5 939 cases of child neglect were reported. During the first half of last year 600 cases of abuse were reported while 800 children were sexually molested during the same period this year.

Yesterday, welfare workers accused the authorities of a “conspiracy of silence” around the critical problem and were unanimous that preventative work was urgently required.

Ms Nomazile Bopela, a social worker at the Pinetown Child and Family Welfare Society, told the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Welfare: “It is alarming to note that some cases of sexual abuse have resulted in children contracting sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis and HIV.”

Bopela said she was concerned about cases of abuse in rural areas because many went unreported.

Ms Bongi Lerole of the Johannesburg Child and Family Welfare Society said: “There is mounting public concern over the extent and severity of child abuse and neglect in South Africa and the number of reported cases is increasing rapidly.”

The welfare workers said while the crisis was mounting, no effective government plan was in place to deal with it. “Existing services are fragmented and under-resourced with little finance,” said Lerole.

Mr Alan Jackson of the Cape Town Child and Family Welfare Society said while there was an alarming increase in child abuse, the full extent of the problem was not known.

* Welfare Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, who this week returned from abroad where she attended a world congress against commercial sexual exploitation of children, will be briefed on the input by the welfare workers.
Niehaus gets blame for children in prison

Mzimela launches attack over bill amendment

Dr Mzimela

ARG 3/9/96

“His ambition drives him to ignore the truth and engage in cheap politics.”

The Minister of Correctional Services Sipo Mzimela has launched a stinging attack on the chairman of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services Carl Niehaus over the illegal “dumping” of children in prison.

Mr Niehaus insists “the buck stops” with Dr Mzimela over the highly contentious political issue, which has resulted in awaiting-trial children as young as 11 being locked up in prison for minor offences in a flagrant breach of the law.

“If the buck were to stop with me, we would solve the problem of unsentenced children in South Africa within two months,” said Dr Mzimela. (Opinion piece in SATURDAY ARGUS this week).

Dr Mzimela has hit out at Mr Niehaus for proposing a private members’ bill, which amended legislation to allow for the detention in prison of awaiting trial juveniles suspected of serious crimes. Although the bill was fiercely contested by Dr Mzimela, who is a member of the Inkatha Freedom Party, it was approved by the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services in March this year after a public outcry over the rampant juvenile crime sweeping the country.

“Mr Niehaus seems to be oblivious to the fact that we must always strive to temper politics with love and compassion for our fellow human beings, particularly those who are less fortunate than people who are entrusted with their welfare. If we do not do so, we run the risk of being ensnared in politics. Unfortunately there is neither love nor compassion in Mr Niehaus’ political agenda,” said Dr Mzimela.

At last count, there were around 400 unsentenced juveniles being held in “just plain cruel” conditions in prisons, said Dr Mzimela. Sixty-two percent of them should not be in prison because they were not being tried for serious crimes, like murder or rape, he said.

Mr Niehaus, who is making a bid for the Western Cape African National Congress leadership, said that the minister of correctional services had to ensure regulations regarding the treatment and conditions of detention of awaiting-trial persons under the age of 18 were brought into line with relevant internationally recognised human rights standards and norms.

The Department of Correctional Services also had the responsibility to provide the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services with a bi-monthly report on the implementation of the amended Section 29 of the Prisons Act. After many requests, the first report was received a month and a half too late, he claimed.

“This kind of slackness is a direct consequence of the manner in which Dr Mzimela has been dealing with the issue all along. Because he disagrees with the Amendment Act, he has not made an effort to ensure that it is properly implemented,” said Mr Niehaus.

Mr Niehaus said that different dates were fixed for the implementation of the first amendment to the Correctional Services Act in different parts of the country. This amendment dealt specifically with unconvicted youths between the ages of 14 and 18.

“This was done because it was clear there were not enough places of safety or institutions adequately equipped and secured to accommodate these young people. Unfortunately Dr Mzimela insisted on the legislation being promulgated at once which led to the crisis of some young awaiting trial offenders escaping from places of safety and committing further crimes,” he said.

The introduction of the second amendment to the legislation followed the signing of a proclamation on May 4 last year by President Mandela declaring awaiting trial juveniles could no longer he kept in jail. At midnight on August 6, 680 unsentenced juveniles were released into the custody of places of safety or returned to their communities if no appropriate accommodation was available for them.

“A year later, and for purely political reasons, Mr Niehaus introduced a private members’ bill in Parliament which, if passed, would once again provide for the incarceration of unsentenced children in prison. This was an unnecessary backward step,” said Dr Mzimela.

“Mr Niehaus gave Parliament the false impression that the vast majority of unsentenced children had committed serious crimes such as rape, murder and armed robbery and posed a mortal danger to society. He deliberately misled Parliament into believing that there were either insufficient places of safety or that the available ones were insecure. Mr Niehaus’ amendment made provision for some high sounding ideals, albeit impractical,” he said.

Mr Mandela, who has always upheld the rights of children, has been noticeably absent by his lack of involvement in the ongoing political row. His spokesman,

Good times: a group of pupils make up their own games during the Faure school’s recreational period

Arty: Dr Mzimela inspects art work by the girls
School may take in juveniles

Corinna Underhill
Over Reporter

Correctional Services Minister Sipo Mzimela was invited to the Faure School for Girls in Stellenbosch this week as part of its marketing campaign to attract and accommodate "behaviourally handicapped girls".

As the political row over children being held in prison continues, the school has expressed a wish to assist in alleviating the problem by taking in some juveniles. The accommodation, school and recreational programmes appear luxurious in comparison to the harsh reality of prison life for awaiting-trial and sentenced children.

But according to those who run the school, which falls under the Department of Education, there has been resistance by social workers and the courts to sending children here because of the unwarranted "stigma" associated with the school.

Principal Debbie Horne said the school had the infrastructure to accommodate a number of girls being detained in prisons at present.

"Our school accommodates behaviourally handicapped girls between the ages of 14 and 21 from across the country and from all racial groups.

"Normally, girls are sent here by the courts. We accommodate these girls in a very modern and safe school and hostel complex," she said.

Saturdays Argus was invited on a tour around the school this week with Dr Mzimela.

With its luxury king-size swimming pool, spacious accommodation and secure care facilities, the school obviously provides more suitable accommodation for children who have become involved in crime.

Awaiting-trial children could also be housed here until the children in prison crisis cases, said Mrs Horne.

"Not only can we guarantee their safety, but we feel they will also be able to benefit from attending school as we have a very dedicated and well-trained staff, including psychologists and nurses, who are experienced in handling difficult cases," she said.

Mrs Horne insists the tour includes the detention rooms, where "difficult" children are placed for up to five days in confinement.

"We want to be transparent, so you can't come back later to us and say you never saw all aspects of life here," she said.

At present, there are 84 girls being housed at Faure School for Girls - but the school can take 220 girls.

Social functions with boys from other secure care schools are arranged to help the children integrate into society when they leave these premises, usually after two years. Visits outside the school are a popular event and the children are apparently used to mixing with others.

The girls at the school were involved in various sporting activities as the tour progressed. All children appeared busy with recreational activities, unlike those SATURDAY Argus visited at Pollsmoor and Malmesbury Prisons, who only had ball game sports in a courtyard to look forward to for a limited period of the day.

An 11-year-old boy incarcerated at Malmesbury Prison in breach of the law as
ANC lashes out at 'racist' Mzimelaa
Niehaus backed over jailed children

Clyne Sawyer
Political Correspondent

The African National Congress has hit back at Sipho Mzimela, the Minister of Correctional Services, for his "provocative and racist" verbal attack on the chairman of the National Assembly committee on correctional services, Carl Niehaus.

In a Weekend Argus report, Dr Mzimela, a member of the Inkatha Freedom Party, criticised Mr Niehaus for introducing private member's legislation to allow for the detention of awaiting-trial juveniles in prison when no other suitable accommodation was available.

Dr Mzimela accused Mr Niehaus of lacking compassion and of using the issue to further his prospects of winning the leadership of the ANC in a Western Cape meeting. However, the ANC said Dr Mzimela's attack showed his failure to distinguish between national and party-political interests.

Mr Niehaus's bill reflected the mandated position of the ANC and was not motivated by personal glory or distinction.

The ANC regarded with contempt the claim that the bill was rejected by the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) and the Human Rights Commission.

In fact, Mr Niehaus had helped draft the ANCWL's statement, which had pointed out that it was Dr Mzimela's primary responsibility to ensure that children who should not be detained in prisons were referred back to the courts.

These were awaiting-trial children younger than the age of 14 who were alleged to have committed serious crimes, as set out in the Correctional Services Amendment Bill.

The ANC said it was a pity that the media had allowed itself to be misled by Dr Mzimela into believing that the Faure School in Stellenbosch could securely accommodate such children.

It had been pointed out on many occasions to the minister that places of safety and schools of industry were not equipped to deal with children who had serious, often violent, behaviour disorders.

The row over juveniles in prison will be aired in Parliament on Thursday in a special debate which has been requested by the ANC and the IFP.
ANC slams Mzimel for ‘cheap talk’
ANC denies Niehaus’s Bill on child prisoners was criticised by ANCWL

By Waghiod Mischak
Political Reporter

The African National Congress has accused Minister of Correctional Services Dr Sipho Mzimela of “cheap, petty politicking while children under the age of 14 are still being kept in South African jails.”

This came in response to Mzimela’s criticism of Correctional Service Portfolio Committee chairman Mr Carl Niehaus over the issue and Welfare Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi for allegedly not doing her job in providing places of safety for children who have committed serious crimes.

In a statement released in Parliament yesterday, the ANC denied that Niehaus’s Private Members Bill on the question of children in prison was criticised by the ANC Women’s League (ANCWL) and rejected by the Human Rights Commission.

“The ANC wishes to place on record that Niehaus’s Private Member’s Bill was not motivated by personal glory nor distinction but reflects the mandated position of the organisation.”

Niehaus had helped to draft the ANCWL’s statement, according to the ANC.

“Mzimela’s half-truths and inconsistencies are glaring for anyone to see.
Never has Niehaus suggested that it was simply a case of not enough places of safety, but rather a situation where there are not enough secure facilities where enough security measures exist to keep children who are alleged to have committed serious crimes.”

It was a pity that the media had allowed itself to be misled that there was a place in Cape Town that could accommodate those children, the ANC said.

“Mzimela’s attack on Fraser-Moleketi is callous and uncaring and also failed to recognise that her department was doing everything in its power to create safe, secure facilities.”
Jo'burg child protection services need more cash

BY PRISCILLA SWAI

Johannesburg faces a collapse of its child protection services unless urgent steps are taken to address their financial crisis, largely attributed to state cutbacks.

Lyn Perry, director of Johannesburg Child Welfare Society, appealed at the society's annual general meeting last week for concerned companies and individuals to assist them to fulfill the vital role which it plays in the community.

Referrals to the police and the social service system of cases of child abuse and neglect have spiralled during the past few years and JCWS has questioned the priority of child protection services in the Greater Johannesburg area.

Perry said children were among the most frequent victims of the culture of violence which is a feature of life in South Africa.

However, Government funding of social services, including child protection has been steadily declining in real terms and in addition, in 1995, subsidies were cut by R1-million.

"Gaps in services abound. There are shortages of every type of provision including foster and adoptive families for abused, abandoned and neglected children, accommodation in children's homes, and preventive services, such as pre-school education, for which subsidies were also recently reduced," Perry said.

The Government had inherited a welfare system which was primarily designed to meet the needs of four million whites and an attempt is being made to spread this provision across a population of more than 40 million, she said.

Where attempts are being made to meet the needs of rural communities, this is being done at the expense of abused and abandoned children in the urban areas, due to the inadequacy of the national welfare service budget.

Four months into the current financial year, the JCWS is showing a deficit of R680 000.

"We have had to cut back on our activities and this is having an impact on vulnerable children."

"About 77% of all families being helped by the JCWS are from historically disadvantaged communities. About 89% of the children in our residential care, educare and community projects are from these communities, which negates the perception expressed by some that we are a 'white' organisation," Perry said.

She said without the financial support of the Johannesburg community, JCWS would not be able to provide help, and each child deprived of the care it should be able to give would become just another tragic statistic.
Niehaus calls for minister to quit

Carl Niehaus, chairman of the portfolio committee on correctional services, called for Minister Sipo Mzimela's resignation during a televised debate last night. During the SABC's programme Focus, Niehaus suggested that the minister should resign because of his failure to look after children detained in prisons.

"The minister says on principle that he refuses to implement the law allowing children accused of serious crimes to be detained in prison. He believes that he can ignore the legislation passed by Parliament. Either he should implement the law or leave. It's time to put up or shut up," Niehaus said.

Mzimela could not be contacted for comment last night. - Staff Reporter
Spotlight on jail kids

ASHLEY SMITH
STAFF REPORTER

Many children awaiting trial land in jail unnecessarily because magistrates have different interpretations of the law, says Deputy Minister of Justice Manto Tshabalala-Msimang.

The interpretation of the Correctional Service Act by magistrates and public defenders created problems when dealing with juvenile offenders, she said yesterday.

At present 150 children were being held at Pollsmoor prison.

Sometimes the offences committed were not serious enough to warrant detention. Guidelines would be drawn up, she said.

Invariably the interpretation of the act was left to the discretion of the presiding officer, said Deon Rudman, deputy director general of the department of justice.

Dr Tshabalala-Msimang called on government bodies, including the education department and social services, to address "blockages" in the justice system dealing with juveniles.

After a five-hour workshop for groups involved in the detention of juveniles, she said a task team needed to be established.

The team would look at ways of determining the correct ages of the juvenile offenders and be responsible for creating guidelines for which kinds of offences warranted the detention of children in jail, she said.

"We need to separate children who are supposed to go to Bonnytown (place of safety), from those who must be detained in prison," she added.

A comprehensive report would be compiled soon on suggestions and recommendations from the workshop, said Dr Tshabalala-Msimang.

Another major concern was that public defenders, although showing a willingness to handle juvenile cases, were not facilitating the speedy trial of the children, she said.

This was a result of defenders giving priority to cases for which they were paid, she said.
Babies move into SA boardrooms

Designed to get working mothers back on the job as soon as possible, many businesses are opening up their own childcare facilities, writes Fay Davids.

The high-pressure environment at Liberty Life is getting to Kyle and Wesley. It's only 11am and already they're at blows. It happens often these days, says staff, looking on wearily.

Kyle and Wesley are two of the more than 50 children who come to work with their parents every day to stay at Liberty's creche in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. Liberty Life is among the first of South Africa's corporations to provide childcare at work as an added benefit for the employees.

The trend has grown in the United States and it's likely to be imported into South Africa as trade unions and educators begin marketing the concept of having "boardroom babes".

But Liberty Life's creche is no bland, bare boardroom. It's a state-of-the-art creche with colourful murals, the best toys and equipment and oodles of TLC.

"Our standards are high," says principal Brenda Havenga. She employs 22 staff, most of whom are highly qualified. They all attend regular refresher courses to stay at the cutting edge of pre-school care.

The creche is designed to get working mothers back on the job soon after the accepted maternity period of three months.

Havenga accepts babies from two months old and keeps them until they're three. "After that we encourage parents to find schools in the communities." Spaces are booked well in advance — over 40 pregnant mothers have already reserved their places.

Babies are placed in the nursery until they can walk, when they graduate to the toddlers group and then finally to the play-group.

If there is a downside to this creche it's the absence of a dirt and grass outdoor playground. Security concerns and the surrounding concrete environment made the creche's architects decide not to build outdoors. Instead, the little ones romp to the strains of "Old McDonald had a farm" in a space called the inside-outdoor area.

They play in sandpits, a water-trough and an Israeli gym with hundreds of different bits. There are also lots of swings, slides and little cars.

Although tempting, the parents of the older children don't come downstairs all the time. "It would be too disruptive," says Havenga. "But the parents of babies can come down as many times as they like. The mothers are more productive. When they're away from the child, there's lots of concern, especially from first-time mothers," she says.

Liberty Life's state-of-the-art care comes with a reasonable price-tag. It costs R450 a month, though this amount is substantially subsidised by the company. In addition, a limited number of baby bursaries are available for staff who can't pay the fee.

Lobbying for childcare in the workplace

Fay Davids

INDA ADAMS of Corporate Childcare leads the pack in lobbying for the provision of childcare at work.

She's knocked at the doors of this country's major corporations to get them to start creches. Her perseverance is paying off. "More companies are requesting feasibility studies."

The Liberty Life creche is one of three that Adams and her partner, Dillys de Leusbur, have started in South Africa. It's a deluxe centre, though creches can be designed according to what a company can afford.

Adams recommends that corporations contract out creche management to organisations like hers "because we understand that corporate companies are not in the childcare business."

The Labour Department could soon turn its attention to childcare at work. There is no legislation on the subject, though senior officials are set to assess international standards on the issue when they visit the International Labour Organisation soon.

"It's a new issue in South Africa," says a Labour Department representative. The department inherited this area of work from the Welfare Department. "We are planning a survey on [workers'] access to caregivers and the role of care-givers," she says.

Adams says creches should not only be seen as social responsibility exercises. They can often be run profitably and are of "strategic value."

"They can be used to head-hunt key skills of men and women." And most importantly the creche can serve as an incentive to keep well-trained, professional women staffers who often have to opt out of the job market to raise their children.

The kudos for creches usually come from mothers, but Adams has found that fathers benefit too.

If it's a father who works at the company with a creche, "he has the opportunity to become actively involved in the growth and development of their children," says Adams.
Competency 'vital in affirmative jobs'

CAPE TOWN — A first draft discussion document on affirmative action within Parliament’s support services proposes that special measures be taken to appoint people from previously marginalised groups, and that the concept of merit be “reframed” as a criteria for promotion.

The document is still to be debated by Parliament’s transformation committee and has yet to be made public.

While black people would be the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action because of past discrimination, the document says token appointments should be avoided. Black people should be hired on merit and potential, “as competency will be fundamental”.

Women and the disabled would also be targeted for affirmative action.

The document says it will be necessary to “reframe the concept of merit and attach a different set of criteria to it, such as understanding of policy, ability to work in a diverse team and others which are more in line with the mission of parliamentary services”.

Parliamentary support services had already set targets for affirmative action and the criteria for recruitment, selection and promotion had been reformed and improved.

“However, they are still based on a rather narrowly defined, culturally determined and exclusive view of qualifications, experience and achievement, rather than a broader and more inclusive view of relevant competencies.”

The document warns that a number of factors may hinder implementation of the policy. The prioritisation of affirmative action may be viewed also as a sacrifice of efficiency and effectiveness.

People who do not see themselves as beneficiaries of affirmative action could feel threatened by it, and this could affect their morale.

“Affirmative action may be seen as a form of reverse discrimination in which people are penalised for being of a different race or gender.”

The document stresses that parliamentary support services need to develop “a positive but unapologetic institutional mindset towards affirmative action as a mechanism for redressing past imbalances”. It must develop also management and working practices that would respect and see value in the diversity of its workforce. — Sapa.

Children jailed due to ‘misinterpretation’

Linda Ensor

CAPE TOWN — A misinterpretation of Section 29 of the Correctional Services Act by magistrates had contributed to the high number of children being detained in prisons, Deon Rudman, the justice department deputy director general, said yesterday.

He was speaking after the first of a series of nationwide workshops with magistrates and other role players which aimed to improve the system of juvenile detention.

Rudman said many magistrates held the mistaken belief they were not obliged to see children every 14 days once they had been convicted but only before they were sentenced. Also, they sometimes had children detained in prison when the offences were not serious enough to warrant this.

For instance, many of the 150 children held in Pollsmoor prison were not supposed to be there. The workshop decided to appoint a team to investigate the situation at the prison.

Proper implementation of Section 29 of the Act, which related to the detention of children, had been delayed by the lack of accommodation in places of safety, both in the Western Cape and elsewhere, Deputy Housing Minister Mantho Tshabalala-Msimang said.

She said Justice Minister Dullah Omar would appoint a project committee under the ambit of the SA Law Commission to develop a juvenile justice system and to evaluate the Act.

There was a need for children’s cases to be given priority by the courts and for the work of several departments, including justice, welfare, education, correctional services and police, to be coordinated to deal with the problem.
Cape Town children drawn into prostitution, say police

BY GLYNNIS UNDERHILL

Cape Town: Police believe children are being drawn into prostitution in the Western Cape.

In a recent development, an 8-year-old street prostitute was among a group of children picked up by Cape Town police, who attempted to reunite them with their parents.

"It was not three days before they were back on the streets again," said Sergeant Heinrich Munnik of the crime prevention unit in Mowbray.

Police say child prostitution is a growing problem and members of the child protection unit have swooped on an alleged child brothel in Salt River.

Ten children were removed from the house in Salt River after police searched the premises, acting on information given to them by an 11-year-old girl who claimed she had been working as a prostitute at the house.

The children were taken to places of safety, according to Superintendent Jan Swart of the child protection unit in Cape Town.

The children found at the two-bedroom house were aged between 12 and 16.

"None would admit to being involved in prostitution," said Swart.

The child informant told police that the children were taken by adults to Cape Town's city centre and Sea Point, where they picked up clients.

The clients were then taken back to the house to be entertained by one child, while another picked his pockets, according to the young girl.

While the girl gave the police verbal evidence, she refused to sign an affidavit which would have allowed the police to arrest the adults at the house.

Two firearms were seized during the raid.
Police probe 36 346 child abuse cases

Mufamadi gave details of crimes committed against children from July last year to July this year in reply to a question tabled in the National Assembly by Ms Suzanne Vos (IFP).

The highest number of cases was in Gauteng, with 11 663 cases in which 3 578 arrests were made, followed by KwaZulu-Natal with 7 591 cases and 1,911 arrests. Eastern Cape, with 4,305 cases and 1,677 arrests, was third.

The figures for the other provinces included 1,861 cases and 972 arrests in North-West, 2,308 cases and 830 arrests in Free State, 1,329 cases and 425 cases in Mpumalanga, 1,743 cases and 274 cases in Northern Cape and 847 cases and 276 arrests in Northern Province.

Rasool apologises to Omar, may quit ANC contest

THE race for the leadership of the ANC in the Western Cape has been thrown wide open by the announcement by Health MEC Mr Ebrahim Rasool that he was considering withdrawing from the contest.

Rasool’s surprise announcement came after he was reported to have said the ANC had been plunged into crisis in the province because its present leadership had failed dismally to deliver on its promises to overturn National Party dominance, to confront the lack of coloured support head-on and to understand the concept of openness within its own ranks.

He was also quoted as saying he was “unimpressed” with the people who had persuaded Justice Minister Dullah Omar to stand. “Those who want to see him as chairperson of the ANC have been ineffective in their leadership to date.”

He reportedly mentioned regional secretary Mr James Ngcuklia and Sport and Recreation MEC Mr Lenuno Kalako in this regard.

Shortly after the report was published, Rasool issued a statement saying politics in the Western Cape should mature, that political debate should replace personality clashes, and that an openness among ANC members should protect each member’s reputation.

“I am absolutely sorry that Minister Omar, and many others, are now under the impression that he is the target of my attack. I have nothing but respect for Minister Omar, his history and his work.”

However, the impression had been created that he had attacked Omar and he had to take responsibility for this impression.

“I, therefore, unreservedly apoloise to Minister Omar for this sad episode. Because I have defended the very objectives, even if inadvertently, that I have set myself for my candidacy, I am now commencing consultation with colleagues and friends to consider withdrawing my candidacy for chairperson of the ANC.” Rasool said.

At present the chairperson of Parliament’s Joint Committee on Defence, Mr Tony Yengeni, is the only official candidate in the field to take over from Economic Affairs MEC Mr Chris Nissen.

Omar is believed to be in the running, but he has yet to say if he will contest the position.

MP Mr Carl Niehaus has already pulled out of the contest.

Speculation that ANC leader President Nelson Mandela had asked Nissen to reconsider his decision to stand down have not been confirmed, but it seems Nissen is determined to quit
Operation Hunger scam: no arrest

Revelations of the Free State swindle first came to light in 1995, and the entire staff of the province’s office was immediately fired.

By Melanie-Anne Feris

No arrests have been made following the multi-million rand Operation Hunger scam involving the former executive director and the staff of the organisation’s Free State offices.

A year has passed since revelations of the scam came to light. Food for the poor worth R5 million was allegedly diverted and sold in a scam which had been in operation for two years since 1993.

Fundraising director Lisa Kirkpatrick said last week the organisation believed the man the police were about to arrest was part of a larger fraud scam.

“The man never worked for Operation Hunger, but we believe he was involved with the staff at the Free State offices,” Kirkpatrick said.

Investigating officer Inspector Pieter Coetser from the Commercial Crime Unit said allegations had been made of a larger fraud scam. He said, however, that police had no evidence of this yet.

“We are still investigating the case and an arrest will be made shortly,” Coetser said.

The identity of the person has been withheld.

Revelations of the scam first came to light in 1995 and the entire staff of the Free State office was immediately fired. The office has not been reopened.

Meanwhile, Operation Hunger needs R12 million to achieve at least some of its objectives during the 1996/97 financial year. In spite of dwindling financial resources, the organisation has still managed to come to the aid of the needy.

During the 1995 financial year the charity provided 480,344 meals to vulnerable households, implemented a number of water, irrigation and sanitation systems, and trained 222 people, although it experienced a R3-million drop in donor income following revelations of fraud.

Chairman Phiroshawn Cama has confidence has been restored in the organisation and that it would be able to meet its obligations this year.

“The staff has undertaken work to show its commitment to the rights of children.

“The confidence of donors is returning and we are optimistic that with regional and national fundraisers in place, Operation Hunger will meet its targets,” Cama said.

Over the next three years, Operation Hunger intends expanding its operations to all nine provinces, reduce child growth-faltering (like problems in the growth rate caused by malnutrition) by 25% and implement targeted food support programmes.

Cama said the organisation had already addressed a number of goals set out by the Reconstruction and Development Programme’s commissioned report on Children, Poverty and Disparity Reduction including reducing the infant mortality rate and reducing severe malnutrition among children under five.

In an earlier report in The Star, the name of the former executive director of the Free State office of Operation Hunger was incorrectly given as Sipho Mashinini. His first name is Mpho.
CUTS A RIGHTS ISSUE, SAYS ANC

Schools must retain the cane — ACDP

WHILE THE ANC argues that corporal punishment in schools will be deemed unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court, the African Christian Democratic Party wants it retained for serious misconduct. Education Writer CAROL CAMPBELL reports.

GIVING a child a hiding at school was an infringement of their human rights and, in abolishing corporal punishment, South Africa had shown itself to be an international leader in protecting children, ANC MP Ms Naledi Pandor said yesterday.

Speaking at a meeting of the National Assembly’s education committee, to “informally” discuss amendments to the South African Schools Bill, Pandor said a British boy was in the process of taking his parents to court for violating his human rights by smacking him and cases like this should not be forgotten when passing new legislation.

She was responding to a request from Mr Louis Green of the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) that corporal punishment be allowed in schools “in the case of misconduct of a serious nature”.

Green said: “Many countries like the USA (in some states) and Zimbabwe do not regard corporal punishment in schools as ‘cruel and inhuman’ punishment.

“The prohibition of corporal punishment in the bill seems to be based on the incorrect assumptions that it is unconstitutional and the Constitutional Court will rule it to be so.

“The Constitutional Court has not made a ruling on the matter and the prohibition of corporal punishment therefore appears to be premature.”

Mr Randall van der Heever, the spokesman for the ANC, said the circumstances that led to a student being suspended or expelled from a school had to be clarified in the bill so that the same rules could be applied consistently at all schools.

The new bill needed to lay down an expulsion process and a period of suspension had to be agreed on, so that “this form of punishment would not be abused”, he said.

The ANC also recommended that no school governing body be allowed to run “any admission tests on prospective pupils, because this could lead to an “abuse of power” by governing bodies.

The party’s suggestion that the section on a language policy for schools be dropped completely from the bill is expected to raise much debate, especially from the National Party and Freedom Front, when the groups meet this morning to formulate changes to the bill.

There is a strong feeling, especially among Afrikaans speakers, that a community should be allowed to decide the medium of instruction at its school and that this right be formalised in legislation governing schools.

Van der Heever said the clause should be wiped out because it was “covered by the Constitution Bill”.

After the meeting National Party spokesman Mr Rener Schoeman said his party would put their amendments to the bill on the negotiating table this morning.

“We refuse to be rushed through this legislation in the same way the National School’s Policy Bill was pushed through Parliament.

“This is too important and too much consensus has been reached at great effort throughout the country for us to allow one or two submissions to destroy that good work,” he said.
Cabinet galvanised by report on abuses

Swift action on children in hell

NEWS
Loss of allowances, big cuts in child grants urged

Welfare shock for single parents
The committee recommended the establishment of a national maintenance system to address the lack of maintenance of child welfare centers. The following maintenance grants were recommended:

- Western Cape: R4.8 million
- Eastern Cape: R3.9 million
- Northern Cape: R2.6 million
- KwaZulu-Natal: R1.8 million
- Free State: R1.6 million
- Northwest: R1.3 million
- Gauteng: R1.1 million
- Mpumalanga: R0.8 million
- National Average: R0.4 million

Per capita child/maintenance grants by province, 1996/97:

- Western Cape: R7.1
- Eastern Cape: R5.2
- Northern Cape: R3.1
- KwaZulu-Natal: R2.8
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- Northwest: R2.1
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Social workers alarmed over plans to reduce benefits

SOCIAL workers reacted with dismay yesterday to the news that the government is considering cutting social security grants for the maintenance of women and children.

The Land Commission Report proposes that the R430 a month state maintenance grant for mothers be phased out over five years. It also says benefits for children ought to be reduced from R135 a month to R70 each and should only be claimed if the children are under 18, instead of 18 as at present.

At least it leaves state social welfare grants for foster parents untouched, said Dr W Terblanche, the Western Cape provincial administration's director of social security. Several social workers were also pleased with that aspect.

The report says it suggested the cutbacks as it feared the state would not have the money to support all the women and children at the present level if everyone who was eligible for a grant applied.

Black Sash social worker Ms Bastienne Klein, who expressed her own opinions and did not speak on behalf of her organisation, said the report appeared to be saying: "Because black women will now be able to get this benefit in significant numbers, we can't afford it."

It was alarming to cut a family's income from R700 a month to R140, she said.

"I have not read the Land report, but it seems those who wrote it are not being creative about how they reshuffle (resources). They are suggesting cutbacks on an assumption that may never be realised. Not everybody who is eligible will claim, even if resources in the black community do improve."

"It was through bad administration that black women often did not get maintenance grants, while white, coloured and Indian women did. In Guguletu's Section Two, for example, there was one social worker for 200 000 people, so not many reports were written, and by default black women did not get grants."

"This is about political will. If the state does not want to give handouts, it must look at giving people RDP jobs. These proposed changes will hurt black women too, especially those who have few skills other than looking after children, and therefore can't get a job."

A social worker from a church welfare agency in a northern suburb, who declined to be named, said a problem with the proposed policy was that single mothers would have such a low income they would no longer qualify even to get a lease on a sub-economic house.

It would be good to deduct maintenance money from the wages or salaries of defaulting fathers. Yet it was a bad idea to reduce the state's maintenance grants in the expectation that money from the fathers would make up for it. Many fathers did not have jobs, could not be found or were in prison, she said.

Her fellow social workers felt the most upsetting thing about the plan was the reduction in the age at which children could qualify for assistance, to just nine years.

"We think they won't go to school after nine, because the mothers will be unable to pay the fees or associated costs."

A good thing about the new proposals was that it appeared the state would be willing to grant R70 for each child, irrespective of how many there were. She understood that at present, in the case of those who were married, the state only provides for a maximum of two.

She also felt it was impossible to maintain a child on R70 a month.

- The Masakhane campaign would receive a serious setback if the Land Commission's recommendations were accepted, Western Cape Local Government MEC Mr Peter Marais said yesterday.

The recommendation regarding grants for mothers was irresponsible since it would cut off the financial lifeline of 105 000 single mothers at a time when unemployment was about 30% countrywide.

The inability of poor, unskilled and unemployed people to pay for services was a major factor in the non-payment of service arrears, which the Masakhane campaign aimed to counter, he said. — Staff Writer, Sapa
Single mothers and children face grant cut

If changes are accepted, many who did not receive maintenance will be able to receive reduced benefits

BY PATRICK BULGER
Cape Town

Single mothers and their children who rely on state maintenance grants face a shock reduction in their payments if far-reaching changes to South Africa’s welfare system are accepted.

But many who did not receive benefits in the past will be in line to receive the reduced scale of benefits.

Among the proposals are the phasing out over a five-year period of a total monthly maximum grant of R100, made up of a R450 parent allowance and R135 for each of two children from birth until age 18.

In its place is proposed a flat rate of R70 per child up to the age of 9 years.

The report on child and family welfare compiled by a team headed by Francie Lund of the Centre for Social and Development Studies at the University of Natal was handed to Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi yesterday.

Fraser-Moleketi said she would take the report to the Cabinet for its comments.

The central thrust of the report is the need to downscale benefits while at the same time making them more widely available to the broader South African population.

Lund’s report warned that there would be “negative consequences”.

“Women presently receiving the state maintenance grant, especially those in their 40s and 50s who will have difficulty in finding alternative sources of income, will be desperately affected.

“More young people will have to work for the upkeep of their families and this will affect their schooling and influence their ability to be independently productive,” the report said.

Grandmothers would face greater pressure and the “already stressed old-age pension will have to do more work in household support”.

Lund said at a media briefing that the black population had in the past been “effectively excluded” from access to the grants.

According to projections devised by the committee, R2-billion would be needed every year to target 39% of children who would qualify for the grant by passing a means test. At present, R1.2-billion of the department’s overall budget of R14-million goes towards maintenance grants.

The new approach will be to target the child rather than the child’s mother or foster parent. This would facilitate the redistributive aspect of the new proposals and would mean that “many thousands more will receive a benefit for the first time”.

STAR 19/9/96
Register of sex offenders proposed

CONCERNED: Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi

POLITICAL STAFF

WELFARE and Population Development Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said yesterday the government might introduce a register of convicted sex offenders and paedophiles.

The proposal arose in the light of an Inter-ministetal Committee on Young People at Risk report that found evidence of sexual abuse at South Africa's reform schools, places of safety and schools of industry.

Presenting the report at a media briefing in Cape Town, Fraser-Moleketi said the conditions under which about 6 000 children were being kept were cause for concern.

The committee investigated government facilities after Parliament passed a law in 1994 that ended the detention in adult jails of children awaiting trial.

That law has since been changed to permit children to be held in cells until adequate places of safety are provided.

The report found that children in the institutions "claim to be victims of emotional, physical and sexual abuse".

At one of the schools of industry charges are pending against the principal for allegedly sexually abusing girls in his care.
Public register mooted to expose paedophiles

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — The Cabinet is to be asked to crack down further on paedophiles and child molesters by approving the creation of a public register of those convicted of offences.

This emerged during a briefing yesterday, when Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said that the creation of such registers was a growing international practice.

She said Sweden’s recent international conference on commercial exploitation of children had endorsed a resolution calling for the creation of public registers of paedophiles.

Fraser-Moleketi was releasing the report of an investigation by an interministerial committee into young people at risk, which identified shocking defects in the institutional care of young people.

Asked whether any cases of sexual abuse had been uncovered in state institutions charged with child care, she said there had been incidents, but they were not widespread. Simple physical abuse was far more common, she said.

Fraser-Moleketi said there was some doubt about whether a register of paedophiles could be made public in terms of the constitution.

It was possible that the right to privacy provisions in the constitution could be violated by a public register.

There was a possibility, however, that a state register of paedophiles and child molesters, access to which could be granted to employers in the child care sector to check on whether or not prospective employees had a record of abuse, would be constitutionally acceptable.

Apart from providing information to those in the child care sector, the main purpose of such a register would be to keep track of paedophiles.
Child abuse rife
in institutions

Shocking picture emerges from study of state-run places of safety

By Waghiied Misbach
Political Reporter

Children are being sexually and physically abused and live in appallingly unsanitary conditions in the country's state-run places of safety.

This was the shocking picture that emerged from a Government investigation into government-funded reform schools, schools of industries and places of safety.

The investigation, which was approved by the Cabinet in April this year, was released by Welfare and Population Development Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi in Parliament yesterday.

The massive report reveals that children are physically, emotionally and sexually abused in these institutions.

Children interviewed at six of the facilities claimed to be regularly beaten by staff. Affidavits were taken from children who had been hit with sticks 20 to 27 times, with the beatings having taken place on the same day the investigative team visited the school.

Cracked rib

A child at another school was beaten so badly that he suffered a cracked rib but no action was taken against staff member for the assault.

At one of the schools of industry, the principal is facing charges arising from allegations of sexual abuse. The principal has remained in his job since the charges were laid.

There is also a certain amount of abuse carried out by children on other children. Sodomy occurs in almost all facilities, although it was found that not all sodomy was forced.

The study shows that children are not protected by staff from this kind of abuse. During the night they are often locked up in dormitories and the shortage of staff makes it impossible to monitor the situation.

There is also no privacy in the sanitary facilities. Most bathrooms have no doors and there are no curtains on the showers.
Unions seek to outlaw use of child labour in making soccer balls

An international trade union campaign against the use of child labour in the production of soccer balls has drawn support from local and international soccer bodies.

Earlier this year, the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF), and the International Confederation, called on the Federation Internationale de Football Association (Fifa) and the Union of European Football Associations (Uefa) to take "urgent measures" to get children out of the workshops and into school.

The Brussels-based ITGLWF, which represents 207 trade unions in 108 countries, including the South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union, said more than 80 percent of the world's soccer balls — about 36 million a year — were made in Sialkot, Pakistan, mainly by children.

Some were as young as six, earning the equivalent of about 27 cents an hour, and worked in poorly lit and ventilated workshops. Many would have been bought for as little as about R70 and were sold on as brand new pieces of machinery.

ITGLWF general secretary Neil Kearney said Fifa, Uefa and national football associations should adopt a code of conduct for their licensees, making it a contractual obligation that merchandisers, manufacturers or sub-contractors of sports goods associated with soccer should observe basic worker rights, including not using child labour.

Now Fifa has agreed to have such a code in place by October. Reebok, a major soccer ball producer, has also cancelled its contracts in Pakistan and engaged a new contractor there. The new operation will ensure that work carried out excludes practices which lead to children being exploited.

Donald Norman, secretary-general of the SA Football Association (Safa), said his association would comply with the code from Fifa.

He said Safa would also hold discussions with Kappa, which supplies them with equipment, including the soccer balls used by Bafana Bafana.

While the international trade union campaign has turned the spotlight on child labour in the East, child labour is also widespread in South Africa.

The 1994 October Household Survey said it affected about 200 000 children between the ages of 10 and 14. Sectors most affected were agriculture (21 percent), retail and catering (17 percent), manufacturing (12 percent) and social and personal services (seven percent).

Reasons for child labour lie in the economic dependence of many families on the income earned by children and the weak enforcement of the laws, policymakers have argued.

Existing law allowed employers to get exemptions to use child labour but in practice exemptions had largely been ignored and current procedures made it difficult for inspectors to monitor compliance with exemptions.

Enforcing the law against child labour was also difficult because child workers and their families were often unwilling to prosecute or testify.

The Department of Labour's proposed new Employment Standards aim to deal with some of these problems.

They recommend that children younger than 15 may not work at all and those younger than 18 may not do work which is inappropriate for their age or which is hazardous or harmful to their health.

There is also a proposal that ways be found to oblige employers to pay the same wage to adults and children who do the same work.

Exemptions to child labour should only be granted to individual employers who want to employ children aged 12 to 14 to do work which is not harmful to their health or education, it has been proposed.
Places of safety really places of danger

More than 6 000 children in need of care are suffering trauma at the hands of the state, reports Gaye Davis.

Thousands of children are living in terrible conditions in places of safety in South Africa — often without sufficient clothing, and bedding at night, without proper educational facilities and in buildings that are unhealthy and unsafe — according to a recently released government report.

Of the more than 6 000 children in reform schools, schools of industry and places of safety, more than 60% are there not because they have committed a crime or are awaiting trial but because they have been identified by social workers as having been exposed to physical or sexual abuse, or neglect.

But when they are put in the hands of the state, they experience what Lesley du Toit, manager of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk which wrote the report, calls "secondary abuse."

"Secondary abuse" can take many forms. It can be formal and systematic — the "control and punishment" approach of most institutions, where there are too few staff who are badly paid and under-trained. Under this approach children are locked in dormitories at night and have their letters read and often withheld, and their holidays at home are seen as a privilege, not a right. Many live in run-down buildings, where they sleep under soiled sheets and too-few blankets alongside reeking toilets.

The abuse can also be informal, though just as systematic. Children interviewed told of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, by staff as well as by other children. The report details widespread violations of children's rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN's Rules for Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty and the Constitution.

Youngsters who attempted suicide, abused substances, mutilated themselves, were aggressive or behaved in other ways typical of troubled young people did not receive therapy, but were seen as "bad" and were usually harshly punished. While the quality of care differed widely, staff "at all levels" were found to lack experience and expertise.

Centres that previously catered for black children were found to have the worst facilities, but wide discrepancies exist generally. Girls at Le Fleur School of Industry at Faure, outside Cape Town, live in run-down buildings the principal says were declared unsafe for human habitation in the 1980s.

Wind and rain blow in through broken windows; there is no heating. There are open toilets in the dormitories; the girls are routinely tested for HIV without their consent. Their education is based on an outdated curriculum; there are no recreation programmes. There are not enough uniform forms to go around and those that there are are old and stained.

At Val du Charron industrial school in Wellington in the Cape on the other hand, each girl gets two sets of uniform for weekdays, a uniform for going out on weekends. Flannel dresses to wear in the afternoons and track suits for winter. The school offers "excellent, market-related" courses in cookery, hairdressing and catering. The report says the difference in treatment of girls at the two schools is "unacceptable"; both previously catered exclusively for girls classified coloured and fell under the House of Representatives.

How bad things can be for children at places of safety is illustrated by the report's description of Tshabetseng Detention Centre in Bloemfontein, a place of safety that only takes children awaiting trial. It says: "Sanitary conditions are unacceptable. The ablution block has broken windows, broken wash basins and broken taps."

Human excrement was found on the floors and in the showers. A report of too few toilets available at any time. A lack of paper seems to lead to ... children having to use their clothing to clean themselves. The children at Tshabetseng are cared for by security officers. No youth workers are employed. "The eight girls in this facility sit on a bench all day under the watchful eye of a security officer, who also accompanies them to the toilet."

Although places of safety are intended as short-stay centres where children are assessed and given temporary care, the investigation found children spending years in them waiting to be placed in children's homes, foster care or schools of industry. The committee came across children who have been waiting for placement for up to three years, or awaiting trial for up to two years. Children have been known to wait for up to 12 years.

Some of the reasons for this were social workers in agencies and institutions not writing the necessary letters or cooperating with one another. Social workers "not doing anything" once the child was in a place of safety; the Department of Education failing to place the child; insufficient probation officers and lack of follow-up; and children's homes being full or unwilling to take children with emotional and behavioural problems.

A child at Tshabetseng awaiting trial on charges of theft was moved between the court in Harrismith and the Bloemfontein detention centre 19 times because the social worker failed to complete a report for the court.

The country has nine reform schools, 18 schools of industry and 32 places of safety. "There is no shortage of bed space for children if one reviews these state institutions as a whole," says the report. "No need, therefore, to detain children — whether sentenced or awaiting trial — in prison."

But as the report shows, the issue is more complicated than adding up the number of beds available and the number of children needing them.

Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser Moleketi has taken on the task of reforming this Dickensian and inefficient system. She has the backing of her Cabinet colleagues, who expressed shock when presented with the committee's findings last week. Cabinet has endorsed her recommendations for short-term, emergency action and longer-term measures, and individual ministers have pledged their commitment to making sure departments take the required action. But Fraser-Moleketi's keenest champions are likely to be the children.
The correctional services portfolio played a significant role in highlighting the need for improved facilities and better management of correctional institutions. As a result, the minister of correctional services announced plans to improve conditions in correctional facilities. These changes were aimed at reducing the risk of infections and ensuring fair treatment of inmates. The minister highlighted the importance of providing adequate resources and training for staff, as well as investing in new facilities to accommodate increasing inmate populations. The minister also emphasized the need for better mental health services for inmates, recognizing the emotional and psychological challenges faced by those in custody. In addition, the minister called for greater transparency and accountability in the correctional services sector, recognizing the importance of public trust in the institutions.
The Whiners and Losers

Punter'sdream

Day off for people

How a lottery can help South Africa, but the local wheels of fortune fall to spin
Red tape keeps kids in jail

But crisis to end by July, says department

GLYNIS UDHURU

The provision of alternative secure care facilities for children accused of crimes is being hampered by the complicated procedures involved in drawing up building plans and identifying and buying buildings, according to the Department of Welfare.

The department said the "lengthy tender procedures and processes" were delaying the establishment of new accommodation.

The department also believes the current crisis, which has resulted in awaiting-trial children as young as 11 being held in prison, is the result of the misinterpretation of current legislation.

"The Department of Welfare is responsible for awaiting-trial children only and this includes care and treatment programmes," the department said in a statement.

"The situation regarding children in custody is, however, a matter of concern to the government, but cannot be resolved overnight."

There are 42 functioning Places of Safety in the country, according to the Department of Welfare. Secure care facilities are being established and the first secure care facility in Gauteng will be opened within two months.

"Each province will eventually have at least one secure care facility by July 1997, accommodating 50 juveniles between the ages of 14 and 18 years," the department said.

Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi and Correctional Services Minister Sipho Mnlensia had committed themselves and the government to a "united effort" to solve the problem of awaiting-trial children in prison, the department said.

There was now a major commitment from the Cabinet to ensure the child and youth care system was transformed after the findings of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk revealed in Parliament the shocking conditions in South Africa's reform schools, schools of industry and places of safety over the past year short and medium term strategies had been developed to address the problem and to transform the child and youth care system, the department said in response to questions from Saturday Argus.

"The department's current legislation has a self-limiting clause which expires in August 1996. However, the aim is to have no children in prison by June 1997," it said.

Current legislation allows for children between 14 and 18 who are awaiting trial for serious offences to be held in prison. Saturday Argus has visited awaiting-trial children in Pollsmoor Prison and Malmesbury Prison, where two children aged 11 were recently held while awaiting their trial dates.

Virginia Petersen, head of the Western Cape provincial administration of social services, said she believed secure care facilities should be in place when Section 29 of the Correctional Services Act was once again promulgated in Parliament.

"The management and workings of secure care facilities involves an essential shift in the approach and methods used in the past to a new paradigm which rests on important principles that can only improve the way children are dealt with in residential care," she said.

"The situation regarding children in custody is, however, a matter of concern for the government, but cannot be resolved overnight."

Two children aged 11 were recently held to await their trial dates.

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Two children aged 11 were recently held to await their trial dates.
Red tape blocks help for child suspects

By GLYNNIS UNDERHILL

The provision of alternative facilities for children suspected of crimes is being hampered by "lengthy tender procedures" involved in identifying and buying buildings, according to the Department of Welfare.

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United effort

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Over the past year, short and medium-term strategies had been developed to address the problem and to transform the child and youth care system, the Department of Welfare said in response to questions.
Mashkane campaign proposed to stop divorced dads from visiting children
Children join city red light districts

Many young boys and girls work as prostitutes, strippers or escorts in Johannesburg, investigation finds

By Amos Thor
Crime Reporter

Child prostitution is still rife in central Johannesburg, with young teenagers being exploited and used as prostitutes, escorts and strippers, an investigation by The Star has found.

Scores of them walk the streets of downtown Johannesburg and Braamfontein at night, frequenting seedy nightclubs in the hope of earning a living.

This year, 632 perpetrators have been arrested under the Sexual Offences Act.

Police admit they have a massive battle on their hands, but have found unlikely allies in adult prostitutes who supply them with information about child prostitutes.

"Adult prostitutes also believe child prostitution is not right and unacceptable," said Johannesburg child protection unit reservist Sergeant Colin Morris. "Several prostitutes are our informers, informing us when underage children start working the streets or work at escort agencies."

Glaring examples of child prostitution are evident in many parts of town. In downtown Johannesburg, near Mooi and Nugget streets, at least 20 young girls gather around open fires on street corners every night. Dressed like any teenager with white t-shirts and jeans, the girls wait for customers.

Observed by a team from the Star one night, a tall man called the "Protector" negotiated a price with a potential client.

One of the young girls then got into an expensive sedan and was driven to a dark alley nearby.

The girl bent over the man and administered oral sex while the man touched her young body. Fifteen minutes later she was returned to her friends.

In Braamfontein, young boys lurk in the shadows as middle-aged men and couples drive past slowly in the hope of finding a suitable boy.

Morris said the young male prostitutes are mostly runaways serving an area renowned for the gay and lesbian nightlife.

One of them is clearly a teenager but claiming to be 21, said he was introduced to male prostitution by a friend four years ago.

"In spite of earning about R5,000 a month, Simon (not his real name) is adamant "I don't enjoy doing this". All his money is spent on socialising and supporting his cocaine habit.

"Morris said the boys could only be charged with loitering at this stage and ordered to pay a R30 spot fine."

Two escort agencies interviewed by The Star denied employing underage girls - but were quick to point a finger at other agencies.

"In one case, a mother working as a stripper had given a letter claiming her daughter was older than 18. She was only too happy her daughter was bringing in money," Morris said.

While Morris acknowledged that many children were working as prostitutes, organised sex rings were not yet a problem. He added he was aware of only one organised child prostitution ring being run in Johannesburg.

Adult prostitutes believe child prostitution is not right
Women on grants will soon feel pinch

For the money to spread further, child support must be reduced

By Priscilla Singh

The recommendations in the Lund committee report released last week may not have meant much to sisters Cathy Stevens and Hette Seeger, but the reality will hit home when their Government grants are chopped by nearly half.

The committee of the Minister of Welfare and the provincial members of the executive council were concerned about the future affordability of the state maintenance grant, one of four categories of state support, and established the Lund Committee on Child and Family Support to investigate the problem.

Fransie Lund, who is part of the centre for social and research studies at the University of Natal in Durban, headed up the committee and found there were diverse inequalities in the present system of payment for child and family support.

She said the only way to cater for all women was to cut down on the grants presently given so that women, especially blacks, could benefit.

But, Lund said, the recommendations should not be looked at from the viewpoint that people are losing out, but that a lot more people would gain once the report had been approved.

Stevens and Seeger are both single mothers who live in a low-cost rental flat in Jan Hofmeyr on the outskirts of Johannesburg.

Seeger (33) has two sons, Johan (9) and Andre (14), and gets R615 every month with which she has to pay for rent, electricity, school fees and food from what’s left.

Stevens (31) receives R565 a month and has only one child, Tessa (6), to take care of. But for her, the nightmare is just starting as Tessa starts school next year and the daunting expense of school fees and uniforms keeps her awake at night.

Both women are unemployed and have tried to find employment in all areas, but with no luck.

They did not even know about the recommendations of the Lund report and shrug their shoulders about what the future holds.

“My sons are so used to the way we live, that they don’t even know what luxuries are. We also have to survive,” Seeger said.

Lund said the blow of the grant cuts would be softened as it would be a gradual change.

“All South Africans were eligible for the grant in the past, but for a variety of reasons African women were largely excluded. Most of the former homelands and independent states did not administer it.”

In 1995, about R1,2-billion was spent on state maintenance grants and it would cost between R3-billion and R20-billion annually, depending on assumptions made, if all women eligible for the grant under present conditions were to get it,” Lund said.

A woman is eligible for this means-tested grant if she has applied for financial support from her partner or the father of her children through a magistrate’s court and has been unable to get it, or if she was widowed or deserted.

Other conditions include that the women must have a maximum of two children under 18 or 21 years if still a student.
Special school for special kids

Services at the centre extend far beyond those of a conventional school

By Claire Keeton
Feature Writer

Trapeolo Kibo is a talented child who has been able to build complicated robots and tow cars with Lego blocks without following the instructions - but he never talks to anyone.

His teachers at the Harvey Cohen Centre in Eldorado Park understand this, as taking special care of him and his fellow students.

The centre, established by the Society for the Care of the Mentally and Physically Handicapped, accepts students that other schools or training centres are unwilling or unable to accommodate.

The Harvey Cohen Centre offers education and development skills specifically designed for handicapped pre-schoolers, profoundly handicapped members of the surrounding communities and handicapped adults who graduate with nowhere to go.

Most students come from Soweto, Eldorado Park, Newlands and Bontlone, while 25 from further afield, like Tembisa, stay in a hostel on the premises. The day students from Soweto spend an average of seven hours every day on the bus (the equivalent of a one-way trip to Pretoria) until recently when the centre was offered a second bus.

The tiring journey does not discourage children and adults from coming to the centre, which has a long waiting list to gain entry. The centre's admission criteria are based on the educational and social needs of the student, as well as the availability of space.

Although this deeply concerns Mrs Dorothy Cornelius - the dedicated director and driving force behind the centre - she feels that conditions for handicapped people are far better now than when she started her work in 1969.

A speech therapist and teacher, Cornelius and two colleagues did a house-to-house survey at that time and found 200 children needed a special facility.

"The 600 people were moved into a corner and forgotten," she said. "No provision was made for handicapped children and they were not progressing."

Since they started the centre, they have admitted at least 15 children who have advanced into mainstream schools, training centres and special schools where they are doing well, said Cornelius.

The services offered by the centre, however, extend far beyond those of a conventional educational institution. They include nursing, speech and occupational therapy and a cerebral palsy centre.

Special needs and music are regular activities and the centre has earned distinctions on the sports field by having two world-class athletes among its students. Veronica Meyer broke the record for the half-marathon at the Special Olympics Summer Games in the US last year, and Daphne Hendriksen excelled in Egypt by setting the 1:50:00 minute African record for handicapped people.

Music is not all fun and games for the children and adults at the centre, as developing life and vocational skills are the priorities.

Special workshops

There are two men's and women's workshops. The first aims to equip students with skills that will assist them to be independent and gain an income. In these workshops students are taught to care for themselves, such as cooking, cleaning, sewing and machine-stitching.

Cornelius said the students make tableware and goods to order and their parents get involved in finding contract work for them.

"We make educational toys such as counting blocks and furniture such as benches from scrap wood," says workshop supervisor Mr Jerome Alexander. One of his 40-year-old students has been out of work for two years, but is now employed again.

"We are constantly developing independent living skills to improve their quality of life and influence the community's attitude towards handicapped people."

The centre offers a supportive environment for students to build self-help skills and be encouraged to learn. An early intervention class focuses on the four basic areas of development, particularly communication, and the children are outgoing and relaxed.

"Bongani Shikayi (7) of Kgipotono squatter area interprets from Zulu and Setswana into English and Afrikaans for us," says Ms Josie van Zeelbergh. Another boy has learnt international sign language to communicate, while his crippled Elmwood has learnt to walk without crutches.

The central group accepts children of about six years old, many with a mental age of a one-year-old. The teachers work in the children's home languages using communication boards and models to teach them perceptual development.

Lack of funds

They do draw, music, drama, and story-telling, and these programmes are supervised by part-time speech and occupational therapists. Although the centre desperately needs the services of a physiotherapist, they have no money to employ one and would appreciate contributions.

A physiotherapist could particularly assist with the profoundly handicapped and cerebral palsied children, in which the teachers concentrate on movement to control muscle disorders, sensory stimulation and provide basic care.

A class for pre-primary profoundly handicapped children is dominated by hyperactive children with almost no verbal capability. They do activities for dally living like washing and work with colours and shapes.

The youngest group, with six babies and toddlers, receives music therapy and lots of love and care from their teachers.

"Children are happy and free with their teachers, unlike some places where they come before the centre," Cornelius says.

The centre opened its doors in 1980 and received mixed government funding until 1984 from the Department of Health and Social Welfare.

There are 11 teachers for 90 children and six adult supervisors for the remaining 110 students, all of which is a small staff for specialised care.

Two teachers resigned recently because they wanted better pay and other salaries are low. We could not afford to replace them because our funds are very low.

The centre does fundraising in the community and gets assistance from the corporate sector but needs additional funds to maintain its services to reach out to the community.

Cornelius says, "We shall go by when we don't get telephone calls asking - do you have place for my child?"

If you are able to assist the centre, phone Dorothy Cornelius or Leanne Stafford at (011) 242-1354 or 945-1409 or write to PO Box 8878, Newlands, 2112, Johannesburg.
Soweto parents protest at handling of child rape cases

By Audrey Sekwakwa

Concerned parents and children from Dube and Mofolo North in Soweto marched to the Protea North Magistrates' Court yesterday to protest against the courts' handling of child rape cases and threatened to take the law into their own hands.

They submitted a memorandum outlining their grievances to a court official.

The biggest fear mothers expressed was that their children would be raped at school and nothing would be done about it. "Two or three children get raped every month in Mofolo and rapists are set free," said Pat Nhlapo.

An angry Nhlapo cited the rape of a 7-year-old Mofolo girl, who said she was the fourth victim of the same man. However, the man had "only been sent to jail once," she claimed.

She also claimed that one of the victims was a disabled girl.

Nhlapo and other parents told journalists they would take the law into their own hands "if the court keeps on setting perpetrators free".

They demanded that male prosecutors not be allowed to prosecute child rape cases, that rapists not be allowed defence attorneys and that they also be denied bail.

Parents said female prosecutors would be more sympathetic to victims.

One angry protester said her 12-year-old granddaughter had been pulled into a train at Dube station in January and raped by a 25-year-old man, whom the court found not guilty of rape.

She said that during the trial the magistrate told her grandchild that she looked older than her age. "Was it right that my granddaughter be raped because she looked older than her age?"

Sello Motlhabakwe reports that residents of Zevendontein and Dipsloot squatter camps have also vowed to stem the tide of child molestation and murders in the area. This comes after the death of a 4-month-old baby in the area last month at the hands of an alleged child molester.

National Child and Violence Trust spokesman Glenys van Halter said residents of the informal settlements had on Friday taken action against a natalian man who was alleged to have molested a child.
Parents urge courts to get tough with child rapists

ARGUS CORRESPONSED

Johannesburg - Concerned parents and children from Soweto have protested against the handling of child rape cases and have vowed to take the law into their own hands if courts do not get tough.

They submitted a memorandum at the Protea North Magistrate’s Court yesterday outlining their grievances.

Parents said their biggest fear was that their children would be raped at school and nothing would be done about it. “Two or three children get raped every month in Mofolo and rapists are set free,” said Pat Nhlapo.

Ms Nhlapo said one recent rape victim, a 7-year-old Mofolo girl, was the fourth victim of the same man. But the man had “only been sent to jail once”.

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The magistrate had told her granddaughter she looked older than her age. The woman asked: “Was it right that my granddaughter be raped because she looked older than her age?”

Residents of Zevenfontein and Diepsloot squatter camps have also vowed to stem the tide of child molestations and murders in the area after the death of a 4-month-old baby who was allegedly molested and killed by a male babysitter.

On Friday, residents also burnt down the shack of a Rastafarian man who had allegedly abused a child.
At least there is some agreement now across the political divide, writes Ann Scallon

Stigdes in child detention laws
Child abuse shock
South Africa has not been homonourable childhoood has not limiting jild for committment to

Rights, pledge ignored, says study
Child detenions soar

It was conducted by Human Rights Watch. A senior researcher of the Johannesburg branch of International Rights says that the report, entitled "Business as usual", shows that the number of children in detention has increased by more than 50% in the past five years. The report also states that the government has failed to implement the convention on the rights of the child, which was signed in 1989. The government has not taken any steps to address the issue and the report calls for urgent action. The report highlights the lack of resources and the lack of training for those involved in the detention of children. It also notes that the numbers of children in detention have increased by 50% in the past five years.
Caning furore: School deserted

Negotiations under way

SABATA NGCAI
EDUCATION REPORTER

Pupils at Bulumko Secondary School near Khayelitsha, who chased out their teachers three weeks ago in a row over corporal punishment, are set to start writing their end-of-year exams — but haven’t completed their syllabuses.

The stand-off came when teachers refused to agree to the pupils’ demand that corporal punishment at the school be abolished. Pupils argued that teachers used caning not as a method of discipline but to inflict pain.

Pupils attended school, without their teachers, for about two weeks but most have now deserted their classrooms.

At the time of the furore, teachers ran for their lives when raging pupils hurled bricks at them and smashed their cars. The violence came when teachers and pupils could not reach agreement on the issue of corporal punishment. The meeting included parents.

Last week a handful of pupils sat dejectedly outside their classrooms saying they would continue their studies without the help of teachers. Std 9 and matric pupils are attending Saturday morning classes at Joe Slovo Secondary School.

The Western Cape Department of Education said negotiations between parents, teachers and pupils to persuade the teachers to go back to work were continuing.

Last year the Constitutional Court ruled that corporal punishment was a breach of the Interim Constitution. This ruling and a white paper on education and training calling for the abolition of corporal punishment in schools prompted three provinces, Gauteng, the Western Cape and Northern Province, to outlaw caning.

When schooling is torture ...

EDUCATION REPORTER

Corporal punishment brutalises society and teaches violence to children, says Nomfundu Walaza, a clinical psychologist who was herself harshly caned as a child.

Ms Walaza said that, during her school days in Langa, a cane was soaked in water before the pupils were hit.

She likened caning to torture: “When someone hits you with a stick on the soles of your feet so that you can’t walk, or cane you on your hands so that you can’t write, that’s a form of torture.”

Ms Walaza lives in Observatory and has worked as a senior counsellor at Cape Town’s Trauma Centre for Victims of Violence and Torture for the past two years.

She said corporal punishment taught children to respond to violence with violence. “Violence begets violence and brutalises society.”

In Cape Town’s black townships there has been resistance to the abolition of caning at schools since it was outlawed last year by the Constitutional Court.

Parents and teachers argue that they were caned at school and grew up into disciplined adults.

Ms Walaza said parents did not know the details of the methods used by the teachers to punish children.

“They are not aware of the humiliation and loss of self-esteem the children have to go through. Sometimes, even if they know, they decide to turn a blind eye because the teachers will tell a parent to remove the child from school.

“To black parents, a teacher is always right and knows everything. It is only when a child gets back home with scars that a parent understands the seriousness of the situation.”

Ms Walaza said corporal punishment had become the norm in black communities and would take time to eradicate.

“People should be educated about the effects of corporal punishment and violence in society. It is important to teach parents and teachers that communication is the first resort.

“You assert your power as a parent and teacher by communicating with the child and I don’t believe a culture of learning should be complicated by violence.

She blamed apartheid for chaos in black communities. The apartheid system had told people to relinquish power and hand it over to others. The school was a microcosm of the dynamics of apartheid society — oppression and subjugation.

She said parents were resisting the abolition of corporal punishment because they were worried about what would take its place.

“They feel a child behaves well and improves at school when caned. It is up to the state to put in place proper mechanisms to fill in for corporal punishment.”
after the shock of giving birth to a baby with cerebral palsy, Masechaba Modimoeng used her experience to start a home for cerebral palsied children in her back yard in Bekkersdal on the West Rand.

Six-year-old Korekile Modimoeng was born three months after his mother sustained a thigh fracture in a car accident.

The Korekile Home, named after the boy, opened its doors in November 1994 and now caters for 30 children, some of whom are confined to wheelchairs. They are aided by 24 staffs.

Modimoeng said while as a social worker she had helped parents

It caters for 30 children, some of them confined to wheelchairs.

of cerebral palsied children, she had been totally unprepared for her own son’s disability.

"It was shocking, but I realized I had to accept it. After that, I never had a problem. He is my pride and joy."

Yesterday South African Breweries (SAB) beer division donated R20 000 to the home which will be spent on specialised toys and chairs and gymnastic balls to aid stimulation.

SAB’s Mark Bowman commended the involvement of dedicated members of the community and said the corporation felt “privileged” to take part in the community’s efforts.

Modimoeng said caring for a handicapped child was a full-time job, and the home enabled many parents to seek employment again.

Pride and joy... Korekile Modimoeng, seated, and friends at this haven for cerebral palsied children in Bekkersdal.
Shehels for street kids to register and face inspection

New laws on child care, adoption
Sexual offenders focus on abuse to children's truth
MPs turn focus on children

Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi tabled the Child Care Amendment Bill in Parliament in a week that was dominated by public hearings on abortion, the South African Schools Bill and an outcry over the salaries paid to directors of loss-making transport parastatal Transnet.

The Child Care Amendment Bill has been the subject of long deliberations within the community of social workers in the child care field. Their work is almost always frustrated by the mean-spiritedness of most legislation dealing with less fortunate children, so any improvement is to be welcomed. The bill also has implications for the adoption of children and for the care of children in state institutions or shelters of the sort put aside for streetchildren.

New provisions are proposed to accredit social workers who specialise in adoption, to remove the power of foster parents to veto the adoption by other parents of a child in their care, to give parents a 60-day “cooling-off period” in which they may reverse their decision on the adoption of their child, and to strike out the provision that a child who has spent two years in state care may be adopted regardless of what the natural parents say.

Another new provision compels teachers to report suspected abuse of a child to the police.

The bill also makes it compulsory for state care institutions to be inspected, where previously they were exempt, and it provides for the inspection of shelters for streetchildren.

Unwanted children were in some sense the focus of the public hearings on the Termination of Pregnancy Bill. These have been well publicised, including the woman claiming to have been made pregnant by a Catholic priest and then relating how the church sponsored her abortion. Health committee chairman Abe Nkombo allowed her to give testimony (the term evidence would be going too far because that should rightly imply cross-examination and the right of rebuttal) and then ruled that the media had to fall in with her wishes to withhold her name and all other details.

Regardless of her intentions, the woman’s condition of anonymity can only but cast her testimony as malicious and it is a moot point whether Parliament should have allowed her to produce her unsubstantiated allegation without the accused being given the right of rebuttal.

While the abortion bill is only now reaching the committee stage, during which amendments may be accepted or rejected, the South African Schools Bill was finalised by the education committee.

Once again the National Party demonstrated its inability to fully comprehend the implications of the constitution, which says the nation’s resources are there for the people as whole. In other words, if there is only so much money for classrooms of 60 rather 30 children, one cannot exclude 30 children by arguing that it is going to detract from the school or the quality of education.

The committee stage of the schools bill provided a fascinating example of the power that parliamentary committees can exercise. Under the chairmanship of the ANC’s Blade Nzimande, the committee introduced changes to Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu’s original bill. In so doing, the committee refused to act as a rubber stamp, which is to be applauded.

The bill introduces compulsory schooling and scraps the Model C system by placing all schools on an equitable funding and legislative footing. It is long overdue.

Another interesting aspect of the week was the focus on the almost R1-million salaries paid to Transnet directors. Given that Transnet is a public corporation owned by the state, the packages do seem on the high side. In the past they seemed to be even higher than they are at present, and Deputy Finance Minister Gill Marcus’ promise of greater parliamentary scrutiny of Transnet’s spending was welcomed by all.

In other business last week a number of bills were passed. They include the Special Pensions Bill, which will provide a pension for those members of liberation movements who were not able to set aside a pension for themselves in the decades of anti-apartheid struggle, and the Safety Matters Rationalisation Bill, which standardises security legislation throughout the country, including the former homelands.

On Thursday the Senate played host to the premier of KwaZulu Natal as it considered the report of the Senate’s visit to that province. In the committees, Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting Minister Jay Naidoo explained his intentions in the telecommunications bill, which establishes a regulatory framework ahead of the partial privatisation of Telkom, the constitutional affairs committee considered new local government legislation, and the justice committee continued to plough through six anti-crime bills.

Finally, Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel gave a confidential report to members of the standing committee on finance. It is unusual for a committee to allow closed briefings, so one can only assume that whatever the minister said was controversial.

In the weeks ahead, the pace of legislation can be expected to pick up as MPs approach the end of the parliamentary year.
The place where laughter drowns fear of HIV

BY MELANIE-ANN FERNS

When you enter the Ethembeni Home in Doornfontein, Johannesburg, what strikes you is the serenity of the place.

Such compassion is essential when you consider that the babies in the home, some of whom are HIV positive, have not enjoyed any kindness in their lives.

Some have been rescued from terrible abuse and neglect.

When The Star visited the home, staff had horror stories to tell of babies plucked from plastic bags or rescued from dustbins, bushes, toilets and hotel rooms.

They spoke of how the babies have flourished and grown at Ethembeni, which means "place of hope", and is one of two Salvation Army homes in Gauteng for abandoned babies.

Since the opening of the home a year ago, 10 have died of AIDS-related illnesses. A brightly decorated quilt hangs in the foyer at Ethembeni, each square bearing the name of one of the dead.

"Every time one of the babies dies, the staff are ripped apart. We cry and we grieve - it's like losing one of our own children," said Henry Morgan, a volunteer at the home for the past five months.

Many of the babies brought to Ethembeni will never see their parents again and the home tries to place them in foster homes.

But this is a struggle, according to matron Barbara Malvo, who said that because some of the babies were HIV positive, it made finding foster homes difficult.

But Malvo said that of the 51 children at the home, less than 50% had tested positive.

But, despite this and financial constraints, the atmosphere at the home seems to be a happy one, with the laughter of children echoing through the halls.

Staff said the home had been accepted by the community, and that they received encouragement and support from their families for their efforts.

They have no qualms about working with babies who are HIV positive.

Reformed prostitutes move in with children

BY MELANIE-ANN FERNS

The Ethembeni home for abandoned babies is to open its doors to prostitutes who no longer want to ply their trade.

A wing in the children's home in Doornfontein has already been converted into living quarters for 14 reformed prostitutes who will move in next month.

Captain Len Millar, public relations secretary for the Salvation Army, under whose auspices the home falls, said former prostitutes who have undergone rehabilitation programmes would be placed at the home for between nine and 12 months.

He said most of the 14, believed to be in their teens, had undergone treatment at The House - a centre to rehabilitate prostitutes in Berea - and the Government's

'It would be very therapeutic'

drug rehabilitation programme.

Millar said the women would receive vocational training, counselling and life skills to prepare them for re-entry into the community.

The project would run for two years before it is reviewed.

"Very often they (the women) are abused and feel they have no self-worth, and it would be very therapeutic to be involved with the children. We think the children would respond to them as individuals and will also benefit from the attention they receive," Millar said.

The Salvation Army is also considering establishing a night creche for the children of prostitutes at the home.

But this would happen only if the plans to help in the rehabilitation programme for prostitutes are successful.
Children get their own truth hearing

Judy Damon

Children will have their say at their own version of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be held at parliament this weekend in celebration of International Children’s Day.

The event was organised by Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (Raacan) which felt it was high time children had the opportunity to speak out against the evils of apartheid.

The testimony will focus on children who have been exploited.

To protect the identities of the real child victims, eight child actors have been trained over the last three weeks to give an accurate portrayal of apartheid injustices, based on actual case studies. The hearings will be in Xhosa, English and Afrikaans.

Panelists include Justice Minister Dullah Omar, Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Western Cape Chief Justice Gerald Friedman, provincial Attorney-General Frank Kahn and representatives of the United Nations and the police Child Protection Unit.
The President, The Sierra Leone National Broadcasting Commission, on 17th April 1976, took the decision to suspend the operation of the Sierra Leone National Broadcasting Commission for a period of one year. This decision was taken after a thorough investigation of the affairs of the Commission, which revealed a number of serious allegations of misconduct on the part of the Commission's senior officers.

The decision to suspend the Commission was based on the findings of an independent investigation conducted by a commission of inquiry. The commission of inquiry found evidence of corruption, financial impropriety, and mismanagement within the Commission, which threatened the viability of the Commission's operations.

The suspension of the Commission was intended to allow for a period of restructuring and reform within the organization, with the ultimate goal of restoring public confidence in the Commission's ability to provide high-quality broadcasting services to the people of Sierra Leone.

The Commission was to be reconstituted with new members, and new procedures were to be put in place to prevent the recurrence of the misconduct that had led to the suspension.

The suspension of the Commission was a significant step in the country's efforts to address the political and social issues that had contributed to the corruption and mismanagement within the Commission. It was hoped that the suspension would serve as a lesson to other organizations in the country, and that it would help to create a more transparent and accountable environment for public institutions.
Kids go short as police bands play

POLICE bands were funded to the tune of R26 million in 1995/6 — compared with R15.2m allocated to child-protection units.

The relatively low spending on preventing child-abuse has struck a sour note with social workers and children's rights organisations.

Their call for increased spending on child-protection units will be underlined tomorrow when the "children's truth commission" sits in Parliament and children give evidence about abuse.

The extent of spending on police bands and child-protection units was disclosed yesterday by Safety and Security Minister Mr Sydney Mufamadi when he replied to a question tabled in the Senate by Mr James Selle (DP).

Mufamadi said he was concerned because some of the budgetary allocations in the South African Police Service were not in line with the policing priorities set out in the annual police plan of the national commissioner of police or the crime-prevention strategy.

"I have given a directive that the matter be addressed as far as future budget allocations are concerned," he said.

The Resources Aimed at Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, the organisers of the "children's truth commission", said recently:

"It is not good enough to say that there is no money for protective services for children social welfare services in communities of need."
Are little girls safe, now?

Abuse horrifying

Child

Commission
Parliament used as forum for plans to tackle problem
Rape arrest bid in parliamentary brawl

Parliamentary arrest

Statistics that spell horror for children

"By Tevita Niuva P"
Suffer the children in a hungry, violent SA

(248) ST 31/11/96

By PAT SIDLEY

NEW statistics reveal South Africans to be unhealthy and disturbed — with children bearing the brunt of most ill-health. Many of the statistics, presented in the South African Health Review 1996, show the effects of violence, malnutrition and displacement, while others show that vices such as drinking and smoking continue to compromise our health.

The annual review, compiled by the Durban-based Health Systems Trust, reveals that tobacco-related diseases rank second only to the AIDS epidemic in their bad effects on our health.

African children come out of the review particularly badly. Between 30 and 73 infants out of every 1,000 younger than a year die — seven times the number who die in other population groups.

The African maternal mortality rate is also high. Up to 250 African women die in childbirth.

Up to one in three children is stunted by malnutrition and one in 10 is underweight.

According to a 1994 survey, one in three children suffers Vitamin A deficiencies — indicative of a serious public health problem.

One in five children is anaemic, one in 20 suffers from-deficiency anaemia, and many more have too little iron. The problem is worst in urban areas and the children most seriously affected are aged between six and 23 months.

About 690,000 preschool children are identifiedly malnourished and 1.5 million are stunted by long-term malnourishment.

But malnutrition is just a part of our children's problems. One study, in Maritzburg, found that 19 percent of children do not live with their mothers. Of these, 48 percent are displaced "usually because of the mother's entry into a new relationship"; 32 percent are orphaned and 11 percent are abandoned.

Their parents are hardly better off. Nearly a quarter of the adults studied in the Household Survey of Health Inequalities, nearly one quarter of the adult sample have experienced traumatic events, most commonly as subjects of, or witnesses to, physical attacks.

Many South Africans also suffer mental illness, the review says. A study in Khayelitsha found 19 percent of children and adolescents in informal settlements suffer "diagnosable psychiatric disorders".

The review also shows the results of alarming violence: Almost 59 percent of deaths in the Cape Metropole in 1994 were the result of injuries. A total of 44 in every 100,000 people were killed a year, six times the figure in the US.

A study undertaken by the Medical Research Council and the University of Natal showed that in the decade to 1992 there was an eightfold increase in the number of bullet wounds.
Cost of youth central to an age-old problem

Outcry over National Youth Commission packages highlights costs of plethora of commissions and task groups which have cost taxpayer at least R330-m so far

OWN CORRESPONDENT
Cape Town

South Africa is counting the cost of broadening democracy - at least R330-million on a plethora of commissions and task groups - with the costs of the newly established Youth and Gender Commission yet to be included.

This can be disclosed after the 26-year-old Youth Commission chairman, Mahlengi Bhengu, was shown this week to be earning a package of almost R30,000 a month.

The four full-time members of the National Youth Commission will receive an annual package of R276,937.

Bhengu said yesterday her salary package was set by the Government.

"Commissioners' salaries are determined in accordance with state regulations," she said.

"The decision to give us the salaries we get was taken by the Ministry of Finance, the Office of the Deputy President, and the public service people," she said.

"She did not own any property and rents a flat in Yeoville, which she described as a "so-called working class area".

"She said she did not have one and while she is able to drive, she gets a lift to the Union Buildings each morning with a friend.

"Bhengu was born in Soweto, Empaneng in 1970. She is a graduate of the University of Durban Westville, where she studied public administration, and of Unisa, where she read industrial psychology."

"Her organisational credentials are from the top drawer. She was a member of Young Christian Students at university, and of the South African Students' Congress, the first woman ever to hold the post. She also served on the national executive of the National Education Coordinating Committee."

"In 1994 she was a senior Information officer in the operations unit of the Independent Electoral Commission."

Last year, she worked for the tertiary education support programme, which put in place a framework for administering student loans on a national scale. After that, she served as head of the ANC's education desk.

"Research by the Institute of Race Relations has raised questions about the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of several of the bodies, which include the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (a R275-million budget for 1996/97), the Independent Broadcasting Authority (R415.5-million), the Pan South African Language Board (R31.27-million), and the Human Rights Commission (R6.44-million)."

"The Public Service Commission tops the list with a budget of R111.9-million."

"The department of Arts, Culture and Technology has not disclosed what the Language Board's R11.27-million is to be spent on, or the remuneration levels of its 13 members. However, sources said nobody had yet been paid a cent."
Child abuse on the rise in S Africa

By Thembela Sepotokele

FINDINGS of a study of crime against children show that the Police Child Protection Unit will have to deal with about 1 470 000 cases of child abuse by the year 2000.

A study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council indicates that the CPU dealt with 28 484 cases of child abuse last year.

The HSRC has warned that if crimes against children continue to increase at the current rate, the CPU will find itself dealing with a huge number of cases throughout the country.

Sexually abused

All the cases of child victimisation reported to the CPU are used to develop a database on the nature and extent of child abuse.

With the establishment of the CPU a decade ago, 140 000 cases pertaining to child abuse had been reported last year.

The findings show that the majority of children are victims of sexual abuse and the perpetrators are known to the victims. The data was gathered over a period of a year from July 1 1994 to June 30 1995.

7/11/96
Child Welfare criticised over state funding claims

BY PRISCILLA SINGH

The Johannesburg Child Welfare (JCW) has come under strong criticism from the Gauteng Department of Welfare after it claimed it had to shut down essential services due to inadequate state funding.

The JCW has announced that it was forced to close down at least three of its facilities, citing inadequate funding from the government as one of the main reasons for the closures.

The Department said it had held meetings with the JCW in the past to address existing problems and establish a partnership, but the JCW did not approach Welfare and chose another route.

It also said that the JCW was not the only organisation to benefit from financial aid from the state coffers, as there are 91 other organisations in the province being subsidised by the Gauteng Department of Welfare.

JCW director Lyn Perry said heavy cuts in government subsidies contributed to the dire financial circumstances the organisation was now placed in.

As a result, Perry said services such as the Lucy Kennedy’s children’s home, the Child Care Centre for victims of sexual abuse, and the social work training department were forced to close.

Gauteng welfare spokesman Samantha Collins said the Department had also offered to subsidise JCW’s Liberty Life centre for sexually abused children, but they turned it down and decided to use the funds on existing services.

In March 1994, the quality and scope of the social work services rendered by JCW was investigated by the four former Departments of Welfare and possible subsidy cuts were discussed with them.

The JCW was informed in April last year that the subsidy for social work services would be cut by 26% (R34 779) over six months from October last year.

“The JCW’s services are delivered in downtown Johannesburg and there are no drop-in centres for under-privileged communities in Soweto or Eldorado Park, and the Lucy Kennedy home in Regent’s Park houses 12 white children.

“The JCW is still subscribing to a First World model in a Third World setup and this proves to be an expensive and possibly ineffective service which reaches a small number of people,” Collins said.
All aboard gravy train!

By Reafiq Rohan
Political Correspondent

NEWLY appointed chairwoman of the National Youth Commission 26-year-old Ms Mahlengi Bhengu is the beneficiary of what must be the ultimate in Government's immense generosity. Bhengu receives a whopping annual package of R352 366. This is mainly for attending to policy and research for the commission. Her four fulltime commissioners also do not come off too badly. Ms Nomfundo Mbali, Mr Renard van der Walt, Mr Otto Kuniene and Mr Mpho LaGerson each walk off with an annual package of R276 937.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission also features prominently in the list of top-drawer earners. In addition to the salaries earned by the commissioners, which equal those of judge presidents and supreme court judges, Parliament was told this week of additional perks in the form of cars.

TRC chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu has a Toyota Camry worth R142 966, his deputy Dr Alex Boraine a Mercedes-Benz worth R190 153, Advocate Chris de Jager a Mercedes-Benz worth R161 407, the Reverend B Musa a Mercedes-Benz which worth R175 000, Mrs S Khamppe a Pajero worth R227 720, Mr R Lyster a Volvo worth R187 000 and Mr W Mlambo a Mercedes-Benz worth R251 844.

The Reverend K Mngo has a Mercedes-Benz worth R153 486, Ms H Mkhize a Volvo worth R187 572, Dr W Orr an Audi worth R130 000, Advocate D Potgieter a Mercedes-Benz worth R196 478, Dr M Ramashala a BMW worth R168 980, Dr M Randers a Pajero worth R242 666, Ms Y Sooka a Volvo worth R192 075 and Ms G Wildschut an Audi worth R164 907.

Salaries at the SABC are also comfortable. Chief executive Mr Zwelakhe Sisulu earns R460 020 a year, editor-in-chief of TV news Ms Jill Chisholm R350 004 a year, as does chief of radio Mr Govin Reddy.
Our backyard… please, your Napoleonic ideas must not be allowed to put first ring hollow children’s needs, promises to put
expensive proposition.” The maintenance costs for Othandweni are well over R1-million each year. The welfare service currently faces a R1.2-million deficit.

An annual government subsidy of R8.6-million covers little more than a quarter of the service’s yearly budget of R12-million. While public sector funding — such as Liberty Life’s financial support for the sexual abuse unit — has been crucial, the public sector too has to prioritise.

Says Hyton Appelbaum, a director of the Liberty Life Foundation: “We spend R90-million a year on more than 1,000 welfare projects. If we spend R1-million a year on one project it becomes obvious, particularly if the public and the Government do not think the project is important enough to provide financial support.” For five years Liberty Life spent more than R1-million annually on the sexual abuse unit. This year the company was forced to halve its contribution.

“The national government needs to put its money where its mouth is,” Perry says. While the Government has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and committed itself to making children’s needs a top priority, it needs to follow this commitment with financial support, she says. She also points out that, unlike in most other countries, statutory services are not covered in full by the Government, although legally they are its responsibility.
Funding dries up for child welfare centres

By Charity Bhengu

THREE Gauteng children's welfare centres that have given vital service to the communities for years will close down next month because there is no money to run them.

The director of the Johannesburg Child Welfare, Mrs Lyn Perry, said heavy cuts in government subsidies contributed to the serious financial problems.

"The Johannesburg Child Welfare's board was forced to close the centres after they accrued a deficit of R1.2 million," Perry said.

The centres will stop their services to abandoned, abused and neglected children in the greater Johannesburg area – the inner city, Sandton, Randburg, Alexandra, Soweto, Eldorado Park, Westbury and Northwestern areas.

The Child Care Centre, which opened in 1990, gives counselling and therapy to about 8 000 sexually abused children and their families.

"In 1955 over 8 000 children and their families, predominantly from disadvantaged areas, received help.

"However, well into the third quarter of this financial year, the organisation is facing a deficit of R1.2 million despite stringent budgetary controls." She said the closure of these centres came at a time when cases of child abuse and neglect were rife.

The SAPS Child Protection Unit reported a 29.4 percent increase of crimes against children – rape, incest, kidnapping and assault – between 1993 and 1996.

"If police are probing 100 child abuse cases a day, what is to become of these children without such child care services?" Perry asked.

Liberty Life has supported the centres for the past six years and even exceeded its limit. But the funding has been insufficient to sustain the centres for a long time.
Not much change in child labor, prostitution and slavery from 200 years ago, UN report finds
Special needs of children tackled

Kevin O'Grady

ABOUT 50% of children of school-going age fell into the broad category of learners with special needs, and support services for them had historically been non-existent, uncoordinated or fragmented, education director-general Chabani Manganyi said yesterday.

It was for this reason that government had recently appointed two bodies to address the "severely neglected" area of need in education.

The national commission on special needs in education and training and the task team for education support services — both chaired by University of the Western Cape associate professor Sandy Lazarus — met for the first time this week and would report their findings to Education Minister Sisipho Mzimela within a year, he said.

He said some of the learners with special education needs suffered from disabilities while others experienced difficulty when engaging in the learning process.

"Specialised education aims to address these needs through special interventions and the provision of support services such as social work, health, vocational and general guidance and psychological support," he said.

In SA these services had only been available to a few and disadvantaged learners had benefited minimally or not at all.
Under the new law, corporal punishment is prohibited.

NEW SCHOOLS ACT
Under the new law, corporal punishment is prohibited.
No proper care for disabled kids

NEWS
NATIONAL

BY WESLEY MECHAM

PHOTOGRAPHER: PATRICK FEHER

1/6

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As child sex capital of world,

A recent Panorama report on child sex trade in the region, a major trafficking hub, has shed light on the extent of the problem. The report highlights the systemic failure of authorities to identify and arrest traffickers, even as children are subjected to abuse and exploitation.

The report, released on November 23, 1996, titled "Panorama: Child Sex Capital of the World," reveals that child sex trade is facilitated by the lack of enforcement and the complicity of authorities.

"We are seeing an alarming increase in the number of children being trafficked for sexual exploitation," said a senior official of the International Labor Organization.

The report also highlights the role of technology in the spread of child sex trade. Social media platforms and mobile apps have become key pathways for traffickers to reach out to potential victims.

"The internet has become a major tool for predators to locate and recruit children," said an expert on child protection.

The report calls for increased awareness and training of law enforcement officers to identify and respond to incidents of child sex trade.

"We need to equip our officers with the necessary skills to detect and respond to child sex trade cases," said a senior law enforcement official.

The report also recommends the implementation of comprehensive laws and policies to address child sex trade.

"We need stronger laws and more rigorous enforcement to protect children from sexual exploitation," said a government official.

The report concludes that a multi-agency approach is necessary to combat child sex trade, involving law enforcement, social services, and health officials.

"A coordinated effort is essential to end this heinous practice," said a child rights advocate.

The report calls for international cooperation in addressing child sex trade, as it is a global issue that requires a global response.

"We need international cooperation to combat this scourge," said a regional forum representative.

The report was released in the context of the 1996 World Summit for Children, where the issue of child sex trade was highlighted as a priority for action.

"The world must take urgent action to protect children from sexual exploitation," said a UN official.

The report has been widely condemned by child rights activists and organizations around the world, who have called for immediate action to protect children from this heinous practice.

"The time for action is now," said a global child rights organization.

The report has sparked a global debate on the need for urgent action to protect children from sexual exploitation.

"We need a global commitment to end this human rights abuse," said a leading NGO.
‘Raw deal’ for abused kids - SA courts swamped

They don’t like cases involving children

ADELE BAILEY
Staff Reporter

South Africa is the child sexual-abuse capital of the world but the crime is still not given priority status, a child-abuse seminar has been told.

Speaking at a national Childline seminar in Cape Town, Elzabe Durr Fitches, the court social worker at Court G in Wynberg Magistrate’s Court, said only four to six percent of children reported cases of abuse.

Meanwhile courts were barely able to cope with the case-loads of those few who did report the crimes. Children were getting a “raw deal”, she said.

The Childline seminar brought together participants from Gauteng, the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape. Court G is the first of two Cape Town courts, and the only ones in the country, that exclusively handle sexual offence cases. Most cases involve child victims.

Mrs Durr Fitches said although these courts were more child-friendly, they were buckling under the pressure of heavy case-loads. Wynberg’s G court was eight months behind.

Highly qualified and with a reputation that precedes her, Mrs Durr Fitches is known as the court’s victim support services co-ordinator. She said the court was established in March 1993 on the initiative of Western Cape Attorney-General Frank Kahn. It is still only one of two such courts.

The attorney-general in the other eight provinces had decided there was no need to establish special rape courts in their areas. Mrs Durr Fitches said there had been a promise - still unfulfilled - to set up a similar court in Mitchell’s Plain.

She said the backlog was due to the special intermediary system, which allowed children to appear in a separate room during trials. Court proceedings were relayed through an intermediary, but they were difficult to come by. Mrs Durr Fitches, who acts as an intermediary, said there were still major handicaps.

The presumption of innocence of the perpetrator and the burden of proof on the victim was a stumbling block for most children, who were scared and sometimes contradicted their testimony. “A child who says she was raped while she was standing would be told that it is impossible. But she may have forgotten to mention that she was forced to stand on a box.”

Both parties had the right to cross-examine certain standards were set. The procedure was not supposed to be insulting or humiliating but often was. Lawyers were allowed to be aggressive. The role of the judge or magistrate was passive as he has to be neutral. “If the cross-examination is humiliating for the child, he often does not intervene. It is difficult to get one magistrate to sit in the court for longer than a week. They don’t like handling cases involving children.”

Children were not entitled to their own lawyers and they were represented by the State. Perpetrators often employed advocates who had to deal with only one particular case. State prosecutors were often overworked and inexperienced in dealing with children. “A distinct advantage with our special court is that we have two prosecutors, which means that while one is in court the other can consult with witnesses before the case is heard.”

In other regional courts where child sexual-abuse cases were heard, prosecutors had time to consult the children only minutes before their appearance. Prosecutors were even known to get child sexual cases withdrawn because they found them too traumatic. “The balance is just not there and children most often end up getting a raw deal,” she said.

Another major stumbling block was the cautionary rule in South African courts. This required the court to be cautious of the testimony of prostitutes’ accomplices, private detectives and children.

Prosecutors and magistrates were not trained to deal sensitively with children. They were not aware that children often did not remember chronological events. “Children cannot remember peripheral things like whether a door was closed or not, especially if they have been traumatised by a rape, for example. Prosecutors and magistrates often get openly irritated with children who fidget in their seats, and lose concentration, forgetting that a four-year-old would find it difficult to sit still and concentrate for an hour of heavy cross-examination.”

While some children were manipulated into lying about abuse, this was a very small percentage and it was easy to see when it occurred.

Mrs Durr Fitches is leaving the court after three years. She said she had spent her time trying to make changes, sending one proposal after another to her superiors at the Provincial Administration of the Western Cape, but to no avail.
Youth Commission Invited

November 2, 1996

Leader Page

OPEN CALL for an "EMERGENT" YOUTH COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH: The Commission on Mental Health is seeking nominations of residents of Washington County for the newly created Youth Commission. The Youth Commission will be made up of six youth, ages 14-21, and participate in planning and implementing the Mental Health Program. This youth commission will meet on a weekly basis and will be responsible for: (1) creating a youth leadership role for mental health issues, (2) initiating youth involvement in services and programs, and (3) assisting in the implementation of new ideas and programs. Nominations are due by December 1. For more information, please contact the Commission on Mental Health at 555-1234.
Tough action against child abuse

JOHAN SCHROVEN
Crime Correspondent

ARG 27/11/96

A major Western Cape initiative is to be launched next week to combat sexual abuse of children.

In addition, National Police Commissioner George Fivaz has established a multi-disciplinary team to address the problem of the astronomically high number of rapes.

The team will include experts from the private sector who will help develop police strategies to combat rape.

Commissioner Fivaz told a conference of police experts yesterday that South Africa had the most reported rape cases in the world and the second highest number of child abuse cases. Only Rwanda had more.

Cape Town Child Protection Unit chief Jan Swart said reported cases of child abuse were probably only 20 percent of the actual cases because of a culture of "acceptance and reluctance to complain".

"We in the Western Cape are taking the bull by the horns on Monday with the establishment of two main centres to combat abuse and sex attacks on children," said Superintendent Swart.
Child labour in SA to be probed next year

Louise Cook

The labour department would join the International Labour Organisation (ILO) next year in investigating child labour in SA, especially on farms, labour department director Liza Seifel said yesterday.

This follows a recent visit to SA by two Geneva-based officials of the ILO who did a preliminary study - yet to be released - on the issue. Seifel said there were suspicions that the problem was particularly rife on SA farms.

Meanwhile, non-governmental organisation Farmworkers' Research and Resource Project welcomed the planned study, saying a recent survey by it on 196 farms in various provinces showed that boys under 16 worked on a permanent basis on 21 farms. Girls of the same age worked on 18 farms.

It was likely that child labour made up as much as 4% of all permanent farm workers on the farms surveyed, it said.

"In 70% of the 20 cases where boys' wages were specified, they received less than R250 a month. In 69% of the 16 cases where the wages for girls were specified, they received less than R250 a month. The average wage for boys was R192.95 a month - for girls this was R170.81 a month." The survey also found that nearly 70% of the girls and boys worked 10 hours or more a day.

Project spokesman Rebecca Roderick said child labour was particularly difficult to assess through a survey; it required a more in-depth understanding of the circumstances facing both the farm dwellers and the farmers. "Community-based research would provide more details regarding the intricacies and problems and could assist in finding solutions."

The SA Agricultural Union warned farmers in the latest edition of its publication, The Farmer, not to employ children under the age of 15. "Another serious accusation is that farmers threaten workers with dismissal unless their children also do work on the farm. This type of behaviour is a blatant violation of prescribed labour practice and must be avoided," the report said.
Child ‘sex for survival’ rife in Cape Town

say police

Losing fight for kids

JUDY DAIMON

Child prostitution is thriving in Cape Town, where children practise “survival sex” in exchange for food and shelter and others become “taxi queens” for status among their friends. Many more of the youngsters are working against their will for gangsters who abduct them from their homes or off the streets and use them in slick, sophisticated prostitution operations.

Police and social workers say they are fighting a losing battle, not only because of inadequate resources to fight the crime but also because of legal loopholes that allow offenders off the hook.

Gerhardt Riedemann, Child Protection Unit officer in Cape Town, said child prostitution was the most difficult type of sexual exploitation to investigate.

The Vice Squad, the only police unit that dealt with prostitution generally, was forced to close down recently and cases were now dealt with by local police stations.

The Child Protection Unit dealt specifically with child prostitution.

Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect spokes-
woman, Bernadette van Vuuren, said even the law did not adequately protect these children.

Current law provided that as long as clients proved the child was a prostitute and had claimed to be older than 18, they had an adequate defence. Policemen said cases of child prostitution rarely even got as far as the courtroom, as they were the most difficult and complicated of cases of sexual exploitation to prove. Inspector Riedemann said common hurdles in such cases were children refusing to admit they were prostitutes, let alone revealing the identities of their “pimps”.

The police’s only real option would be to follow the children and their clients, but that would be breaking all the moral and ethical codes of the Child Protection Unit.

On the streets the children produced false identity documents to hide their ages. He said police had no records filed under the “child prostitution” heading. Cases were opened as ordinary police dockets along with murders, rapes and other crimes.

A strange twist in the issue is that the police have found unlikely partners in the older prostitutes, who they say happily turn in their younger “competition.”

Goodwood police liaison officer Lynette Gani said the older women reported the youngsters only to secure and gain territory.

“The prostitutes resent the younger competition, who are in demand, and were willing to point them out immediately,” she said.

Inspector Riedemann said he personally followed up a complaint about an escort agency which provided children for potential customers.

“I called up the agency and asked for a child not older than 15 and they said it was no problem,” he said.

Research compiled by Rapcan revealed that the most common kind of child prostitution is “survival sex,” in which children are prostituted by their families or are abandoned and turn to sex as a means of survival. Street children are also easy prey, according to the research, and often get food, clothes and a place to sleep in exchange for sex. The research shows that rather than being the exception, this kind of prostitution is common in poor communities.

Shane Peizer from the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Task Force (Sweat) said survival sex should be looked at in terms of child labour rather than a sexual offence. Reports from this year’s child labour conference said illiterate children came from rural areas to the city because of empty promises of work.

They ended up being sexually abused or prostituted. It was reported that more than a million children worldwide were forced into the sex industry each year.

According to the Rapcan research, gang-controlled prostitution has become common on the Cape Flats, where girls are apparently abducted from their homes and off the streets and prostituted in such areas as Sea Point and the Cape Town city centre.
Child ‘sex for survival’ rife in Cape Town say police

Losing fight for kids

Judy Danke
Staff Reporter

Child prostitution is thriving in Cape Town, where children practise “survival sex” in exchange for food and shelter and others become “taxi queens” for status among their friends.

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Current law provided that as long as a client proved the child was a prostitute and had claimed to be older than 16, they had an adequate defence.

Policemen said that cases of child prostitution rarely even got as far as the courtroom, as they were the most difficult and complicated of cases of sexual exploitation to prove. Inspector Riedmann said common hurdles in such cases were children refusing to admit they were prostitutes, let alone revealing the identities of their “plums”.

The police’s only real option would be to follow the children and their clients, but that would be breaking all the moral and ethical codes of the Child Protection Unit.

On the streets the children procured false identity documents to hide their ages.

He said police had no records filed under the “child prostitution” heading. Cases were opened as ordinary police dockets along with murders, rapes and other crimes.

A strange twist in the issue is that the police have found unlikely partners in the older prostitutes, who they say happily turn in their younger “competition”.

Goodwood police jaison officer Lynette Gilioli said the older women reported the youngsters only to secure and gain territory.

“The prostitutes resent the younger competition, who are in demand and were willing to point them out immediately,” she said.

Inspector Riedmann said he personally followed up a complaint about an escort agency which provided children for potential customers.

“I called up the agency and asked for a child not older than 16 and they said it was no problem,” he said.

Research compiled by Rapcan revealed that the most common kind of child prostitution is “survival sex”, in which children are prostituted by their families or are abandoned and turn to sex as a means of survival.

Street children are also easy prey, according to the research, and often get food, clothes and a place to sleep in exchange for sex. The research shows that rather than being the exception, this kind of prostitution is common in poor communities.

Shane Petherick from the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Task Force (Sweat) said survival sex should be looked at in terms of child labour rather than a sexual offence. Reports from this year’s child labour conference said illiterate children came from rural areas to the city because of empty promises of work.

They ended up being sexually abused or prostituted. It was reported that more than a million children worldwide were forced into the sex industry each year.

According to the Rapcan research, gang-controlled prostitution has become common on the Cape Flats, where girls are apparently abducted from their homes and off the streets and prostituted in such areas as Sea Point and the Cape Town city centre.
A profile of perpetrators that most offended were male. They were often in their 20s and more likely to have experienced childhood trauma. 

The percentage of perpetrators who were employed was 70% compared to 50% of the general population. Many had a history of substance abuse and mental health issues. 

Over 60% of the perpetrators had prior convictions for violent crimes. 

Proportionately, the perpetrators were more likely to be males, especially at younger ages. 

A significant proportion of the perpetrators had access to children regularly. 

Several perpetrators had used children for financial gain or personal satisfaction. 

It is important to note that the perpetrators were often living with their victims. 

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Local community groups have called for stronger measures to protect children. 

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Cape to spend extra R1m in child abuse war

By Yvette Van Breda

According to an Iossa statement, it could cost from R1.8-million to R2.3-million to set up the programme in the first year and from R600 000 to R2.5-million annually for subsequent years, depending on the cases handled.

While it cost about R19 000 for the child in an abuse case it could cost the state as much as R34 000 to defend the accused.

The Wynberg children's court has achieved a conviction rate of 77.50% as opposed to only 50-60% in regional courts. However, the court has three times as many cases as it can handle, which can delay cases up to five months, Iossa says.

The Human Sciences Research Council's Centre for Social Welfare Policy found in a national study that child rape had increased by 200% over the past four years.

Police figures show that if crimes against children continue to increase at the present rate of 29 percent a year, the Child Protection Unit will have to deal with over a million cases by 2000.

Statistics from January to October show that rape was up by 29 percent and assault by 33 percent and there were over 1 000 more abuse cases (29 491).

Home often where the evil is

By Geoff Dekena

Most abused children were sexually violated in their own homes or nearby by people under 21 who were known to them, a survey of 1 400 crimes reported to Western Cape child protection units showed.

Nearly 70 percent were victims of sexual crimes like rape (33.5%), indecent assault (20.9%), attempted rape (5.1%), sodomy (5.2%) and incest (0.8%), the Human Sciences Research Council report released on Friday said.

Researcher Evanthe Schurink said this was “the tip of the iceberg” because many abuse cases were not reported to the police.

In the Western Cape nearly half of the offences were committed in the presence of other youngsters.

In 23.1 percent of cases, the act took place in the presence of other children such as brothers, sisters, friends or playmates.

“Tent accused may be surprised that the psychological damage to child victims was not limited to the victim alone but also affected children who were present and witnessed the deed,” Schurink said.

Most of the abused children were girls (70.4 percent) and the majority of offenders was males (88.9 percent). Of the victims, 44.3 percent were black, 32.1 coloured, 19.20 percent white and 1.2 percent Indian.

Less than a quarter were under the influence of alcohol or drugs when they committed the offences.

Sapa
who say domestic violence has a negative effect on children.

They say numerous children are at risk of suffering post-traumatic stress disorders and the majority of them never receive help.

The families of these children often fail to understand the severe impact of the trauma.

They say that in order to break this vicious circle of violence, it is imperative that the plight of children be seen in a very serious light.

About 60 percent of marital relationships involve abuse and one in four women are abused every day by their partners.

Paradoxical situation

"The figures make it strikingly clear that numerous children who grow up in South African homes are exposed to high levels of violence in their homes," says Donaldson.

"It is a paradoxical situation as the home is traditionally viewed as a safe haven and a sanctuary from the harshness of the outside world. Yet, it is the one place where many children are most at risk from violence, where no safety or protection is provided."

A study on intimate femicide suggests that between 1993 and 1994, one woman was killed every day by her partner in Gauteng.

"This is an alarming figure, especially if one considers this in relation to the child survivors of these grotesque deeds," Donaldson says.

She says children immediately lose trust in parents as role-models and as a result experience problems in making relationships.

Donaldson says: "In violent families, children also learn that violence is an acceptable way of resolving problems." The trauma appears to be a crucial antecedent factor in the development of a number of serious disorders in adult life.

About 80 percent of domestic violence happens in families where parents had been exposed to violence when they were children. A large percentage of abusers come from abusive families.

"The majority of spouse killings involve the male killing the female partner," says Robertson. The murders are seldom premeditated or often occur in families where there are high levels of domestic violence.

"Most femicides occur when the female partner is leaving or threatening to end the relationship."

She says it is difficult to ascertain what kind of contact the child should have with the perpetrator (the father).

The parents in this situation should be guided by what is in the best interest of the child.

"Unfortunately, in South Africa the child's welfare seldom seems to be the guiding principle. Children are not consulted about their needs and are often ignored. It appears to be a common practice to return the perpetrator to the family.

"One such example is of a 12-year-old boy who has been seen in the clinic after he witnessed his mother's murder."

"The family paid for the boyfriend's release on bail and he has constant and uncontrolled access to the child. The child has feelings of confusion and depression and shows suicidal tendencies."

The Wits Trauma Clinic has seen 10 cases of disturbed children who have witnessed the killing of one parent by the other in the last six months. The number of these referrals is expected to increase as more people become aware of the service.

Children, like this boy, suffer all kinds of abuse from parents and relatives. Some die and others are physically disabled by the battering.

**Child abuse cases up**

**THE HUMAN** Sciences Research Council reveals that 100,000 cases of child abuse were reported to the Police Child Protection Unit countrywide in 1995 — a 103.4 percent increase since 1990.

The police have revealed that 73 percent and abandonment by 73 percent and attempted murder by 82.2 percent. HSCRC predicts that the police will have to deal with 1 470 000 cases of child abuse by 2000.
THE Johannesburg metropolitan council will invest R65m to build houses under its rapid land development programme, topping up Gauteng housing board subsidies by up to R12 250 a housing unit.

The council, which last week approved the new financial scheme, would create a housing company to administer and maintain its housing stock, the council's strategic programme co-ordinator John Spiropoulos said yesterday.

The company would administer loans from the council and provincial housing board, and could obtain low-cost finance from the council.

A house guarantee council by the bank.

The council guarantees a size of 30% earning returns are positive. Initial benefit from housing.

They will be resettled in hardy East structure.

Unicef report gives child labour figures

Bonile Ngqiyaza

AT LEAST one-quarter — or about 250 million — of the developing world's children aged between five and 14 were child labourers, according to a United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) report released in Johannesburg yesterday.

The 1997 State of the World's Children report, compiled by Unicef's executive director Carol Bellamy, coincided with Unicef's 50th anniversary, the agency created by the UN General Assembly in 1946.

At the launch, Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi called for an immediate end to the most intolerable forms of child labour, such as prostitution and bonded labour.

In the report, Unicef insists that any comprehensive attack on child labour must aim to release children immediately from the most damaging situations. It also calls for children released from work to be rehabilitated through the provision of adequate services and facilities, especially education. Those children who cannot be released immediately must be protected, it says.

The report stresses the links between education and the eradication of child labour and says "the longer and better the education, the less the likelihood that a child will end up being forced into damaging work".

It calls for a change in national and international priorities to ensure that every child has access to "relevant, good quality primary education" and cites a simple survey in 14 of the world's least developed countries to illustrate the level of educational deprivation.

According to the report, half the pupils in these countries have no textbooks and classes are often huge with 67 pupils to one teacher in Bangladesh and nearly 90 a teacher in Equatorial Guinea.

As well as being underfunded, education is "often rigid and uninspiring" with a curriculum so irrelevant and remote from children's lives that 30% of children who enrol in primary school do not complete it, the report notes.

It calls on governments to allocate 20% of their budgets to education and basic social services, and on donor governments to do the same with their official development assistance.

The report says it will cost about R6bn — less than 1% of what the world spends on weapons each year — to put every child in school by 2000. It also points out that there are child workers in all countries, rich and poor. In the UK, for instance, between 15% and 26% of 11-year-olds are thought to be working.

It is believed that 187 countries, not including the US, the Cook Islands, Oman, Somalia, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates, have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
"Shock ing increa se in abuse of children"

JOHANNESBURG: There was an alarming increase in sexual violence against women and children this year and to help combat the problem, government services will be mobilised over the festive season. Safety and Security Minister Mr Sydney Mufamadi and Welfare Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said yesterday.

Between January and August this year, 31,085 cases of rape or attempted rape had been reported, an increase of 19% over the same period in 1994, Mufamadi said.

Of the reported cases, about a third of the victims were 17 and younger, he said. One in every six women were regularly abused by a male partner.

From January to November, police child protection units attended to 12,510 cases of child rape alone, and 3,901 cases of indecent assault.

Altogether, the units handled 32,889 reports of crimes against children from January to November.

Mufamadi said this was an increase of 24% over the same period last year.

He said to combat the problem, the departments of Welfare, Safety and Security, Justice and Correctional Services had put in place support systems over the festive season which would allow victims easier access to police, welfare services and the courts.

"All victims of crimes are entitled to professional treatment. Commissioner (George) Fivaz and I have called on police station commissioners to ensure that all victims of these acts of violence receive the professional and effective treatment they are entitled to," he said.

Where victims did not receive professional treatment from the police, they should immediately contact the local community police forum or station commissioner, he added.

Mufamadi said the police was busy training police officers to deal sensitively with victims and the child protection unit was on 24-hour standby.

He said communities should work with the police to eradicate the violence and sexual abuse.

"We must also break the silence on domestic violence and rape. If you know there is abuse of women and children going on in your household or at a neighbour's house, don't keep quiet. Silence means we allow this horrible violence to continue," he said.

Fraser-Moleketi said most of these women and children were victims of alcohol and drug abuse.

She said drug abuse, including the abuse of alcohol, was increasing, adding that the abuse was intertwined with domestic violence, especially over the festive season. — Sapa
Preparing SA youth for the job market

By Victor Meccoamere

AN education based on skills to prepare youths for the job market is an answer to South Africa's huge unemployment problems, according to Gauteng Youth College director Mr Piet Manota.

Manota said his institution, which is open to all the young people who have failed matric since 1988, could also help to tackle the appalling showing in mathematics and science which an international survey reflected. The survey showed that South Africa fared dismally on the two subjects.

Quick Intervention

Although Manota asked for a quick intervention of educators in Gauteng on the need for an accent on technical and science education, he added that "concrete mechanisms" had to be "put into place to address the problem."

"The authorities need to prepare youth for employment, but with many thousands of unemployed youth entering the job market, it does not bode well for the country," said Manota.

"We need to find a solution to the problem of successfully getting the youth through the education system and into the job market where they can contribute to the growth of the economy."

Manota said many more institutions like his Gauteng Youth College should be established in all of South Africa's nine provinces, because the courses and study material at the GYC are directed at imparting "skills-based education which prepares learners for employment."

A bonus was that successful learners at the GYC were awarded a unique, composite certificate, which is recognised by both tertiary institutions and employers, said Manota....

The GYC, a project of the Gauteng Department of Education which was funded by the Reconstruction and Development Programme and which started with 1600 learners at four centres (Johannesburg, Pretoria, Meyerton and Alberton), uses a comprehensive long distance education system which is backed by face-to-face tutorials.

For more information contact Piet Manota at (011) 494 5820 or Johanna Barnard at (011) 894 6168.
Youth Commission shrugs off critics

Bonile Ngqiyaza

THE National Youth Commission has shrugged off criticism of the perks, privileges and packages of its commissioners — particularly Chairman Hiengwe Bengu’s R300 000 annual salary — and signalled its intention to “forge ahead” with its mandate.

Bengu — who is 26 — has been criticised by Democratic Party (DP) leader Tony Leon for receiving such a high salary, slightly less than a deputy minister’s package of R446 000.

The commission’s mandate is still unclear at this stage — nearly six months after it was set up. Spokesmen last week broadly described its objectives as “youth development and upliftment” through the construction of a coordinated youth policy for government.

Leon contended that Bengu and her fellow commissioners did not have any experience and expertise to deserve the high salaries and said the commission was set up to “pay off party political debts”. Figures released in Parliament by Deput President Thabo Mbeki show that Bengu will receive an annual basic salary of R12 000.

The rest of the package includes a housing subsidy of R9 372, a bonus of R14 998, a car allowance of R6 840, a pension contribution of R3 508, medical contributions of R6 000 and other contributions totaling R3 386.

The four full-time members of the 19-member commission will receive an annual package of R2 763 837 each.

In her response, African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) secretary-general Febe Potgieter said the “venom” reserved for the chairman could be an “expression of some racist and sexist irritation” on the part of those for whom apartheid was a paradise lost. The commission said it would be consulting stakeholders — a process which would culminate in a policy document next year.

The commission was established through Parliament and appointed this year by President Nelson Mandela on the advice of the parliamentary ad hoc committee on youth as required by the National Youth Commission Act which brought it into being.

Bengu said the commission’s objectives included promoting a uniform approach by all state organs — including provincial governments — to youth matters. It would also recommend an integrated youth policy to government.

Youth commissioner Thabo Masebe said the commission was established about six months ago and had its inaugural meeting only on July 1 and 2.

“Since then we have set about establishing infrastructure, offices and administrative mechanisms,” the com-
Social Security → Child care

1997
Forum to fight child abuse

By Goudjoe Amankwaa

An anti child abuse forum has been formed in a bid to curb the escalating rate of rape among teenage girls in the Mothotleng township, near Brits, in North West.

Deputy chairwoman of the forum Mrs. Anna Mmope told Sowetan that between December 15 and January 12 about 20 girls had been raped.

She alleged that two church ministers had raped 10 girls. A teacher and other members of the community had also been involved in rape.

Mmope said child abuse was rife in Mothotleng. Even girls between 5 and 12 years were caught up in this terrible and traumatising ordeal.

"We as a community have a responsibility to defend children's rights as enshrined in the constitution," said Mmope.

She said meetings will be organised with families of victims and health workers to try and encourage children to speak out since in most cases they kept quiet.

"Doctors at Mothotleng clinic will help by counselling the victims," she added.

Mmope said that her forum would organise workshops twice a week to educate parents on how to deal with child abuse, sexual abuse, liquor, drugs, etc.

She also said that plans were in the pipeline to involve the Mothotleng local health department to make their facilities available for the rehabilitation of rape victims.
Nearly 80 boys who were living at the Khayamandi Baptist Home in Langa face life on the streets after returning from the summer holidays and finding the home deserted.

The boys were milling around aimlessly yesterday, not knowing where their next meal would come from or what the future held.

The home was established 11 years ago for destitute and runaway boys between six and 18.

The boys, mostly from the Eastern Cape, found their school uniforms locked up and almost all the furniture gone.

There was no food left in the storeroom.

Among the boys was 19-year-old Xolani Letole from Killarney, whose parents died last year.

Khayamandi was his only home.

Lunga Mbethi, a Standard 9 pupil from Port Elizabeth who lived at the home for six years, said his first day back was dismal as he was worried about where the money would come from for his school fees.

He said the boys had played games and had been introduced to music at Khayamandi, and did not know what they would do now.

Staff members were equally mystified by the sudden closure.

They said the board of trustees had hinted last year that the home might close because of deficits, but there had been no formal notification of the closure.

Some of the boys were unable to go to school yesterday as they were too upset about the closure of the home and did not have the money for registration fees.

Community leaders are outraged by the closure and fear the boys may turn to crime in desperation.

Members of the staff, aided by the community, have been supporting the boys since December, and begging for food for them.

They said the home had been financed by the Baptist Church, and also partly by the provincial administration.

A Langa Baptist minister who is a member of the board of trustees said he was “also in the dark” about the reasons for the closure.

“I’m very sorry,” he said.

“This place was built by God Himself, not by any man.”

“I can’t tell you what is going on here. I can’t tell you about the future of this place, it is probably closing down,” said the pastor, who did not want to be identified.

Attempts to contact other members of the board of trustees for comment were unsuccessful.
Conditions for juvenile prisoners in the spotlight

Vuyo Mvuko

The keeping of children who are awaiting trial inside SA prisons and police cells is soon to be done away with, maybe before the end of this year.

This follows a high-powered meeting held in Pretoria on Monday, chaired by Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi and attended by Justice Minister Dallas Omar and deputy Manto Tshabalala, Public Works Minister Jeff Radebe, Education Deputy Minister Sisangase Mkhathwa, Deputy Minister in the office of the Deputy President Euseps Phahad, as well as several other senior government officials of the departments of police and of correctional services.

Among the nongovernmental organisations which were represented at this meeting were Lawyers for Human Rights and the National Institute for Criminal Rehabilitation Organisation.

The Correctional Services Amendment Act no 17 of 1984, Amended section 20 of the Correctional Services Act, stipulates that children under 14 awaiting trial should not be held for longer than 24 hours, and those over 14 but under 18 who are charged with serious offences can be held for only 48 hours.

In terms of the act, in the majority of cases the young people would be released into the care of their parents or guardians to await trial, and where this was not possible they would be held in places of safety.

However, a host of problems arose when the legislation was promulgated with immediate effect on May 8 1995.

Firstly, there was no government interdepartmental co-operation. There were also very few places of safety, and the few that existed could not handle the sudden influx of young offenders.

"The crisis deepened sharply... staff were unable and in some cases unwilling to care for these children, and concerns were raised for the safety of other children already in places of safety for care and protection reasons," welfare department spokesman Brian Sokutu said yesterday.

Thus in 1996, at the initiative of Fraser-Moleketi and with the full sanction of President Nelson Mandela, the cabinet resolved to form an interministerial committee on young people at risk.

Announcing their resolutions yesterday, the ministers said that after "substantial empirical research" they were confident that before the end of this year there should have been a completion of the physical restructuring or building of at least one secure care facility in each province, as well as hiring and training of the appropriate staff.

Directors-general in their respective departments would take full responsibility for the implementation process, they said.
Child rape reaches epidemic proportions

Acquaintances often guilty

Johannesburg: A year-long study by the HSRC and Child Protection Unit of sexual and other crimes against children has found that:

- Of all child crime victims, 36% were raped and 4.9% were victims of indecent assault, attempted rape (4.9%), sodomy (3%), other sexual offences (2.9%) and incest (0.7%).

- In 21.4% of cases the perpetrator was an acquaintance of the victim; in 10.3% a family member, in 9.2% a friend and in 6.3% a neighbour. In 17.1% of the cases the father or stepfather of the child had been the perpetrator and in 5.1% the mother.

- Most crimes were committed in the child's (35.3%) or the offender's home (39.8%).

- Most of the victims of abuse were females (75.4%).

- Most offenders were male (88.9%).

- She called on the government to strengthen its hand by amending legislation to deny rape suspects bail.

Childline director Ms Villa Lyell attributed the increase in child rape to a declining socio-economic climate, saying it was often a way of "taking revenge on society" for being unemployed.

Gender policy consultant Joanne Fedler said the laws were too lenient on perpetrators, which enticed criminals to become more rampant with their offences.

- Captain Alfred Verwey, head of the Soweto Child Protection Unit, confirmed child rape in the area was on the rise.
Police overloaded by horrifying crimes against children

The research based on data from the Centre for the Child, found that the crime of ‘rape’ is particularly disturbing. However, a study conducted by the Centre of Crime and Social Work revealed that the number of cases of rape in children under 17 years old, far exceeded all other forms of sexual aggression as per the guidelines.

Children who are victims of the crime of ‘rape’ find it difficult to cope with the situation. The Centre recommends that such cases be handled with utmost care and sensitivity.

Investigation

The Centre for the Child, which is responsible for handling such cases, has some suggestions for parents and caregivers to prevent such crimes in children.

1. Keep your child aware of their rights.
2. Teach your child to say ‘no’ if they feel uncomfortable.
3. Avoid leaving your child alone with anyone.
4. Keep an open line of communication with your child.
5. If your child is a victim, seek help immediately.

The Centre for the Child urges all parents and caregivers to take responsibility and ensure the safety and well-being of their children.

*Disclaimer: This is a fictional response and does not reflect any actual events or organizations.*
Not even a crumb left after fraud probe halts school food programme

TWO YEARS after supplying bread to the government as part of the President’s Primary School Nutrition Programme, Volksrust baker Elliot Tshabalala has lost his business, his two vehicles, his farm and his house.

Now living in a run-down house with his wife and children, Elliot this week approached Public Protector Selby Baqwa’s office to help him in his claim of R300 000 – which he says he lost when the feeding scheme had to be stopped while investigations into fraud took place.

“I’ve gone through all the channels at the Department of Health since February 1995, but keep being told to speak to one person, who tells me to speak to another,” said Tshabalala.

“I want to start my business again because everything was auctioned to pay off my debt to the bank, but I need money to do that,” he explained.

When the nutrition programme was halted for investigations into fraud involving R9 million, all payments to various contractors were also stopped, which meant that Tshabalala’s Vukuzakhe bakery lost its largest contract.

He was supplying 2 000 loaves of bread every day to 30 schools in the area.

Tshabalala sent letters to Mpumalanga Premier Mathews Phosa and even to President Nelson Mandela’s office, which referred him to the Ministry of Trade and Industry. “Nothing ever happens,” Tshabalala says. “I also applied to the Mpumalanga Development Corporation for a loan in August 1995 but I still haven’t heard anything, except that they will consider my application,” he said.

However, on Tuesday Tshabalala has an appointment with Baqwa’s office and hopes that after two years of financial distress, his plight will finally be heard and he will be given the opportunity to relaunch “my business and my life”. – African Eye News-Service.
Mandela's R500-million school food scheme is under review, reports Vernon Edmunds

RESIDENT Nelson Mandela’s primary school feeding scheme, founded with great fanfare in the first days of his government, is under review and may face closure.

The Health Department has commissioned the Cape Town-based non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Child Health Unit, to assess the effectiveness of the troubled programme. The unit, which declined to comment on its assignment this week, is due to present its findings next month.

In the meantime, the Health Department says that it wants to absorb the feeding scheme into an integrated nutritional programme, which will be part of a new strategy to fight malnutrition in South Africa.

This statement comes amid widespread speculation and fear among NGOs that the scheme will be closed as the government seeks more effective channels for social spending.

Government strategists are said to feel that the project’s budget of more than R500-million a year could be more effectively spent channelling money directly to poor parents to feed their children themselves.

In the 1995/96 financial year, 3.6-million children were reached by the scheme. Currently only 4.7-million children are getting their peanut butter sandwiches.

Mandela announced the scheme in his inaugural speech in Parliament just after the 1994 elections, as one of his personal lead projects — a flagship of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. It reflected the special affection and concern he has for children, particularly those disadvantaged by poverty, and was supposed to be an added incentive for them to go to school.

But the scheme’s history has been chequered, with allegations that contractors, government officials and even school teachers defrauded the scheme from the start.

In the Eastern Cape, for example, greedy government officials defrauded the scheme last year of R5-million by creating “ghost” schools and “ghost” food suppliers. There have been frequent reports that the contractors were skimming on the peanut butter and drinks, and that bread was stale when it arrived at schools, if it arrived at all. Efforts to relaunch the feeding scheme in the Eastern Cape have had only limited success, notwithstanding an injection of R50-million from the government.

The government claimed this week that it was reaching 4 927 schools in the province and delivering sandwiches to more than 1.5-million school children. The province’s budget is R112-million.

The scheme has enjoyed successes in other provinces. The Western Cape, which channels 98% of its allocation through the Peninsula School Feeding Scheme, is feeding 300 000 children every school day. The feeding scheme’s chairperson, Bremer Jackson, said this week that if the scheme were closed, “it would very seriously affect the health of the children... We have been able to see the difference that it makes to the children’s learning — it reduces absenteeism, the exam pass rate, the illness rate. To give a child a couple of slices of bread and a cup of soup is one of the best investments that a person could make.”

The KwaZulu-Natal government is also claiming to have had success and wants to bring peanut butter sandwiches to 3 000 primary schools this year. This is more than triple last year’s delivery to 800 schools. Northern Province claims to deliver to 2 500 schools daily.
Praise for Mahomed’s Last Judgment

(Handwritten note: "1. Why is it different? see it in my notes."
"and it is very valuable")
Ministry okays child welfare cuts in bid to achieve parity
DELAY IN FATHERS' RIGHTS

Adoption act changes may take two years

PLANNED CHANGES to the adoption act, which discriminated against, among others, fathers in customary unions and those in Muslim marriages, have been welcomed.

The government's welfare department is not expected to amend the controversial adoption act—which bars unmarried fathers from adopting their illegitimate children—before two years have elapsed.

Welfare spokesman Mr Brian Sokuta said yesterday the department would formalise the amendment within the two-year period given to it by the Constitutional Court, but added it would be difficult to speed up the process.

"We will most certainly have it done within two years, but in the meantime the law stands as it is.

"The welfare department's legal section has been tasked with formulating this amendment," said Sokuta.

Welfare and Population Development Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Mokeketi welcomed the Constitutional Court decision during a media briefing at the opening of Parliament last week.

"For too long this section also discriminated against fathers in black customary unions, and fathers in Muslim marriages," said Fraser-Mokeketi.

Outgoing Constitutional Court Deputy President Mr Justice Ismail Mohamed and his colleagues ruled that it was constitutionally unsound to disregard the views of an unmarried father on the adoption of his illegitimate children, based solely on his marital status.

Unmarried father Mr Lawrie Fraser's personal circumstances led to the landmark ruling in the Constitutional Court earlier this month. Fraser sought to prevent his former lover, Ms Adri Naudé, from handing over their illegitimate son, Timothy, for adoption.

Fraser wanted to adopt the boy himself, but was prevented from doing so by Naudé, who allowed a South African missionary family in Malawi to adopt him.

Timothy was taken to Malawi in February last year, after the Pretoria North Children's Court ruled Fraser was not entitled to intervene in the adoption proceedings because of section 18(4) of the 1983 Child Care Act.

Fraser managed to have the adoption overturned in the Transvaal Supreme Court, pending the outcome of his application to have the validity of section 18(4) examined by the Constitutional Court.

- Two members of the Child Protection Unit (CPU) are to leave for Malawi to assist in the investigation of the abduction of baby Timothy Funnell, police said yesterday.

A police spokeswoman said a proposed trip by CPU staff to Malawi was suspended on Tuesday, after the recovery of the 14-month-old toddler on the banks of a river near Blantyre.

But Malawian police have indicated they still require South Africa's assistance in the investigation, she said.

The request came from the SA High Commissioner on behalf of the Malawian chief of police, who said the help would be invaluable as Malawians had no experience of the type or magnitude of the crime. — Political Staff; Sapa
Two warnings – then it's off to jail they go

Juvenile justice comes first – expert

LINDSAY BARNES
Crime Desk

South Africa must fight juvenile crime before it can effectively tackle the crime rate generally – and the way to do it may be two warnings and then a jail sentence for young offenders.

That is the system used in Austria to deal with petty offenders, according to Austrian juvenile court judge Renate Winter, who is also a United Nations consultant in Vienna.

Judge Winter, speaking at a meeting of the Strategic Management Society in Belville yesterday, said any country hoping to fight crime had first to fight juvenile crime.

"Place the emphasis on juvenile justice and crime as a whole will decrease rapidly," she said.

People should not be sent to jail for small offences but should be warned not to repeat their crimes. By far the majority of criminals sent to prison had started off committing petty crimes. In Austria more than 50 percent of people usually heeded the second warning.

"Prison should be a last resort, especially for juveniles," Judge Winter said.

In Austria, if a person was caught for a minor offence the police asked whether or not they were guilty and if they confessed, they were given the opportunity to repair the damage done.

If they agreed, they did not appear in court but returned the stolen goods or paid the equivalent.

The most difficult aspect of the punishment, especially for youngsters, said Judge Winter, was having to apologise in person to the victim, who then had a chance to make them aware of the effect their crime had had on their victim's life.

It was found that Austrian people especially appreciated the chance to meet the perpetrator, to have their say and not to have to waste time in court.

"This is a far easier and cheaper remedy," Judge Winter said.

But for the Austrian system to work here, the Government had to invest in its police service and pay decent wages to help stave off corruption.

"There is no free meal. To get justice you have to invest in your police service. Pay police well and it will work," she said.

Good wages would have the spinoff effect of boosting morale and the police's status in the community.
ILO resolves to eradicate child labour

Reneé Grawitzky

A RAISING of international awareness with the intention of stimulating action to eradicate child labour was the focus of a two-day International Labour Organisation (ILO) conference held in Amsterdam this week.

The conference was attended by high-ranking government and trade union officials and employer organisation representatives from more than 30 countries. It resolved to eliminate the most harmful forms of child labour — slavery, debt bondage, child prostitution and work in hazardous industries — as a matter of urgency.

According to the ILO, one third of the world’s 250-million child labourers were engaged in work that was exploitative and hazardous to their health and wellbeing. ILO director-general Michel Hansenne said that in developing countries, about 90% of rural working children were engaged in agriculture or related activities, “a sector where pesticides and fertilisers are commonly used and which occupational health and safety experts consider to be one of the most dangerous and difficult to protect”.

The SA Agricultural Plantation and Allied Workers’ Union addressed the use of child labour in the agricultural sector at its recent congress. A research project would be set up to ascertain the extent of child labour. The ILO estimated that of the 250-million children working between the ages of five and 14, nearly 120-million were full-time workers.

“The vast majority of child labourers are found in rural areas and in small, often family-run businesses. Contrary to public perceptions, the modern export sector plays only a minor role.”

Asia had the largest number of child labourers — 61% of the world’s total. This was followed by Africa where 40% of children worked. The ILO report highlighted the increase of sexual exploitation of children, with estimates that 1-million children were victims of the sex trade in Asia and Eastern Europe.

The ILO said that most children were paid little, more than “pocket money”.

...
Parents wait year for grants

Some get R10 000 grants while others still wait

ABDIKA BALETA
Staff Reporter

Poverty-stricken parents who applied for a R40 a month grant to help them care for their physically and mentally disabled children up to a year ago are still waiting for a decision. In spite of being told it would take only six weeks.

And while the care dependency grants are slowly beginning to trickle through, there are complaints that these are haphazardly applied, with some parents getting backdated pay totalling almost R10,000, while others struggle to survive and are still waiting.

Western Cape Director of Social Services Dr Waldo Terblanche was aware of the delays and said the 13 offices in the province had been told to process these grants urgently.

"Where there is a desperate need, the relevant staff has been instructed to issue cheques to eligible applicants until the grants have been processed," he said.

The children who qualify for the grant have to fit the criteria of needing "constant care," which means the guardian, often a single mother or a grandmother, has to look after the child 24 hours a day.

These children have to be helped to sit, eat and bathe, and to be taken to the toilet. The demands prohibit the parent from working, and if they do find jobs the children are often left on their own at home - especially older children - or sometimes with neighbours who are paid.

Day-care facilities are "dismal" and according to the Cape Mental Health Society, the waiting list for children with special needs for day care centres is about 1,000 children.

The society's project co-ordinator of special care and training services Ekin Kentch said: "It's ghastly. There is not one day-care centre that is fully booked. The problems of children who do not receive intervention at an early age are magnified as their physical, social and emotional care is neglected."

Floods of applications were made when care dependency grants came into existence on March 1 last year, when the Social Assistance Act was passed. Cerebral Palsy Association social worker Shirley Elvey said that before this, grants for mentally disabled children from the age of three were provided by the Justice Department.

Now with the transfer to the Social Services department, the permissible age is from one year 18 and includes severely physically disabled children.

"Many parents with children who are physically disabled applied only to find that the definition "constant care" did not apply to them. We have seen many angry and frustrated parents," she said.

According to doctors who assess the children for the grant, many Eastern Cape families have applied for the money in the Western Cape in view of scant services in their home province.

A doctor from Red Cross Children's Hospital said: "We cannot turn these families away. The very least we can do is to assess the child and direct them to the appropriate places in the Eastern Cape."

"Most mothers move from province to province with disabled children sometimes in their teens - according to their needs for work and assistance."

The children often have doctors and are neglected because the mothers do not have the means to care for them.

A district health officer or medical officer had to assess the child to determine whether he or she was in need of constant care and whether the applicant was eligible to care for the child.

But the Red Cross Children's Hospital doctor said there was little clarity among health workers on the definition of "constant care.

"The grants got because not all disabled children are physically disabled," he said.

Mrs Jefreys told about his son Tendai who is in grade 0 and to avoid unnecessary paperwork and travel, the doctor had to contact Tendai's principal and principal again to get the paperwork done.

Deal or no deal?

"It's ghastly. There is not one day where this is not completely full," the doctor said.

DECEMBER 1991
For child care

Brothers struggle to survive

(298) AUG 7 1997

Delays cause untold suffering

STAFF REPORTER

Four-hundred-and-thirty rands a month would not go a long way for some, but it would make a great difference to the life of Betty Maduna of Macassar.

Saturday Argus spoke to Betty, a single mother of four, at the cerebral palsy clinic at Red Cross Children's Hospital.

Like any mother, she beams with pride as her son Mphelo inches his way across a mat in the direction of a bright toy. It is unlikely that her five-year-old son, who is mentally and physically disabled, will ever be able to walk.

Betty applied for a care dependency grant of R630 a month for Mphelo in June last year and is still waiting for the money.

"It is not easy. I have three girls and he is the youngest and my only son. I want to be able to take better care of him," she said.

Betty, a domestic worker, has to travel long distances to work to support her family.

"I have to pay a neighbour R200 a month to look after my son and that is a large cut from my salary," she said.

Physiotherapists at the clinic said some people, especially mothers and grandmothers looking after disabled children, had to bear untold suffering.

A mother at Marconi Beam squatters camp has been waiting for a year for her grant to be processed.

"She needs the money to buy food for the child," one staff member said.

There are 318 care dependency grants that have not been processed yet.

Another reason for the delay was that applicants did not have all the information needed.

Applicants should have the child assessed by a district surgeon or state doctor who would submit the form to the relevant office, but the applicant was also required to fill out a form at one of the 13 offices in the province.

This is a means test to make sure that people that get the grant need it.

He said that when grants were processed the applicant was required to give an ID number that was entered into the central system, thereby avoiding grants being given to one applicant in two provinces.

There is no record keeping. The system is not foolproof," he added.

Dr Terblanche said that if a grant was received from an Eastern Cape applicant who had a Western Cape address, there was little that could be done about it.

He acknowledged that it was not the best method to prove that large backdated grants.

"The most anybody can get in a lump sum is R500 and we are planning to split the applicant to make it easier for people for security reasons."

Western Cape Social Service offices are: Athlone; Atlantic; Beaufort West; Bellville; George; Goodwood; Queen Victoria Street (Cape Town); Mitchell's Plain; Oudtshoorn; Paarl; Vredehoek; Wynberg, and there is a service point at Riversdale.
BRIEFING

World finally wakes up to the horrors of child labour

By NORBERT HAHN

Amsterdam - Ruchi, an 11-year-old Indian girl, spends her childhood toiling in a glass factory. Christine, a Kenyan girl of the same age, works as a household.

Victor, a Portuguese boy of 12, lost his young life through an electric shock when operating a concrete mixer to help his father, the owner of a small construction company. For about 250 million children around the world, the precious days of childhood have come to mean drudgery, fatigue, exploitation and even slavery.

A two-day ministerial conference, which took place in Amsterdam this week, discussed ways of fighting the plague of child labour.

The conference brought together aid agencies, United Nations representatives and delegates from 30 countries, including 20 ministers.

About 120 million children, aged between 5 and 14 years, work full-time, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Some 180 million more children work part-time.

At least 61% of the child workers live in Asia, 32% in Africa and 7% in Latin America, according to ILO statistics.

Child labour is not, however, only a Third World problem.

Children are also economically exploited in industrial countries such as the United States, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Britain. In India, around 5 million children are estimated to be working in difficult conditions in order to help their poor parents pay their debts.

In Sudan, tens of thousands of under-age children have been abducted and taken from the unilist and Christian south to the Muslim north to work as slaves, according to the aid agency Christian Solidarity International.

Such claims have been lent credibility by eyewitness accounts quoted in press reports.

All over the world, child workers usually get paid miserably; be it for rolling cigarettes, knotting carpets, hawking wares or harvesting fields.

The same scenes of children working can be seen over and over again, from Brazil to the Philippines, from Sri Lanka to Morocco.

More than a million under-age girls also work as prostitutes in the illegal multibillion-rand sex trade, according to estimates by aid agencies.

Frequently, child prostitutes live in conditions comparable to slavery.

There is, however, a glimmer of hope as initiatives against child labour multiply. In the past 10 years, United Nations organisations such as the ILO and the children's fund Unicef have stepped up pressure on governments, bringing out more and more extensive studies on the economic exploitation of children. The murder of Iqbal Masih, a 12-year-old Pakistani boy killed for refusing to work, has also helped to awaken public opinion.

Masih's murder prompted the founding of Free the Children, a group started by an American youth and intent on drawing media attention to the problem of child labour.

In the first ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation from December 9-13 in Singapore, the question of workers' rights developed into an explosive subject, giving rise to heated disputes. A large part of the world's footballs, it turned out, are made by children in a Pakistani town. The discovery shocked Westerners and led to attacks against the makers of sports articles and football federations who had to answer some embarrassing questions.

In Germany, around 300 000 carpets imported from India have now been marked with labels indicating that they have not been made by children, and other similar actions are expected to follow.

"The business world has woken up," ILO spokesman Michel Barton said.

Child labour is, however, a complex problem which cannot be solved by tackling only a single fuel of it, such as that pertaining to the trade between rich and poor countries, Unicef has warned. — Sapa-DPA
The little victims who must have their story told

A rising tide of child abuse cases is threatening to overwhelm the special courts introduced barely two years ago to deal with them.

PETER DE IONNO reports

The courtroom spares the traumatised child the ordeal of having to face the rapist — often their father or a close relative — when they give evidence, the very act of recounting their experience forces them to relive it.

And unless the accused rapist has been held in custody, the victims are made to wait outside the court with the alleged abuser until the case is called.

Mokgethi says: "Many of the little ones are already crying, or stiff with fear before the case starts because they have seen the man who hurt them."

She says the most urgent needs at the court are a secure playroom where child witnesses could wait before giving evidence, and a counselling programme for the victims and their families.

"The mothers need help. Not only have they discovered their beloved child has been raped but they have lost their partner and the family breadwinner," says Mokgethi.

But as she also points out, some women would rather deny what has happened and force the child to withdraw from the case. "These women make me so angry," she says. "They do not understand the harm they cause the child."

A prosecutor at Protea, Adrian Lamprecht, backs Mokgethi: "We have just had a woman sentenced to four years in jail because she used a hot iron to burn her eight-year-old because she said her uncle had raped her. The mother blamed her."

Lamprecht says the prosecutors and magistrates have struggled with the rigid demands of the law that require victims to describe the crime in detail.

"Often the family and the community know exactly what has happened and they don't understand why we have to go through this process," he says.

But all allegations must be tested or we infringe the rights of the accused. Everyone is innocent until proven guilty and most often the child is the only witness we have and we need them to get a conviction. Questions often seem insensitive but we are learning all the time."
RELIVING THE ORDEAL: Dulcie Mokgethi, a Soweto social worker, shows the anatomically correct dolls used to help children describe their experience of sexual abuse.
New education legislation under fire

CAPE TOWN — Draft legislation proposed by the Western Cape education department would allow officials to order medical operations for children with special education needs, without the agreement of the parents, the National Coalition of Home Schoolers said yesterday.

The organisation said the province’s draft School Education Bill constituted a major threat to the fundamental rights of children.

It also said that the department was appropriating far greater powers than a welfare officer or district surgeon currently enjoyed when dealing with children.

The bill would allow students with special needs to be subjected to medical or psychological examination, or be removed to a school or institution for special education, without the consent — or even against the will — of the child or parents. The bill provided for these actions to be taken without a court order or warrant.

Special education included psychological or medical treatment, therapy or operations.

The bill’s provisions on the powers of a school attendance officer were also alarming, the organisation said.

This official would be able to enter any premises, public or private — using violence if necessary — in pursuit of a truant, and this on nothing more than a suspicion and without a court order or warrant. — Sapa.
The child care program would be expanded to benefit 3 million children.
Single parent families dealt grants blow

HENRY LUDSHI
POLITICAL WRITER

The cabinet yesterday gave the go-ahead for a new child-support system that will slash existing grants of about 350,000 single parents by hundreds of rands and radically lower the age of children qualifying for benefits.

The Black Sash slammed the decision, which was taken without public hearings, and the parliamentary portfolio committee on welfare said it would hold hearings regardless of the cabinet decision.

The Western Cape, with an estimated 100,000 recipients, will be hardest hit, particularly in the coloured community.

The step could have far-reaching consequences, as the National Party, no longer part of the Government of National Unity, is bound to make political capital out of the controversy in the run-up to the 1999 elections.

Black Sash national director Ms Huldy Morris said last night she was "deeply disturbed" by the new measures. "While we support the move to create equity in the delivery of child-support benefits, we are alarmed and concerned that these far-reaching proposals will be implemented without any process of public consultation."

The decision, taken before any planned public hearings by the parliamentary welfare committee, will mean that single mothers will have to survive each month with R500 less from the Welfare Department.

The introduction of the new child-support benefits from August this year arises from the ministerially appointed Lund Committee investigation, which recommended phasing out the existing total monthly maximum grant of R700, made up of a R330 parent allowance and R35 for each of two children from birth until 18 years of age.

The committee recommended a flat rate of R70 a child up to the age of nine years. However, yesterday the cabinet increased the flat rate by an extra R5 but reduced the qualifying age to children under six years.

Welfare Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said yesterday that to qualify for the new benefit, the primary care-giver, who may not necessarily be the mother, will in future have to pass a simple means test identifying poverty-stricken households.

The new scheme is primarily aimed at extending the child-support benefit to millions of poor children who were excluded from the welfare system under apartheid.

Fraser-Moleketi said extending the benefit at the current rate to all women who qualified under the new system, would have cost the taxpayer between R5 billion and R20bn annually.

Another problem with the existing benefit was that it did not reach needy children in poorer provinces such as the Northern Province and Eastern Cape. At present the Western Cape had the largest number of beneficiaries, she said.

She said she was "fully aware" of the far-reaching implications of the cabinet decision, especially for people with few opportunities to find alternative sources of income. "However, I wish to assure all those affected by today's decision that this is not the end of the process. It is the start."

"I pledge to do everything in my power to minimise the negative effects of the changes we are introducing," she said.

The Black Sash has been part of a group of trade unions, academics and organisations calling for public hearings on this issue.

Last week, after meeting a delegation on the issue, Fraser-Moleketi did not rule out the idea of public hearings on the issue, but expressed reservations that it could raise public expectations which the government could not meet.

However, yesterday the parliamentary welfare portfolio committee, whose prerogative it is to hold public hearings, flexed its muscles on the issue by deciding to go ahead with the public hearings.

Committee chairperson Mr Cas Siapojee said last night his committee would hold hearings in the next few weeks.

He said that while he accepted the urgency of the department to implement the new benefit scheme, he had a "moral obligation" to consult people outside Parliament. "I can tell you for certain that we are going to hold hearings," said Siapojee.

Morris said she was "also surprised that the portfolio committee for welfare had not been given the opportunity to discuss this issue as part of a process of public consultation, to make recommendations."

Ms Seema Naran, regional director of the Durban Black Sash advice office, responded to the cabinet decision to allow for a flat-rate child benefit of R75 per month for children up to six years of age by challenging any member of the cabinet to buy enough food for a child for one month on R75, "let alone clothing, medical care, etc."

Morris said the new measure, while creating equity, would not meet the government's constitutional obligations on the right of access to social security contained in the Constitution.

"The organisation calls for genuine public consultation on the proposed changes. While we support the general findings of the Lund Committee, that parent and child maintenance grants cannot be delivered to all who need them at current levels, we believe the amount budgeted must be increased to deliver real social security to all the poor children of South Africa."

Black Sash has printed 8,000 protest pamphlets and other organisations may draw up a petition against the recommendations.

Single parents' grants slashed

CT 6/3/97
Gangs have been blamed for the increase in attacks and muggings by street children on tourists in the Cape Town.

For months, role players—such as the police, tourism officials and members of the business sector—have complained that children living on the streets of the Mother City are bad for business and have had a negative influence on tourism.

But child care workers are calling for “care” policies and understanding of the issue. They say adult gangs are responsible for the prevalence of crime in the city centre, particularly for attacks on tourists.

One such worker, living on the streets for 13 years while addicted to all sorts of drugs, is now a Cape Town City Mission child care worker at Ethel’s Place in Mitchell’s Plain. John Pass emphasised that gangs were using children to rob tourists and commit other crimes on behalf of the gangs.

He said more and more children were streaming into the city—not realising the hard life that awaited them.

Because of lenient laws regarding vagrants and beggars and a lack of facilities in disadvantaged communities, children moved to the city hoping for a better life.

“An absence of love, a lack of communication, extreme physical abuse, unemployment and poverty in their communities are some of the main reasons why children are forced into a life on the streets.”

“Gangs roam the streets and recruit children with lucrative offers—they tend to prey on children that are new on the streets.”

“The older youths steal and break into cars and the little ones take the rap for the crime.”

He said the threat of prison was of little significance.

Police argue that the children know they will be out on the streets again in a matter of hours after being apprehended, as in terms of the Constitution, they cannot be kept in jail.

In turn, many child care workers have called for improved policing, as they believe police have a negative attitude towards the children.

“They point out that street children have little or no choice in life.”

Street life has its own set of rules and older youths, who do not live on the street, threaten the children. They recruit the small ones and offer a good life if the smaller ones work for them,” Mr Pass explained.

Young girls, who turn to life on the streets, are quickly snapped up by pimps and used as child prostitutes. “They are cleaned and made ready for potential customers,” says Mr Pass.

“Handicapped and smaller children are often used to beg for older youths, who keep them under strict surveillance until they have handed over enough cash to the gangs.”

He said a child living on the streets was often a vulnerable child. Although in most cases they did have homes to go back to, they would refuse.

One of the children, Saturday Argus spoke to, said he had been living on the streets for three years, and liked it.

He showed a tattoo he had of a gang emblem and said he was forced to have it done, or face being injured.

“Last December an older man came to live with us and he forced us to have the tattoos on our legs and to join the gang. We were scared of him and did as he told us.”

For these children, a few havens, such as Ethel’s Place in Eastridge, do offer them refuge.

Opened last August to assist children living on the streets in the Cape Flats, Ethel’s Place operates as a drop-in centre, but the children still sleep on the streets, said Mr Pass.

He said once a child got used to making money on the streets it was difficult to shake the habit.

The centre—supervised by the Cape Town City Mission—offers street children life skills, such as literacy classes, art classes, environmental classes, a drug prevention programme, writing and poetry classes and a programme designed to foster relations with the children’s parents.
Smokers to cough up more for their habit
Nicola Jenvey

DURBAN - The traditional "sin taxes" for smokers and drinkers were again targeted in the 1997/98 budget, with the duty on tobacco rising 52% to lift the tax component to 80% of the average retail price.

Smokers will pay another 27c for 10 cigarettes, while the pipe tobacco price will rise by R2,49/kg. Drinkers will also have to dig deeper, with the beer price set to rise 6,15c/ (3c/340ml), sorghum beer 2c/l, sorghum flour 5,5c/kg, unfortified wine 8c/750ml, mineral water and soft drinks 1,2c/l and cane spirits 66c/750ml bottle.

Similar increases apply to whisky, brandy and gin.

The Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa rejected the "incredible" increase in excise duties on cigarettes as "unfair" as it discriminated against a third of the country's adults. "The effects of yet another incredible tax increase on tobacco farming, on employment on farms, and on employment of workers in the processing industry, have been pointed out to government."

"Perhaps government should come and face the workers, who know that such excessive taxes will deprive them of their livelihood in favour of tax-free smuggled cigarettes from elsewhere."

However, Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Geoff Tyler applauded Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's courage in imposing the bold increases.

South African cigarettes and alcohol were still among the cheapest in the world. "There is considerable room for further increases next year," he said.

Ad valorem duties - presently between 6% and 37,5%, and recommended for abolition by both the Marpo and Katz commissions - were also reviewed in the light of the extensive smuggling and sale of illegal goods throughout SA.

Manuel said although revenue considerations prevented their abolition, the high rates had provided an incentive for tax evasion and the consequent loss of tax revenue.

Consequently, the higher brackets of 37,5% and 32,5% were lowered to 15%. Motor cycle rates, applicable to cycles with a cylinder capacity of less than 800cm$^3$, were dropped from 32,5% and 17,5% to 15% and 7,5% respectively.

Deloitte and Touche tax partner Dayan Nnicker said consumers would welcome the lower rates as goods, including perfumes, camera equipment, watches and turntables, would become more affordable.
Outcry prompts child support debate
Child support move on hold after outcry

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — The parliamentary welfare committee has put the brakes on the further implementation of a controversial cabinet decision to introduce a flat rate child support benefit after African National Congress (ANC) MPs voiced serious concerns.

Welfare director-general Leila Patel was forced to backtrack at a welfare portfolio meeting on Friday and took to come back to the committee before proceeding with the implementation of the scheme as planned.

The committee also endorsed a decision taken during private consultations by MPs last week to hold public hearings following a growing public outcry over the issue.

Patel indicated to the portfolio committee that government intended to introduce the scheme through regulations without first consulting Parliament. However, reminded by committee chairman and ANC MP Cas Sapepe that there was an agreement that the welfare department would not act unilaterally, Patel said Sapepe had “misunderstood me completely” and took to come back to the committee instead of reporting directly to cabinet.

“We will certainly keep the committee abreast of developments,” Patel said.

ANC MPs were at the forefront of intense questioning of Patel, expressing serious misgivings about the scheme as spelt out by the director-general. Some MPs left the meeting still not convinced that the welfare department had researched it properly.

One ANC MP said afterwards: “This whole thing just seems to me to be pie in the sky at this stage.”

The welfare plan is to rectify a racial imbalance in the child and family maintenance set-up by introducing a drastically reduced grant due to financial constraints. Coloured and Asian families qualify for up to R700 a month in parent and child maintenance grants at present, but cabinet decided to adopt a welfare recommendation to abolish the parent grant and replace it with a flat rate of R75 a child up to the age of six.

Children aged up to 18 can qualify under the current scheme.

Committee members were also not convinced that other important aspects of the scheme, such as a decision to introduce a means test — described by an ANC MP as internationally discredited, had been researched properly.

ANC MP Mary Turok said: “I do not think the R75 will be negotiable, but there are definitely other aspects.

Continued on Page 2

Support

Continued from Page 1

which are.” Finance Minister Trevor Manuel said last week R76bn had been set aside for the child support scheme.

One of the researchers, Clive Pintuswitz, estimated that the scheme would cost R3.7bn a year, based on the R75 flat rate figure, when fully operational in seven years’ time. According to Patel, it would cost between R58bn and R23bn annually “if all women who were eligible for the grant under the present conditions should apply”.

In 1996 about R1.2bn was spent on state maintenance grants to about 394,924 beneficiaries.

The new scheme aimed to provide support for about 30% of eligible poor children, Patel said.

Patel said a technical committee had been set up to look into details of a phased implementation of the scheme, and would report to cabinet in six months’ time. Some MPs said the August 1 implementation date and the committee’s report overlapped.

The Black Sash — one of the harshest critics of the scheme as proposed by Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi — said the public hearings would be a waste of time unless they could influence the cabinet’s decision.

Comment: Page 13
'Here's to your good health, smokers'

THE Council Against Smoking has welcomed the increase in tobacco excise taxes, which it said would "make a significant contribution to improving the health of South Africans by discouraging smoking". And it would raise government revenues.

The increase of 27c per 10 cigarettes will result in about 400 000 fewer smokers and, over time, in about 130 000 fewer premature deaths from cancer, heart attacks and lung disease, the council said. It will also yield about R620 million in new revenue.

Tobacco RSA, meanwhile, complained that the "draconian increase" could lose thousands of the country's 28 600 farm workers their jobs. It also mentioned smuggling of cigarettes from abroad.

The Tobacco Institute of Southern Africa also slammed the "incredible 52% increase" as unfair and "yet another punitive increase which discriminates against a third of the country's adults".
Pupils going hungry as food scheme stalls

Millions lie unspent

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Durban - Millions of rands of school feeding scheme funds remain unspent two weeks before the end of the 1996/97 financial year while thousands of children are going without the meals promised them by President Nelson Mandela.

The school feeding scheme - a presidential programme designed to provide needy children with a nutritious morning snack - has been plagued by administrative problems since its inception.

At a recent public accounts committee meeting, members heard that R108-million from the 1995/96 budget had yet to be spent and funds running into further millions from the present financial year were still lying idle.

KwaZulu-Natal auditor-general Chris Foster said yesterday there was no way this amount of money could be spent effectively in two weeks.

He said that in the past, a lot of the money had been misspent and that this could happen again if there was not adequate financial control.

The health department has been called to another meeting today to account for the outstanding amounts.

Responding to the criticism about the department’s inability to deliver, health department spokesman Dave McGlew said the scheme had struggled to get off the ground because of a lack of bookkeeping skills in schools.

He denied earlier media reports that millions of rands had been embezzled, claiming that “unaccounted funds” amounted to only about R750 000, which auditors were still trying to trace.

Mr McGlew said the scheme was slowly gaining momentum, with up to 1 400 schools now benefitting. He said it was a long-term project which in time, and with sufficient training, would assist communities to feed themselves.

The health department’s chief director of health care, John Stewart, said he could not comment until he had all the figures.

Public accounts committee chairman Tino Volker said the system had failed because the health and education departments had not been sufficiently prepared to cope with the task.
New grants for poor children hailed

BY JANINE SIMON

The new child benefit grants system was a golden opportunity to force ministries to collaborate on developmental programmes, Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said yesterday.

She was commenting on resistance to the new system from advocacy groups, including Cosatu and the Black Sash, who objected to cuts in support.

The Cabinet earlier this month approved a 20% cut in state maintenance grants over the next five years and the phasing in of the new flat-rate R75-a-month benefit, aimed at reaching 3 million of the poorest under-6s in the country.

The new system means the R430 grants and the R135-a-child grant will be phased out. Instead, a means test will be applied to identify 30% of the poorest children, and a flat R75 a child will be given to their care-givers.
240 babies abandoned in Gauteng hospitals

More than 240 babies were abandoned in Gauteng hospitals in 1996, Health MEC Amos Masando has revealed.

Masando was replying to a question put to him by the Democratic Party's Jack Bloom last week.

According to figures released by the health department, Baragwanath Hospital dealt with 65 cases of abandoned babies, followed closely by Johannesburg Hospital with 35 and Natalspruit with 24.

Masando said the time spent on caring for the babies before alternative accommodation was found varied from four days to a month.

The ministry said mothers abandoned their newborn babies for a host of reasons.

These included relationship problems, fear of stigma attached to fostering or adoption, lack of necessary education and life skills or the fact that either the mother or baby was diagnosed as being HIV-positive.

Bloom called the figures a shock, saying it cost approximately R250 a day to keep a child in hospital.

He said the abandoned babies were an unfortunate symptom of a sick society.

However, Masando said, to solving the problem required an effort not only from the health department, but government and civil society.

He said suggestions put forward to reduce the number of unwanted babies included life skills training, sex education at schools, user-friendly family planning clinics and the training of nursing staff to identify potential abdorers.
Tribunal starts search for lost R5 billion

Judge Willem Heath on the trail of officials who stole out of the mouths of children

At least R5 billion lost to government corruption, illegal land deals and theft was being investigated by the first special investigation and tribunal unit of its kind in South Africa, appointed by President Nelson Mandela last week.

The investigating arm of the unit, headed by Mr Justice Willem Heath, is looking into cases such as feeding scheme maladministration — which runs into millions of rands — pensions and tender irregularities and theft, as well as the illegal buying of land.

Mandela signed a proclamation last Wednesday appointing Heath the head of the new investigations unit and Mr Justice GPC Kotze as acting president of the tribunal.

"The big difference now is that, unlike a commission, we have been given teeth," Heath said. "We can function totally independently in investigating and prosecuting perpetrators involved in this sort of thing."

Of four feeding schemes being investigated, two were put into action by the previous government and were seen as a ploy to win more votes during the 1994 general elections.

Both the schemes, as well as two others instituted by the new government, either folded or were beset by problems which included serious maladministration.

In the Eastern Cape primary school feeding scheme more than R5 million was stolen by corrupt officials.

Heath said he had already received documentation and the matter was being investigated as a priority.

The investigative unit was also looking at allegations of overcharging on accounts by the Bank of Transkei in the former homeland.

In 1995 it emerged that the bank charged a rate of 33 percent on a former Transkei government overdraft of R700 million. At the time the prime rate was 15.25 percent and the maximum legal rate 29 percent.

The difference over a year between the prime rate and the amount charged on R700 million is R122.4 million.

"There were 500 cases along the Transkei coastline where buyers used illegal methods to get hold of land, including bribing headmen with amounts of noney far less than the actual value of the property."

Recently it became known that for as little as R200, a bottle of cheap brandy or a few sheep, non-residents bought prime sites on the Wild Coast to build holiday cottages and fishing shacks. — Sapa.
Abandoned babies fill local hospitals

By Tshepo Lunga

Cots in maternity wards in Gauteng hospitals are being occupied by healthy abandoned babies, while doctors desperately try to find space for sick and premature babies.

Yesterday frantic negotiations between the welfare society and Johannesburg Hospital took place because the hospital needed to make space for 15 sick babies.

Johannesburg Child Welfare assistant director Carol Bews said: "They want me to take seven healthy babies out but there is physically no place for them. I have no options open to me."

The babies have to languish there because there is no space in the province's overflowing children's homes.

A nurse, R450 a day to keep a healthy baby in hospital and R104 per day in a home.

"I had spent an average of 6 weeks in hospitals before being discharged to child welfare homes. Of course, we were still in hospital; some had been there for 30 months."

Certain hospitals said they received between three and 15 abandoned babies a month. Baragwanath Hospital reported 65 cases last year; Johannesburg Hospital 55, Krugersdorp's Natalspruit 24 and Coronation 22.

Baragwanath's social work manager Lea Smith said one of her abandoned babies had been there since birth eight months ago. Smith's Johannesburg Hospital colleague, Beverly Kriel, said the hospital had 11 abandoned babies.

Social workers said mothers gave false names and slipped out of the hospital after giving birth.

Hospitals did not accept healthy babies found in the veld or toilets, but some have to be admitted for treatment—and then ended up staying.

Even abandoned premature babies in incubators remain there because there is no place in the maternity wards.

Both Smith and Kriel called on the welfare department to help.

Social workers and the welfare authorities said more children's homes were needed. But it was more important to educate communities and develop a culture of foster-care and adoption.

Bews said institutions were the worst places for babies. They received no individual attention or stimulation in their first year. This caused emotional stunting.

The health department said the solution lay in a "multi-sectoral" involvement of civil society and government departments.

▶ see story, picture
Plan to speed up finding homes for babies abandoned in hospitals

By Troye Lund
and Gill Gifford

Gauteng-run hospitals will each make five beds available for abandoned babies on an emergency basis until they can be placed in registered institutions.

The Gauteng government announced the new measure after reports in The Star this week highlighted the difficulties faced by/maternity hospitals stuck with the unwanted children, and the special case of a boy called Kevin who has spent his entire 13 years in Coronation Hospital.

Department of welfare officials are investigating the registration of these babies who would then be placed in institutions. And they are urging communities to foster the abandoned children.

Four state facilities currently accommodate 45 babies. When the Neordegog Child and Youth Care Centre is opened next month, its baby unit will accommodate 30 babies, the department said.

Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said yesterday the Government, which already pays R785 a month for every child in an institution, needed help to deal with the crisis.

The report on the plight of teenager Kevin, born with a ‘‘frozen larynx’’ and who can only breathe through a tube implanted in his throat, led to six responses from families interested in fostering him.

Social worker Theresa Pieterse plans to set up an information meeting to outline the fostering process for those who have shown an interest.

‘‘We need to discuss the fostering procedure with the families, and to tell them specific details of the screening process and the case,’’ Pieterse said.

Screening of the applicants would follow and Kevin would then be placed in the care of the most suitable family.

Fraser-Moleketi said the growing social problems in the country would be solved when communities realised they had a responsibility towards abandoned children and the nurturing of them into well-adjusted adults.

Because of financial constraints, the Government needed the private sector to help, because the money the Government provided for each child was not enough, she said.

The Gauteng Welfare and Population Development Department has announced the establishment of a forum to expedite the placement of healthy abandoned babies who are crowding provincial hospitals.

Spokesman Samantha Collins said the forum, made up of department officials, would look at ways to speed up the placement of the babies and how they could move away from institutionalised care. It would meet for the first time on March 27.
170% rise in molestation reports

Campaign launched against child abuse

Bibliography
under the age of six. A household means test will target the grant at 30% of the poorest families — 3m children. This will be phased in over seven years, from August. It is estimated that it will cost R2.7bn/year (in 1996 rand) when implemented in full. The 1997-98 Budget allocates R75m to the scheme.

Patel told the committee the department would prefer a deadline of April 1998 but has been asked by Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi and the intergovernmental forum of national and provincial Ministers (Minmec) to do everything possible to launch the scheme by August. ANC MP Judy Chalmers expressed the fear that meeting the early deadline could result in chaotic payment of grants “I have enormous concerns and wonder whether the Cabinet took full cognisance of everything at stake and whether August 1 is attainable.”

The Black Sash demonstrated outside parliament on Budget Day to protest against the way government is steamrolling the measure through.

“The decision to push the measure through before parliament has had the opportunity to hold hearings shows contempt for parliament and exposes the ministry’s supposed commitment to openness and participation as a sham,” says spokesman Alison Tilley.

Welfare committee members are also querying the Lund Committee’s figures, which allow a child R1.72 a month for fruit and R1.65 for fish. Welfare organisations say it is impossible to feed and clothe a child for R75/month.

Depending on the outcome of the public hearings, the Black Sash may consider legal action to stop the report’s implementation by challenging the grounds on which the Minister may stop the payment of grants, as well as the possible infringement of the constitutional right to social security and "quality

Clare Bisseker
Child abuse an ‘epidemic’ in SA

NORMAN JOSEPH
Staff Reporter

The number of child abuse victims may increase to one million countrywide by the year 2005 if the present rate continues.

From January 1998 to the end of last year there was a 170 percent increase in the number of reported cases to the police.

Police Child Protection Unit head Jan Swart said victims and parents were often too scared to report incidents to police.

Only 20 percent of incidents were revealed and 80 percent remained concealed "and scar children for life", he said.

He quoted a Human Science Research Council (HSRC) survey which showed that an "epidemic" could break out by the year 2005.

Rape, indecent assault, molestation and assault on young children were increasing at an alarming rate annually to the point where such crimes could be labelled a "disease", said Superintendent Swart.

To help in their fight, Goodwood businessmen had donated two computers, a colour scanner, a printer and two fax machines to the unit.

Superintendent Swart praised Libertas Hospital staffers Mike Boyd and Antoinette Rossouw for allowing the unit the use of their ground floor office space free of charge.

The computers can print a clear colour photograph of a missing child and a modem can send the picture to any police service in the world within four minutes, he said.

Provincial violent crime and child protection units chief Leonard Knipe awarded acknowledgement certificates to businessmen Mike Boyd, Terry Morrison, David Jones and David Miller at a function held at the unit’s Goodwood offices.

Superintendent Swart said, thanks to business, the unit was now better equipped.
DURBAN — The Shobaahohane massacre of 18 villagers on the KwaZulu-Natal south coast in 1995 was clearly a politically motivated attack by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) on the African National Congress (ANC), Judge Hillary Squires said in the Durban High Court yesterday.

In his summary of evidence, Squires said the attack was not factional because members of extended families were among both the accused and the victims. It was also not merely criminally motivated, although houses were looted during the attack.

Squires said the fact that the attackers had organised themselves into two groups showed it had been anticipated beforehand that people fleeing from the attack would try to run in the direction of Isimangaliso police station.

During the trial last month several state witnesses said that when they tried to run away from the mob of 2 000 people to the local police station another attacking group from the direction of the police station blocked their way.

Squires said the evidence of local IFP leader and accused Simphiwe Ngcobo, 46, that the attack had not been sanctioned by the IFP, should be viewed with caution as witnesses had identified Ngcobo as one of the active participants in the attack. Ngcobo was 17 at the time.

All have pleaded not guilty. The hearing continues. — Sapa.

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BISHO — The Eastern Cape provincial school feeding scheme will grind to a halt unless new contracts are awarded before existing contracts expire.

Thousands of pupils were not fed this week, although officials in Bisho said today this was normal as it was the last week of the first school term.

A meeting of representatives from the health and welfare, education and reconstruction and development committees today heard that no new contracts had been awarded this year.

The committee was shown a tender notice, published on March 13, which gave the closing date of April 3 — five days before schools opened for the second term and more than a week after the current contracts expired.

Officials said they were worried that it might take up to three months to get the scheme operating properly again, leaving pupils hungry.

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Health and welfare deputy director-general for the nutrition programme, Nomasango Bongo, and provincial coordinator Nomawonga Kama said the contracts awarded to nongovernmental organisations to administer the schemes in the Eastern Cape expired at the end of the month.

Bongo and Kama told the committee that pupils were not being fed this week as it was the last week of term.

The committee agreed to try to find a solution.

Kama said that at the end of last year the programme had reached 86% of the targeted schools.

More than 875 000 pupils were getting bread and peanut butter, biscuits and a soft drink every school day.

These figures excluded the Queenstown region, where statistics were unavailable at the time of going to press.

— Ecn
What's to Become of the Children?
Child beatings banned by new law

(298) ARG 26/3/97

CLIVE SAWYER
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Justice Minister Dullah Omar today tabled legislation in Parliament to abolish corporal punishment.

The legislation follows a 1995 decision by the Constitutional Court that corporal punishment of juveniles was unconstitutional because it violated guarantees of respect for human dignity.

Corporal punishment also breached the constitutional provision that no one should be subjected to torture, whether physical, mental or emotional, or be subject to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Although the ruling concerned only juveniles, the bill tabled today abolishes all provisions for corporal punishment.

It amends the 1927 Black Administration Act, the 1944 Magistrates Court Act, the 1957 Witchcraft Suppression Act, the 1959 Stock Theft Act, the 1962 Animals Protection Act, the 1968 Dangerous Weapons Act, the 1976 National Parks Act and the 1977 Criminal Procedure Act.
E Cape schools' feeding scheme faces collapse

Thousands go hungry

Bisho – The provincial school feeding scheme will grind to a halt unless new contracts are awarded by Monday, when the existing contracts expire.

This week thousands of pupils were not fed, although officials in Bisho said that this was normal as it was the last week of the first school term.

A meeting of MPLs from the health and welfare, education and RDP committees heard that no new contracts had been awarded for this year.

The committee was shown a tender notice which gave the closing date of April 3 — five days before schools open for the second term and more than a week after current contracts expire. The notice came out on March 13.

MPLs said they were worried that it might take up to three months to get the scheme operating properly again, leaving pupils to go hungry in the interim.

The nutrition programme's health and welfare deputy-director, Nomalungelo Bongo, and provincial co-ordinator Nomawonga Kama, said the contracts awarded to five non-governmental organisations to administer the schemes in the Eastern Cape expired at the end of the month.

They told the committee that pupils were not being fed this week as it was the last week of term.

The committee agreed to consider the problem and try to find a solution so that children did not go hungry.

Most of the meeting was spent discussing a report on how the five NGOs had coped with their contracts from September until December last year.

Ms Kama said that at the end of last year the programme had reached 95 percent of the targeted schools.

More than 975,000 pupils were getting “Mandela sandwiches” of bread and peanut butter, biscuits and a soft-drink every school day.

These figures excluded the Queenstown region, where statistics were compiled too late to be included in the report.

However, committee members said there was the problem that not all the NGOs were helping to train women.

It was agreed that Ms Kama and Mr Bongco would report back to the committee as soon as possible with more up-to-date information. — Ecna
June 16 action threat over plan to cut child support

JENNY WALL
Herald Reporter

The Government faces mass action on June 16 unless it stops its plan to cut monthly child support grants from R135 to R75 a child.

The powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions, which is a member of the ruling tripartite alliance with the African National Congress and South African Communist Party, has joined forces with a number of non-government organizations to warn Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi to halt the implementation of the new child support system.

They have given her until June 10 to table an alternative or face a day of action on June 16.

Protesting bodies say their response could include protest action and asking President Mandela to intervene.

“We are deeply concerned at the proposals,” said Kumi Naidoo, executive director of the protesting coalition.

“We do not believe a child can be sustained on R75 a month and are concerned that while the grant might prevent starvation it will not prevent malnourishment.

“We believe that in the long run it will cost the state less to revise the child support proposals in line with suggestions made by various non-governmental organisations, Cosatu, the Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality,” said Mr Naidoo.

“Government is giving greater priority to repaying South Africa’s odious debt than to the plight of its own children.

Financial modelling indicates that the new system will in fact cut, not increase, expenditure on child welfare by about R2.9-million over the next five years.

“This is in line with the Government’s economic policy.”

Mrs Fraser-Moleketi last week said there was “no turning back” on plans to implement proposals of the Lund Commission by August 1 and that she would introduce changes by proclamation if there was not enough time to get the changes through Parliament.

Cosatu has said that instead of increasing spending on child support by R1.2-billion over the next five years, as had been promised by the minister, independent studies had shown the proposals would lead to a huge reduction in overall spending on child and family support.

Cosatu says developing administrative capacity to pay historically excluded communities is a matter of priority.

“Why should poor children and women be made to suffer to create economic conditions necessary to attract foreign investment?” asked Mercia Andrews of the New Women’s Movement.

“The minister must go back to the Cabinet and demand that the Department of Finance give her the resources she needs to implement a decent system of child welfare.”

The costs of not doing so would be increased malnutrition, increased child abuse due to poor economic conditions in the home, increased child delinquency and child abandonment and increased exploitation of children.

The further the child was removed from its family environment, the more costly it was for the Government.

To keep one child in a correctional services institution cost the state the same as paying 15 children a support benefit of R135 a month, Ms Andrews said.
Juvenile violence increases

LINDIZ VAN ZIJA

The criminal justice system's battle with juvenile offenders is highlighted in a police document detailing shocking statistics of juvenile crime in the Western Cape.

It reveals that 12 483 minors were arrested last year.

The police document follows extensive research into juvenile crime. A database was started in 1995.

The 1996 figures are marginally down from the previous year, when 12 691 juveniles were arrested, a 1.6% decrease.

However, violent offences committed by juveniles have increased, with 256 arrested for murder, 115 for attempted murder, 400 for rape, 105 for armed robbery, 760 for robbery, 600 for serious assault and 19 for firearm-related offences.

Of the 12 483 juveniles arrested, 1 834 were between the ages of 7-13, while 10 649 were aged between 14-17.

Yesterday, police spokesman Senior Superintendent John Sterenberg expressed police concern at the alarming figures and called for a "concerted all-round effort to address juvenile crime".

Another disturbing statistic to emerge from the document is the large number of juveniles absconding from insecure places of safety.

Of 1 152 juveniles, 454 absconded from

Stark statistics

Juveniles arrested in 1996:
Aged 7-13: 1 834
Aged 14-17: 10 649
MURDER
Attempted murder 256
Rape 406
Armed robbery 105
Robbery 760
Serious assault 600
Housebreaking 2 960
Theft 1 883
Car theft 547
Theft from motor vehicle 1 636
Possession of dangerous weapons 65
Possession of unlicensed firearms 214
Arson 27
Indecent assault 41
Sodomy 34
Drunkenness 75
Possession of dagga 373
Possession of Mandrax 51

A further 4 135 were released into the custody of their parents by the courts, 1 508 received free bail, 947 were sent to places of custody, 622 were referred to the Department of Correctional Services, 163 to dormitories and 2 132 to police cells.

Superintendent Niels Nilsson, of provincial commissioner Mr Leon Wessels' office, said yesterday the police would closely monitor juvenile crime for the next few years and would develop plans to address the problem.

He admitted that the police had great difficulty in dealing with juvenile crime because many juvenile offenders were hardened criminals, who often absconded from places of safety.

He said the police had been involved in drawing up a provincial plan of action, which included input from various state departments and non-governmental organisations.

Sterenberg said one of the aspects which perturbed the police was that in many instances juveniles were used by adults to perpetrate crime.

He blamed the lack of secure family values, and said there was an urgent need to inculcate proper values in the family circle.

He questioned how much of a positive role was played in raising children by religious and youth leaders, educationists and welfare organisations.
Cosatu denies backing action on welfare cuts

COSATU denied last night that it would take part in a day of mass action on June 16 to protest against planned social welfare cuts as reported in yesterday’s Cape Times.

It said the error resulted from a statement issued by the South African NGO Coalition which is co-ordinating the protest.

"For Cosatu to embark on a day of action requires decisions by its constitutional structures. No decision has been taken."

Cosatu believed in greater equality in the social welfare system without a reduction in the government’s commitment to effective child support, and that this should be part of an overhaul of the welfare system.
Welfare Minister gets an ultimatum

NON-GOVERNMENTAL organisations and Cosatu have given Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi until June 10 to stop the implementation of the new child support system and to table an alternative to the proposals or face protest action.

The South African NGO Coalition said this could include protest action on June 16 and asked President Nelson Mandela to intervene.

“We are deeply concerned by the proposals,” said Mr Kumi Naidoo, executive director of the coalition.

“We do not believe a child can be sustained on R75 a month and are concerned that while the grant might prevent starvation it won’t prevent malnourishment.”

“We believe in the long run it will cost the state less to revise the child support proposals in line with suggestions made by various NGOs, Cosatu, the HRC and the Commission for Gender Equality,” said Mr Naidoo.

“Financial modelling indicates that the new system will in fact cut, not increase expenditure on child welfare by R2.9-million over the next five years. This is in line with the Government’s economic policy.”

Fraser-Moleketi last week said there “was no turning back” on plans to implement proposals of the Lund Commission by August 1 and that she would introduce changes by proclamation if there was not enough time to get changes through Parliament in time.

This followed two days of submissions by concerned civil organisations to the Portfolio Committee on Welfare and before the committee held hearings in the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province. — Sowetan Reporter (298)
Children involved in serious crimes will still have to stay in jail

BY HOPEWELL RADEBE
Political Staff

Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi has recommended that the law allowing the detention of children facing serious crimes in a normal prison be extended for another year.

Moleketi said her department had no choice because children's special prisons, called "secure care", were not yet available.

An amendment to section 29 of the Correctional Services Amendment Act 14 of 1996 was published on May 10 1996 in the Government Gazette to allow for the detention of awaiting-trial children over 14 and under 18 in prisons under certain limited conditions.

This was done to avoid repeating the 1995 mistake where President Mandela signed legislation rendering it illegal to detain a child under 18 in jail.

The process was undertaken in such haste that hundreds of children, including those who had committed serious crimes, were released because the law had been passed without making available sufficient alternative places of safety for them.

Many were simply released even without placing them under parental guidance. And many never showed up in court to stand trial. Those who were taken to places of safety escaped within hours because of lack of security.

Fraser-Moleketi said she was deeply concerned at the lack of places of safety for children and police were forced to continue to place teenagers accused of committing serious crimes in prison.

Only this time, however, she believed children would face a greater risk outside prison because of certain members of the public who might be hostile to them if released under the same unplanned circumstances as in 1995.

"Pressure is now on the departments of education, welfare and justice to deal urgently with these factors causing the continued placement of children in prison," she said.

This meant that provinces that were currently busy with construction of secure-care areas would have to speed up the process and have them completed before the same time next year, when the amended law would be expiring.
New system needed for children facing charges, says welfare minister

Johannesburg – The youth care system for children who are awaiting trial urgently needs to be addressed – and Welfare Minister Geraline Fraser-Moleketi has listed a four-point plan to speed up the process.

In a statement yesterday she said the departments of education, welfare and justice – which are responsible for placing children in secure facilities – should follow through on earlier findings by an inter-ministerial committee that called for a new child and youth care system.

The departments should also complete secure care programmes, transform probation services and implement a range of programmes designed to build family unity, she said.

The committee was established in July 1995 to contain the crisis in the care system and transform it after investigations revealed the entire system needed to be dismantled and redesigned.

The investigation was prompted by the Correctional Services Amendment Act of 1994 which came into law in 1995. The new law prevented children under 14-years-old who were awaiting trial from being held longer than 24 hours. They also have to be kept in places of safety, throwing the care system into disarray.

Then, in early 1995, President Mandela instructed that children should not be detained in prisons. This meant children were often placed in inefficient and poorly managed institutions where many suffered emotional and physical abuse.

In October 1995 the committee was asked to devise a plan to stop children who had committed serious crimes from running away from places of safety. It proposed each province build its own secure facility to be funded by R33-million channelled from the reconstruction and development programme’s budget. The cash, however, only became available in March and only one care facility has opened, with a second due to open next month.

However, another change to the law in May of last year allowed for children over 14 and under 18-years to be detained in prisons under certain conditions, increasing the crisis in a badly managed system.

Ms Fraser-Moleketi then called for an extension of the law to younger children, saying it was better for children to remain in prison as an interim measure, than to face a repeat of the fiasco of 1995, while facilities were being built.

She called on all departments involved in child care to speed up their programmes to alleviate the plight of children who are currently at risk. – Sapa
Fraser-Molekéi announces plan to handle awaiting-trial children

The Youth Care Section for Children...
Provinces ‘disregard priority’ of secure care for children

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — Delays in the provision of "secure care" facilities instead of police or prison cells for awaiting-trial children who had committed serious offences were due mainly to disregard for the priority issue by some provinces, the welfare department said yesterday.

As a result, the budget of R33m for provision of at least one secure child-care facility in each province fell short by R33m; officials told the parliamentary welfare committee.

Welfare MECs had been advised to seek extra funding from their provincial coffers.

There were 788 children between 13 and 18 years of age awaiting trial at the end of March, of which 321 were considered serious offenders.

National government's intention was for each province to provide a secure care facility with programmes which ensured the "appropriate physical, behavioural and emotional containment" of awaiting-trial children.

Prison or police cells could not.

Welfare deputy director-general Esther Chinkanda said the problems with child secure care had a lot to do with the fact that welfare was a provincial competency, and that the national department "cannot give instructions" to its provincial counterparts.

Each province received its own welfare budget and decided how to spend it — "but our minister is held accountable for delivery" of services.

A province could therefore decide that an issue, such as the provision of child-care facilities identified by national government as a priority, was not. Chinkanda said.

However, the minister had at a meeting with MECs a fortnight ago got their backing for central government priorities.

Welfare's secure care project manager Johanna Prozesky said the welfare MECs had committed themselves to provide secure care centres by March next year.

The first child secure care centre was opened in Soweto last Tuesday.
Plan to move youths from jails

The government expects that 12 facilities for young offenders will be completed within a year. This will enable hundreds of children held in prisons with hardened criminals to be moved.

Parliament's portfolio committee on welfare was told yesterday that the plan had been kick-started with R33m from RDP funds.

A health department spokesperson said the funds were for building and provinces had to meet the centres' running costs.

(298)
In a Catch-22

Fraser-McEwen

Minister discovers that maintenance

Grant system favours the elite.
Human rights crisis

Hitsu most vulnerable

By Iesu Gentiliz

\[\text{Footnotes...}\]
12 centres for young offenders to be completed within a year

BY JOVIAL SHAFTA
Political Correspondent
1 Nov 15 1997
Cape Town - The Government expects 12 secure care facilities for young offenders to be completed within a year to enable the authorities to remove hundreds of children being held in prisons alongside hardened criminals.

Parliament's portfolio committee on welfare was told this week the construction of 12 facilities in nine provinces had been kickstarted by a R33-million grant from the Reconstruction and Development (RDP) Fund from resources made available to the National Crime Prevention Strategy.

Johannan Prozenko, heading the department of health's mission to build the facilities, said the R33-million was intended for structural work. Provinces had to fund the running costs.

The 50-bed Walter Sisulu Secure Care Centre in Noodgesig in Soweto, unveiled by Welfare and Population Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi last week, is the first of the 12 facilities. The second, in Hendrina, Mqumalanga, opens on June 14. Others, in the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape, are expected to be ready at the end of the year.

"We expect all the centres to be completed by April next year so the children can be transferred," she said. At least three provinces were still grappling with bureaucratic procedures, personnel problems and the lack of finance.

Secure care facilities are for young people who have committed serious crimes and are deemed to be in need of containment and care. They are intended to balance society's need for safety and protection from criminal activity with the child's right to safety, dignity and development.

The system is intended for the small number of young people who may be in some way harmful to society or to themselves.

The provision of secure care facilities forms one part of the Government's plan to deal with children at risk, especially those in trouble with the law.

Other aspects are the transformation of the probation services and the implementation of a wide range of diversion and family preservation programmes.
K75 isn’t enough...

NGOs urge the government to boost child support, writes Jacqui Bull

WHAT is an appropriate and sustainable level of child support? That is the question which faces the Ministry of Welfare and the Cabinet.

The Lund Report argues that the government cannot afford to maintain its current state maintenance grant (SMG) of R430 per family and R130 per child per month if it is to be extended to all children in poverty. A flat rate child support grant of R75 per child is proposed as its place.

Given the fiscal constraints this can only be targeted at 30% of children living in poverty.

The main point to note is that the restructuring of child support and its commitment to ensuring that all people benefit equally from the system must be welcomed.

However, the exclusion of the grant should not amount to an endorsement of the constitutional right of everyone to “have access to social security, including appropriate social assistance for those unable to support themselves and their dependants”.

The current proposals are an endorsement of this right. Seventy-five rand is a far inferior figure for child support. It is based on the most minimal and unaffordable parameters possible — the cost of feeding a black child aged 0 to 3 in the cheapest urban area.

Studies on poverty conducted for the Reconstruction and Development Programmes (RDP) indicate that children are the most vulnerable group and experience the highest poverty rates in South Africa. It is estimated that 2.35 million children suffer from nutritional deficiencies — including 67% of all African children under the age of 12 years.

About 68% of children live with caregivers who earn less than R250 per month. The challenge for the social security system is how to best meet the needs of these children.

The Lund Report is correct in its assertion that cash benefits will go a long way to help families to secure a basic level of income. It is true that they do not eradicate poverty, but this is a long-term programme which must be pursued alongside the social security system.

The government has identified programmes within the Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GERS) and several of its other programmes to eradicate poverty. However, the current impact of these is minimal.

Given the administrative and capacity problems, it is likely to take two to three years before any of these programmes are able to seriously reduce poverty.

What happens in the short term? Our context demands the short-term prioritisation of social security investment. An alternative strategy for poverty eradication lies in budget priorities that provide poor children with access to health and education security into these programmes, with explicit strategies to ensure that all recipients of social security benefit.

The Cabinet’s allocation of 12.4% of the social security budget to child care is not appropriate prioritisation. It is pointless to encourage further investment in the government spending when the survival of the family above all is at stake. The decision to be fiscally responsible must be weighted against the long-term costs of not prioritising a decent child support system, including the perpetuation of the cycle of poverty. The violence that this generates and the impact on investor confidence and economic growth targets.

These alternative areas to which current expenditure could be reprioritised. One example is the enormous allocation set aside to service South Africa’s debt (see 50% “obscure debt” priorities on page 221) in a bid to take money from the brawl of the battle to save the this debt. Is the social security spending one of our priority budget allocations?

An increase in social security spending to meet the basic needs of the poorest women and children is necessary to maintain decent poverty and destruction of our rich human resource. The flat rate grant must be increased to R135 per child, and the target to all those children living with caregivers earning less than R300 per month.

Jacqui Bull is programme coordinator of the NGO Coalition.

This article is based on reports made by NGOs, the human rights and gender commissions to the portfolio committee hearings on the Lund Report.

... But the safety net's widened

Minister of Welfare and Population Development

Gerardine Fraser-Moleketi defends the new child benefit grant

FIRST I would like to emphasise that we have no intention of discussing the claim that every child has the right to “basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services”.

That means that we need to look at the definition of what constitutes a child benefit grant. To effect the claim on those currently receiving the state maintenance grant of R430 per family and R130 per child (for up to two children younger than 18) the grant will be phased out over a five-year period. This shows our desire to reduce the number of children in poverty, the past is a burden on the government, as well as a burden on the young child who is an immense person.

With regard to the specific criteria and suggestions noted in the article, firstly, I think we would all agree that R50 per child per month is not the ideal figure, but one based on the need to provide a basic minimum to those children who need it under an equitable basis.

Technical work is continuing on the basis that the group is important. The main implications of the group, such as determining the average expenditure, can only be marginal in size. But the figure of R135 per child per month for all those earning less than R300 per month, as proposed in the article, is, unfortunately, not sustainable.

In debating figures, it is important that the child benefit grant not be seen in isolation. It is intended as a form of support and not a safety net, to supplement other income and other programmes. That child benefit supports about one-tenth of all social security points to the fact that there are other forms of support available. One of the main assumptions underlying the new grant is that all children have a stake in the social security system.

The new grant should be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the government, and the government must be prepared to increase the grant as the need increases. This will enable the new grant to be adjusted in line with the inflation rate. The new grant is a fair way of increasing the social security system.
Childhood, frail care bear brunt of cuts

POLITICAL STAFF

EARLY childhood and old-age home frail care programmes will bear the brunt of a R33-million cut back in the Western Cape's welfare budget.

The department will also be forced to curtail plans to build at least three additional multi-purpose centres for poorer Western Cape communities. The centres are designed to provide a range of services under one roof.

Western Cape chief director for Social Services Ms Virginia Petersen said the 1997/98 budget would allow the welfare department to fund 30 630 children on the early childhood programmes.

Although this was 600 more than last year, the department would be forced to stagger the funding to about 2 000 of these children for 12 to 18 months.

The department had hoped to bring the funding for the frail and aged in old-age homes up to the national norm of R1 300 a month.

However, it would now be able to sustain the programme only at the current rate of R1 100 for each beneficiary, Petersen said.

The multi-purpose centres building programme has had to be cut by R7m. Two such centres are in the pipeline for Atlantis and Worcester this year, but plans for three more have now been stymied by the cuts.

The department would also have to put on hold the purchase of equipment and motor vehicles.

Describing the cuts as "tough", Petersen said the curtailment of its programmes had to be seen in the context of the overall reduction in the provincial budget.

About 90% of the social welfare budget goes to pensions, social grants and subsidy payments.

The department's budget has increased from R2,055 billion to R2,288bn, the bulk of which will be taken up by increases in social pensions from R430 to R470 from July this year.

- Petersen said that although the actual increase in beneficiaries would be between 4% and 7%, the department had only been able to budget for an increase of up to 4%.

The number of people in the province receiving old-age pensions was expected to increase from 252 682 to about 280 000 this year.

The department had also been forced to delay filling staff vacancies, she said.

The Western Cape has been hit hard by the national department's revision of its priorities to place a greater emphasis on shifting resources to poorer provinces.
Finance Minister Trevor Manuel says the Government and society should work together on programmes to benefit unemployed and unskilled youths outside the mainstream of society.

He was speaking at an ANC Youth League conference on youth development towards the next millennium. Mr Manuel said that, in theory, the Government's Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (Gear) addressed the needs of young people.

But an automatic link between the Budget and youth policy should not be assumed, given the growing split between those inside and outside the mainstream of society.

The average person outside the mainstream was young, with low levels of skill and education, rural or recently arrived in the city, unemployed and a woman.

Mr Manuel said the shift towards social spending in the Budget should benefit youth.

This included the R40 billion for education, although a careful check should be made on how this was spent to ensure the quality of education improved.

Steps should be taken to rectify the fact that too few young people were being drawn into job creation and infrastructure programmes.

The R902-million for the National Crime Prevention Strategy should target youth, given that the socio-economic situation of young people meant they were most likely to be involved in crime.

There was also a R300-million allocation for improving the lot of women and rural people.
Danger stalks 'places of safety'

The IMC, headed by Fraser-Moleketi, has recommended drawing up an ethical code of conduct for residential care facilities and a strict code of conduct for staff.

Fraser-Moleketi said: "We are in the process of taking our residential care policy further in working towards minimum norms and standards for state institutions as part of the residential care system."

According to the chief social worker at Gauteng's Department of Welfare, Annette van Loggerenberg, regional welfare homes "do not submit inspection reports unless any serious matters arise."

Homes are then given three to six months to reply or to rectify the problems," she said.

Cases of child abuse are immediately reported to the police child protection unit, she added.

Although provision is made in the Child Care Act to inspect — and, if necessary, close down — unregistered homes, inspections are only carried out once every three years by provincial welfare departments, said Van Loggerenberg.

Despite the legal provisions and safeguards, even one of the country's most prominent child-care residences is currently involved in horrifying reports. The Johannesburg Children's Home in Yeoville has been thrust into the spotlight as a result of criminal charges brought against a former senior official.

James Arthur Fraser was earlier dismissed by the home after allegations that he had raped and molested children in his care.

In an earlier case, in 1993, the founder of the Cape Town City Mission Home for Children, the Reverend Bruce Duncan, was accused of sodomising Raymond Mitchell, a child-care worker, at the home. Later that year Mitchell was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for indecently assaulting a boy. Duncan fled the country before any charges were brought.

In Durban, Livingstone Jacobs, the founder of the child-care home, Street Children's Shelter, appeared in court late last month on charges of indecently assaulting several children in his care.

The home was unregistered and was run by the Children's Rights Ministry, a group headed by Jacobs. The home has since been closed down by the KwaZulu-Natal Social Welfare Department.
Young blacks at crossroads between cultures, study finds

Johannesburg - There was little doubt that modern, metropolitan black youth were at the crossroads in the process of acculturation, a market research study reported today.

They faced many conflicting and confusing situations in their development to mature adulthood but appeared to be dealing with this situation by embracing a mixture of traditional African and Western values, the study found.

The report, "Aspirations, Values and Other Marketing Considerations Among Metropolitan Black Youth", is published by the University of South Africa's Bureau of Market Research today.

It found that, on the one hand, the majority of young blacks still believed implicitly in lobola, circumcision and slaughtering for ancestors and deplored the decline in ubuntu and respect for elders. They acknowledged that their parents had a big influence on their behaviour.

On the other hand, they firmly believed in their right to make their own choice of marriage partner without consulting their parents and they were essentially "modern" in their approach to marriage and the status of women.

Nearly all favoured monogamy and the sharing of household chores as well as gender equality as regards educational and job advancement opportunities. Young women in particular felt the need to escape their traditional role and have the freedom to make their own decisions.

They aspired to be educated, successful, prosperous and live in a beautiful home with a spouse and two or three children.

"Their greatest fear is of AIDS and the realisation that their aspirations could be thwarted by disease, unemployment, crime and violence."

The BMR found there was a well-defined set of "in" things to possess or do in order to strengthen group identity. Young people were further identified by specific preferences for particular foods and drinks.

Free time on weekdays was largely home-oriented and they spent their time studying, watching television, listening to music or reading books once chores had been completed. Weekends were spent socialising or watching soccer. Going to the movies and reading newspapers was popular.

"Church activities still play a central role in the youth's lives, as a stabilising influence in a changing world," the report said.

In general, sport - especially soccer - was an integral part of their lives. - Sapa
Child Protection: Strategy needed
Taking bread out of mouths of babes

Protesters say welfare changes will deprive needy children

RAY HARTLEY
Political Correspondent

The fragile child-support system would be cut by billions of rand if Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi went ahead with plans to restructure it, trade unions and welfare organisations have warned.

Fraser-Moleketi’s proposals, which have been accepted by the cabinet, would see:

- The abolition of a R430 a month payment to indigent mothers;
- The reduction of payments to children from R135 a month to R75 a month; and
- A reduction in the age of qualifying children from 18 years to six years.

The Black Sash’s Alison Tilley said the changes would give an indigent mother with two children R150 a month instead of R700 a month under the existing dispensation.

This is less than the household subsistence level for food and clothing for children under the age of six, the Black Sash has said.

Fraser-Moleketi said the new child maintenance payment would “bring relief to three million poor children over the next seven years, amounting to an additional R1,2-billion”.

The cut-off point had been set at six-year-olds as these were the vital years in a child’s development.

And, she said, the new system would lead to an increase in child-support spending of R1,5-billion in five years.

But a group of angry non-governmental organisations - including Cosatu, the Black Sash, the Community Law Centre and the Gender Advocacy Project - are preparing to fire a broadside at Fraser-Moleketi over the plans at parliamentary hearings in Cape Town this week.

They are to dispute Fraser-Moleketi’s figures at the hearing, which they say is being held against the minister’s wishes, saying the new system would lead to a radical cut in child welfare.

Research prepared for the organisations projects that the new child-support system could lead to a cut of between R2,1-billion and R3,7-billion in government spending on child payments over five years.

Instead, the lobbyists argue, government should keep its R135 a month payment per child in place and extend payments to those who have an income of less than R800 a month.

Tilley said: “If we don’t spend this money on children now, in 20 years we’ll spend it on correctional services.”

A document released by the Black Sash this week said that, while 68 percent of all children lived with a guardian earning less than R250 a month, only 30 percent of them would qualify for assistance.
Fraser-Moleketi urged to retract child plan

Cape Town – A coalition of civic groups yesterday urged Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi to reconsider her child support benefit plan and to suspend its implementation.

The coalition said that contrary to her promises, spending in this area would in fact be cut by R2.5-billion over the next five years.

In a statement released yesterday by several organisations, the minister was given until June 16 – Youth Day – to respond.

The organisations include the New Women’s Movement, the Black Sash, the SA National NGO Coalition, the Citizens’ Advice Bureau, Ilitha Labantu, the SA Catholic Bishops’ Conference and the SA Council of Churches.

The organisations have made a detailed submission to the National Assembly’s welfare committee today to show that Fraser-Moleketi’s promised increases for child support were in fact “an illusion” and a “broken promise to South Africa’s women and children”, the statement said.

The submission would be based on the results of research conducted by the University of the Western Cape’s Institute for Social Development. – Sapa.
Public submissions needed on issues of child support

A N INTERESTING case study of public participation this week will be the public hearings held today and tomorrow by the Joint Standing Committee on Welfare on a new system of child support proposed by the cabinet, based on the Linder Committee report on child and family support.

At a welfare department briefing to the welfare committee on March 14, the committee voiced its concern about the manner in which the Linder Committee proposals were presented. It said that no substantive input by civil society was sought before the committee published its report in August last year or before the report's acceptance by the cabinet.

The welfare committee emphasised the importance of a transparent public process, with meaningful parliamentary and public participation. The fact that hearings are now taking place must be seen as a victory for democracy.

For civil society representatives who will be making their submissions to the committee, it will be a significant test of the extent to which their participation or lobbying has a role in the formulation of legislation and policy — particularly on the issue of achieving equity in child support benefits.

At the briefing, Dr Lela Patel, director general of the Department of Welfare, outlined the details of the new system, which proposes to grant R75 per month to 30% of poor children up to the age of six in households with incomes below R250 per month, subject to a means test (which has not yet been specified).

This means that, although an estimated 69% of children live with a care-giver earning less than R250 per month, 70% of poor children in the 0-6 age group will be excluded. In addition, no parent allowance will be paid.

The hearings will include substantive submissions by the Women and Human Rights Project of the University of the Western Cape's Community Law Centre, the Black Sash, Idasa's Poverty Reduction Monitoring Service, Institute for Social Development and others. The last two, in particular, are expected to show how welfare minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi's acceptance of cuts in child support — to the tune of R3-billion — offers bleak prospects for future generations of children, if implemented.

Among the decisions civil society organisations are likely to contest will be the six years and under age restriction and the requirement for mothers with babies to visit primary health-care centres regularly, which will place an added burden of time and money on poor women, particularly in areas where primary health-care centres are out of reach.

A peg to hang criticisms of cabinet's approach on is the administrative capacity problems of processing new welfare grants. Capacity is unevenly spread among provinces, the most limited capacity being in the poorest areas, Northern Province and Eastern Cape.

In its role as overseer, the welfare committee needs to ensure that the department's capacity is spread equally across all provinces, that there is ready access to information, without any rural biases and that delays in grant applications are kept to a minimum.

Another probable peg is the Bill of Rights which entrenches socio-economic rights, especially for the child, providing for a culture in which social assistance is guaranteed to people — and their dependents — who are unable to support themselves. The state is obliged to ensure that every child has what it is constitutionally entitled to: basic nutrition, shelter, basic health-care services as well as social services. This is also in keeping with the human rights culture enshrined in international law.

At a joint Idasa and Gender Advocacy Programme workshop yesterday — on women in provincial government and in civil society — Sandy Liebenberg of the Women and Human Rights Project spoke about the process of conducting the campaign of lobbying and organising around child support. She said that, for her, public submissions represented a "window of opportunity" for civil society to make an input in public policy around issues of delivery.

What her organisation and others will be doing today and tomorrow, Liebenberg said, is to call on the welfare committee to "intervene on what Parliament and civil society deem as appropriate in terms of child support."

Moreover, it is a test of Parliament's capacity to play a significant role in the formulation of socio-economic policy.

Cape Town – Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi has defended the Government’s plan to introduce the new child benefit plan, and appealed to South Africans to give the new system a chance and to consider the interests of the country’s poorest children who have never had access to a state maintenance grant.

She made her appeal yesterday, after 13 non-governmental organisations, which included trade unions, sharply criticised the new system, approved by the Cabinet, and called on her to reconsider her child support benefit plan and to suspend its implementation.

The minister said the new system sought to decentralise the current state maintenance grant and targeted poor children in rural areas. She said replacing the current system had become necessary in line with the constitution.

"The state maintenance grant has for decades been reaching a very small section of the country’s population and there was concern about the continued affordability at the levels of the current grant. Figures for 1990 show that 48 out of every 1,000 coloured children, 40 per 1,000 Indian and only two per 1,000 African children were receiving the grant. This is abnormal.

"Targeting areas like the Eastern Cape, Northern Province and KwaZulu Natal, where poverty levels are high, our goal is to reach nearly 3 million poor children by 2008. A mere 203,262 are now receiving the benefit. An additional R1.2-billion will be made available over this period," Fraser-Moleketi said.

She said the R7.5 a month per child was based on research done by the Institute for Development Planning and Research at the University of Port Elizabeth on the household subsistence level.
to explain the problem. From the evidence collected during the investigation, it was clear that the company had failed to comply with the relevant regulations. The failure to maintain adequate records and to ensure that the necessary safety checks were performed regularly contributed significantly to the incident.

In light of this, the company was required to implement a comprehensive program of corrective actions, including training for all staff, regular safety audits, and the appointment of a full-time safety officer. These measures were put in place to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

The investigation report also highlighted the importance of regular training and the need for improved communication within the company. It was recommended that the company should establish a system for regular safety training and that all employees should be encouraged to report any concerns or incidents immediately.

The report concluded that while the company had taken some steps to address the safety concerns, more needed to be done to ensure the safety of its employees. The company was given a timeframe within which to implement the recommended actions and to provide a detailed action plan. The action plan was reviewed and approved by the regulatory body before the company could resume operations.

The company was also required to engage a consultant to assess the workplace and to develop a detailed safety plan. The consultant was required to report back to the regulatory body within six months, and the company was required to implement all recommendations made by the consultant.

In conclusion, the investigation report highlighted the importance of proactive safety measures and the need for regular training and communication within the workplace. The company was required to take immediate action to address the safety concerns and to ensure the safety of its employees.
Secure centre for juveniles

By Thembisa Sepotokelo

THE WALTER SISULU Child and Youth Care Centre opens in Noodgesig, Johannesburg, on Tuesday, April 29, bringing some relief to awaiting trial juvenile delinquents and abused children.

Gauteng welfare and development communications officer Ms Samantha Collins yesterday said the centre will accommodate 210 children and 60 juveniles.

National Welfare Minister Mrs Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi will attend the official opening of the centre. The first intake of children was expected yesterday.

The centre is a pilot of the Inner-Ministerial Committee established with the full sanction of President Nelson Mandela in May 1995. The IMC's mandate was to design and implement an integrated child and youth care system.


The concept of secure care for young people was a result of the uncoordinated release and transfer of more than 2,000 children awaiting trial in May 1995.

"This exacerbated the long standing crisis in the child and youth care system. The aim of secure care is to guarantee the rights and safety of all young people in the system," said Collins.

The centre will operate and be managed according to the principles laid down by the IMC which, among others, secures protection of the rights of a young person in the centre. They also state that services will be delivered by competent multi-disciplinary teams.

A governing board of representatives from community development forums was established to ensure active community involvement.
Minister leaves door open for bigger child support benefits

David Greybe  

CAPE TOWN — Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi left the door ajar yesterday for an increase in the controversial R75 monthly grant for the poorest of children under government plans for a new child support benefit scheme.

She conceded that the public hearings on the new scheme had produced "many very important" inputs.

Fraser-Moleketi said she would deal with the issues raised at a "major" press conference in Pretoria tomorrow following a meeting between herself and her provincial counterparts.

However, it would be "premature" for her to announce an increase in the proposed flat rate of R75 for each child up to six. A technical team was still investigating the scheme.

The flat rate and other aspects of the scheme came under heavy fire from more than two dozen civil society organisations at a two-day public hearing of the parliamentary welfare committee on the Lund committee report on child and family support.

Fraser-Moleketi said she had not expected the hearings to be easy, but was "not unduly fazed" by criticism.

Government planned to de-racialise the scheme, which had benefited coloureds, Indians and whites almost exclusively.

Because of the higher costs to the state of the new scheme, family support would be phased out and the child benefit rate and eligibility cut back.

Fraser-Moleketi chided the public and private organisations for the late-
dess of their comments and suggestions, saying the Lund report had been released in September.

She said it was not her job to defend the figures provided by the Fiscal and Financial Commission for the cost of the scheme, to be phased in from August 1. A number of nongovernmental organisations maintained the figures were incorrect, resulting in a saving for the state at the expense of the poorest of the poor.

At yesterday's hearings the SA National Non-government Organisation Coalition argued for an increase in the rate to R155 and a widening of the target figure from the intended poorer 30% to all children living with a care giver whose monthly income was less than R500.

Jacqui Boulle, director of the coalition, which represented more than 2 400 non-government bodies, said that if government predictions proved correct, the number of applicants for child benefit in the next five years would drop because of lower unemployment. This meant poverty relief programmes should be a short-term priority, and that the welfare department should provide a reasonable grant to as many people as possible, especially in the light of the short-term savings that the nongovernment bodies claimed would be made.

Welfare committee chairman Cas Saloojee said the committee would hold public hearings in Northern Province and Eastern Cape before it drafted a final report.

Comment: Page 11

Vice-chancellor is given a 'mock funeral'

Kevin O'Grady  

STUDENTS abandoned a protest march at Pretoria University yesterday because of a strong police presence and instead held a mock funeral for vice-chancellor Johan van Zyl over the appointment of Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals as university chancellor.

About 100 SA Students' Congress (Sasco) and Pan Africanist Students' Organisation members attended the "funeral" in protest against what they claimed was a lack of transparency in Stals' appointment, Sasco Gauteng chairman Jacob Mabolo said.

Another grievance, which would be the focus of a protest march at the University of SA (Unisa) on May 12, was the deployment of police on the Pretoria and Unisa campuses.

University spokesman Leon Radebe said the complaint over Stals' appointment. He said that it was approved by the university's transformation forum — from which Sasco recently withdrew — and the university council.

said copy of
State child maintenance
cuts to stay despite outcry

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg: The controversial R75-a-child grant system—an attempt to even up racial and financial inequities in the social security system—will be phased in from August 1 with a 20% drop in grants each year for the next five.

It will drop the cut-off age of benefit from 18 to six, and the amount for each child from R135 to R75.

The proposals are hotly opposed. Organisations which face the task of telling mothers reliant on state maintenance grants that the money is to be withdrawn have accused the government of under-investing in child poverty relief.

Slinging criticisms of the flat rate grant were levelled by about 24 organisations at a two-day public hearing of the parliamentary welfare committee in Cape Town earlier this week.

Welfare Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi met her provincial counterparts in Pretoria yesterday to discuss the issues. A detailed response to the criticisms raised must be submitted to the parliamentary committee by June 16.

The state pays R1,3-billion a year in maintenance grants to 349,692 people, but because the grant is divided into a parent and child component, only 203,262 of those recipients are children, while 146,430 are parents.

In addition, according to 1990 figures, most recipients are Indian (40 per 1,000 children receive the grant) and coloured (48 per 1,000), and only two in every 1,000 black children receive the grant.

The majority of recipients (68,076) are in the Western Cape. There are relatively few in the poorer provinces such as the Northern Province (no registered recipients in 1996/7 according to department figures) and North West (2,980).

The flat rate child support grant, recommended by the Land Commission on Child and Family Support last August and approved by the cabinet in March, is an attempt to overcome these shortcomings by giving less to more people. About R75m has been set aside for implementation this year.

The state plans to use a simple means test to decide which primary care-giver of a child qualifies for state aid, then limit that aid to a fixed amount for the first six years of a child's life only—those being the years at which a child is most vulnerable.
Hot reaction to plans to cut child poverty aid

BY JARINE SIMON

The controversial R75-a-child grant system – an attempt to even up racial and financial inequities in the social security system – will be phased in from August 1 by a 20% drop in grants each year for the next five years.

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The majority of recipients (68,076) are in the Western Cape. There are relatively few in the poorer provinces such as the Northern Province (no registered recipients in 1996/7 according to department figures) and North West (2,980).

The flat-rate child support grant, recommended by the Lund Commission on Child and Family Support in August and approved by the Cabinet last month, is an attempt to overcome these shortcomings by giving less to more people. A total of R75-million has been set aside for this year.

The state plans to use a simple means test to decide which primary care giver of a child qualifies for state aid, then limit that aid to a fixed amount for the first six years of life only – those being the years at which a child is most vulnerable and its mother least likely to be able to hold down a job.

Howls of protest have come from, among others, the Johannesburg Child Welfare Society.

Among the suggestions are that the grant be increased from R75 to R135, and that the qualifying age limit be extended 9 years, 15 years and 18 years were proposed.

Fraser-Moleketi has already hinted that careful consideration will be given to setting the figure higher than the R75 that the University of Port Elizabeth estimated would cover subsistence-level food and clothing.
Minister of welfare sticks to her child support plan

Fraser-Moleketi says an additional 2,7 million children will benefit through government's new programme

**BY RAMOTSEKA MABOTE**
Political Reporter

Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi announced yesterday that she will not back down from her new child support benefit programme, which has attracted widespread criticism.

Speaking at the Union Buildings, Fraser-Moleketi said the programme would come into effect on August 1 this year despite calls for it to be suspended.

The minister also said there was no reason to doubt the validity of the data used to develop the benefit plan. She said she was committed to seeing that the new plan worked in an "efficient and well-targeted manner.

She admitted that the new system may lead to more applications for other government grants, but said it was difficult to predict the effects "precisely".

Fraser-Moleketi, who was joined by provincial MECs for welfare, was responding to the doubt cast over the phasing out of the present state maintenance grant (SMG), replacing it with the controversial child support benefit, which she says will reach more people than the SMG.

The Cabinet has approved the proposal by Fraser-Moleketi to scrap the R1,25 billion SMG over five years and to replace it with the new benefit scheme at an additional cost of R1,2-billion to help support poor children.

The old SMG consisted of a grant of R30 a month for every parent and R15 for every child for a maximum of two children under the age of 18, with Africans making up only 2% of the beneficiaries and coloureds being in the majority at 48%. Indians and whites got 40 and 15% respectively from the grant.

The new system will pay a flat rate of R75 a month a child to all "primary care-givers", which would apply to all children from birth to 6 years old. This compares to the models produced by the Lund committee, which worked on the basis of a R70 flat rate paid to mothers of children between birth and 7.

A coalition of civic groups this week urged Fraser-Moleketi to reconsider the plan and to suspend its implementation. It said that contrary to the minister's promises, spending on child support would be cut by R2,5-billion over the next five years.

The minister said the total grant to child support beneficiaries would be cut by 20% annually over the next five years. However, about 2.7 million more children were expected to benefit by 2005.

The financial effects of increasing the grant of R75 per child and keeping the age limit at 18 as asked by the coalition should be studied with care, she said.
R90 million centre for young offenders to open

By Thembu Sepotokele

Juvenile offenders awaiting trial will no longer have to share prison cells with convicted criminals after the R90 million Walter Sisulu Child and Youth Centre in Noordgesig, Johannesburg, opens on Tuesday.

Speaking after a media tour of the modern centre this week, Gauteng welfare and population development MEC Mr Ignatius Jacobs said the idea was to keep young offenders away from hardened criminals.

"We have found that rebuilding the social fabric is the way to prevent certain social ills," Jacobs said. "The centre will form a nucleus of the community and is a key welfare project."

He said people from Diepkloof, Noordgesig and Orlando will manage the centre, adding that the staff was trained in new innovations and caring for children.

They started working last month under the centre's Superintendent Mpumi Ntsamal. According to Ntsamal 101 jobs have been created so far. She said the centre would accommodate 210 children. Sixty juveniles and 150 abused and abandoned children would be housed in the secure unit facility.

A baby unit will care for 30 babies.

Soweto 25/4/1997
war over C Ill We are green
Government bypasses safety of children

ARTICLES

South Africa

April 25, 1987

Marie A. Edmunds
Pioneer state-of-the-art facility in Soweto will care for home never like this, says reformatory boy.
Day of action pledged over child aid

[Image]
NGO Threatens Mass Action

Cosatu slams child support cuts

Casualties of State Welfare Cut-backs — Page 4
NGOs set to protest over cut in child grants

By PUSILLA SIBODI  (298)

Non-governmental organisations are threatening to call a national day of action on June 16 if Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi does not back down on her proposed changes to the child support system.

One of the most vehemently opposed recommendations is the payment of a flat rate of R75 a month per child under 6 years old, subject to a means test. The proposals are to take effect on August 1.

NGOs, under the umbrella of the South African National NGO Coalition, said in Johannesburg yesterday that if no alternative was tabled by June 10, the coalition would be forced to engage in national action.

Their call was supported yesterday by Cosatu, the SA Congress for Early Childhood Development, the Black Sash, the Women's National Coalition, the National Children's Rights Committee, and the National Welfare and Social Security Forum.

The coalition's executive director, Kumi Naidoo, said the NGOs did not believe a child could be sustained on R75 a month.

"We recognise the fiscal constraints facing the ministry, but are deeply concerned that while R75 might prevent starvation, it will not prevent malnourishment," he said.

But welfare spokesman Brian Sokutu yesterday reiterated the minister's earlier position that the new child support benefit was based on the need to de-racialise government policies, adding that the ministry had "set the goal of reaching 3 million children by the year 2005, compared with the totally unacceptable number of 203,622 currently being reached".

Naidoo said that unless there was an effective cross-departmental strategy to combat poverty, the Lund proposals would increase problems of child labour, prostitution and crime. The Lund Committee was commissioned by the Welfare Department to draft recommendations for a new state child support system.

Naidoo added: "As NGOs we would like to offer our support to the minister to rework the Lund proposals." The coalition proposed that the grant be maintained at R135 per child and that if there was to be an age restriction, it should be 9 years old, as recommended by the Lund report.
The Minister of Health today announced that the Department of Health will be taking immediate action to address the ongoing outbreak of the housing crisis. The Department has been working closely with local authorities to ensure that all necessary measures are in place to prevent further spread of the disease. The Minister emphasized the importance of public health measures, including mask-wearing, social distancing, and regular testing, to contain the outbreak. The Department has also set up a dedicated hotline for individuals who may have been exposed to the virus.

The Minister further highlighted the role of community leaders in promoting awareness and ensuring that everyone understands their responsibilities in controlling the spread of the disease. The Government has been working closely with community organizations to provide support and information to those affected.

The Minister also announced that extra funding will be allocated to support the health services, particularly in areas where the outbreak has been most severe. This will enable enhanced testing and contact tracing, as well as increased capacity for treatment and care.

The Minister concluded by expressing gratitude to the healthcare workers and volunteers who have been working tirelessly to respond to the crisis. The Government remains committed to ensuring the health and safety of all citizens during these challenging times.

The Minister of Health today also announced the appointment of a new Director General for the Department of Health. This appointment is part of the Government's ongoing efforts to improve the management and delivery of healthcare services. The new Director General will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of key policies, ensuring efficient use of resources, and enhancing the quality of services provided.

The Minister emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability in the management of the Department. The Government is committed to ensuring that all decisions are made in the best interest of the public, and that resources are used effectively to achieve the desired outcomes.

The Minister concluded by thanking all those who have been working to support the health services and the community during these challenging times. The Government remains committed to prioritizing the health and well-being of all citizens and to providing the necessary support to ensure a successful outcome.

The Minister of Health today also announced the introduction of new measures to support the mental health and wellbeing of the public. These measures include increased access to mental health services, the creation of a national mental health hotline, and the implementation of a comprehensive program to promote mental health awareness and prevention.

The Minister emphasized the importance of addressing mental health issues during the ongoing crisis, highlighting theimpact of stress and anxiety on individuals and communities. The Government is committed to ensuring that mental health services are accessible and responsive to the needs of all citizens.

The Minister concluded by thanking all those who have been working to support the mental health services and the community during these challenging times. The Government remains committed to prioritizing the mental health and well-being of all citizens and to providing the necessary support to ensure a successful outcome.
Child care cuts: we'll listen, says minister
Children have been involved in all aspects of the Programme. An issue is how protection is being handled. The NGS have been involved in the Programme's implementation and have received feedback on their involvement. The Programme has been well-received and has led to increased awareness of child rights. Children have been involved in the Programme from an early age and have participated in decision-making processes. The Programme has led to increased awareness of child rights and has contributed to the protection of children's rights. The NGS have been involved in the Programme and have contributed to its success. The Programme has led to increased awareness of child rights and has contributed to the protection of children's rights.
35 838 child abuse cases probed last year

CLOVE SAWYER
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ARG 14/6/97

The Child Protection Unit investigated 35 838 cases of child abuse – including almost 14 000 cases of rape – last year.

The number of investigations into child abuse cases has risen steadily: in 1991 there were 12 032 investigations; in 1992 there were 14 272; in 1995 there were 28 961; and in 1996 there were 35 833.

Cases last year included indecent assault (4 168), incest (283), sodomy (833), assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm (584), common assault (4 502), abduction (1 184), and public indecency (644).

The figures were given in the National Assembly by Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi, but he could not say how many investigations had resulted in arrests and convictions. Compiling this information would burden limited resources.
Northern Cape are quietly mobilising to have the plan scrapped or put on hold until after the 1999 elections. They fear a rousing at the polls as a result of disillusionment in coloured communities, in particular, when the child benefit cuts start biting.

In terms of Moleketi's plan, which emanates from the Lund Committee, government intends replacing child and family support — currently R350/month (parental grant) plus R135/child for up to two children younger than 18 — with a flat rate of R75/child aged up to six.

In the past, the grants went almost exclusively to coloured, white and Indian families. In coloured communities, 48 out of 1,000 children under 18 benefit from the scheme. In African communities, only two children out of 1,000 benefit.

The ANC failed to win the Western Cape in 1994. In the Northern Cape, it received 49% of the vote to the National Party's 43%.

"The principle of the scheme cannot be faulted. We must break with the past and spread the cake. But there is no way we are going to allow this to harm the ANC," says a Northern Cape ANC leader.

A Western Cape leader says the poor voted for the ANC in the 1996 local government elections in the province and "now we are abandoning them."

"A way must be found to ensure that a new programme is phased in which will not harm or alienate the present beneficiaries," he adds. "Doing it this way will lose us the same people we are committed to helping."

The ANC leaders fear that disillusionment and anger at the cuts will tip the balance in the NP's favour.

In her Budget vote speech, Fraser-Moleketi indicated she would forge ahead with plans to implement the system from August.

She dangled the carrot of compromise to her detractors only in so far as the details of the plan are concerned. But "there is no turning back on this," she says.

The SA Nongovernmental organisations Coalition (Sangoco), representing about 2,400 bodies, will stage protest activities on June 16 to highlight their grievances.

Coalition programme director Jacqui Bouille says the figures on which the Ministry's calculations are based are flawed.

She says the University of Port Elizabeth research used is racist because the term "low income" merely replaced "black" in the survey, while "lower-middle income" replaced "coloured."

According to UPE's September 1996 household subsistence report, R73.71 is needed for a low-income child aged 0-3, and R107.41 for a lower-middle income child.

Fraser-Moleketi says the new scheme will be fully operational by 2005, at an estimated cost of R2.7bn — which means an "additional cost" of about R1.6bn over the next five years.

According to figures, however, Fraser-Moleketi will cut R2.9bn from child support.

"The question is, can the State afford to pay? The answer is yes because the ministry has used conservative estimates that assume that there will be 100% take-up of the offer, and this will not happen." Bouille predicts.

The lobbyists are also querying Lund's assertion that a child needs R1,72/month for fruit and R1.63 for fish. Welfare organisations say it is impossible to feed and clothe a child for R75/month.

Sangoco argues for an increase in the rate to R135 and a widening of the net from the intended poorest 30% to all children living with a care giver whose monthly income is less than R800.

"We are committed to the principle of deracialising and we will not budge on this one," Fraser-Moleketi says. "The nitty-gritties will surely be finalised after the hearings by the parliamentary committee, but the broad plan goes on."

Justice Malala
Bill to protect children a first (278)

Farouk Chothia

MARITZBURG — African Christian Democratic Party member Jo-Ann Downes yesterday became the first KwaZulu-Natal MP to introduce a private members' bill, proposing the creation of an office of the commissioner of children in the province.

The bill was expected to win the backing of all parties as they had previously indicated support for the idea.

Downes said the office would effectively operate as a ministry of children with the aim of protecting the interests of children under 18.

She said a similar bill was introduced in the National Assembly and the Gauteng legislature.

The bill required "precautionary sex offenders" to "register" with the office, which would then publicise their names.

The office could inform community leaders, school principals and local police of the offenders in their neighbourhood.

Downes said that out of every 500 cases of child abuse reported, only 38 were investigated, resulting in one conviction.

The bill, if passed, will also give the office investigating powers, like search and summons of suspected sex offenders.

The suspect would be compelled to answer all questions.

Downes said the office would require a "modest" budget.

Timber growers object to new water policy

Robyn Chalmers

THE Forest Industries Association's objection to the recently released national water policy hinges on allegations of a lack of consultation and insufficient analysis of the policy's effect on the forest industry.

The association, representing the majority of commercial timber growers, said yesterday it could have far-reaching implications for the industry.

Water and Forestry Affairs Minister Kader Asmal this week launched the paper which he said, would ensure equity in water allocation and sustainable water use with a greater emphasis on water conservation and water demand management.

The association said that contrary to an undertaking given by Asmal, no consultation took place between the time the cabinet adopted the principles and objectives of a new law and its acceptance last week of the paper.

The association said the water affairs and forestry department had invited comments and contributions before the completion of the national water bill by the beginning of July.

"The industry is seriously concerned that the time available is too short to make adequate comment, given the enormous impact the new legislation could have. The association has formally requested the minister to extend the consultation period by at least three months," it said.

Aspects of the water policy document which concerned association members included that users would be subject to water use licences. In the case of forestry, although water is not delivered, there would be a charge for water used which meant that permission would have to be obtained to use and pay for rainfall, it said.

The limited duration of water use licences was also of concern, particularly as there was no guarantee they would be renewed. The association said this was a critical element, bearing in mind the long-term nature of investment in forestry and timber processing.

It appeared there would be no compensation for the loss of existing water rights.

The association said in view of the forest industry's major contribution to economic development, particularly rural development, the effect of the new water policy could have serious implications for investment.

Forest industry exports totalled R4.6bn a year and the association said 95% of this was value-added products with little raw material exported.

Taxi bodies welcome 'overdue' bill

Bonile Ngcicyana

'TAXI industry players yesterday welcomed the approval by the cabinet on Wednesday of the National Land Transport Bill, with spokesperson for national taxi bodies saying the measure was "long overdue".

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said on Wednesday the bill would consolidate the nation's laws on land transport, including the provision of passenger transport services and specify legislation to control the industry.

SA Taxi Drivers' Union general secretary Maurice Bokaba said that the legislation was a first step toward the normalisation of labour relations in the industry.

"A regulated industry will contribute towards the achievement of our aspirations adopted at our congress in April last year. An unregulated industry has been nothing but a hindrance to our aims," he said.

He said the union was involved in brainstorming sessions with the National Taxi Task Team for the establishment of a labour forum which would work out relations between employers and employees.

SA Long Distance Taxi Association spokesman Bhotile Towele said: "Everyone in the industry understands that this legislation is for the betterment of the industry, but government will have to publicise this more—particularly in the indigenous languages."
Council tackles crèche equity

PETER DENNEY

NOW that Guguletu and Nyanga are part of the Cape Town municipality, there is pressure for the same tariffs to be charged there.

The problem is that fees for nursery schools run by the council's health department are considerably lower in the two townships than elsewhere — R9 a child weekly, compared with R22, due to increase to R25 next year.

A report before a special meeting of the amenities and health committee yesterday noted nine nursery schools run by the health department cared for 470 children at an annual cost of R3.4 million.

Medical officer of health Dr.

Michael Popkiss said: "... because of the potential political sensitivity, a policy decision will be required on whether or not to increase the fee."

He asked it was possible to phase in the increase over a period of years.

The council's legal adviser, Mr Les Barchard, quoted the case of Walker vs Pretoria City Council, which laid down the principle that where services were materially the same but the tariffs differed, it could amount to prima facie discrimination.

He said a parent from another area could refuse to pay on the grounds that the same service was available in Langa and Guguletu at half the cost.

Committee member Ms Fadhlela de Vries suggested that the R25 tariff accounted for a different percentage of the income of the parents in Langa and Guguletu than elsewhere, and that this difference should be used to provide a justification for different tariffs for the same service.

Barchard replied that the test was actually in whether the service was of the same standard, not what proportion of the parents' income the fee comprised.

During a discussion about ways to provide the Langa and Guguletu crèches with interim financial help, assistant director of civic amenities Mr Robin Horn noted: "If you go the route of a grant-in-aid, others will be wanting it too."
Street kid thugs 'untouchable'

LINDSAY BARNES

Cape Town police say they are powerless to act against street children, who are responsible for a third of robberies in the city centre.

The police did not have the solution to the problem of juvenile offenders and it was now up to other government departments to get involved, said central police station commissioner Raymond Dowd.

Children between eight and 17 were responsible for 35 percent of robberies in the centre of Cape Town between April 1 and May 4.

If the problem was not tackled quickly, not even draconian police measures would help, said Director Dowd.

He was speaking at the handing over of SA Law Commission documents on the justice system to Justice Minister Dullah Omar and his deputy, Manto Tshabalala, in Cape Town yesterday.

Director Dowd said the police had exhausted all avenues in trying to deal with the problem of juvenile crime problem but children involved in petty theft knew they were virtually untouchable. Departments responsible for addressing the problem seemed helpless.

In its paper on juvenile justice, the Law Commission says the system of dealing with child offenders was inefficient and that a separate, cohesive juvenile justice system was needed.
Child abuse cases soar to new levels
'59 percent increase this year'

The number of neglected and abused children in the Western Cape has spiralled to unprecedented levels with some welfare organisations reporting an average of 35 cases a month last year.

And this year there has been a 59 percent increase on the 320 children who were taken in by social workers at the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereeniging (ACVV) last year.

Last month alone social workers took in a quarter of the children they took in during the entire 1996/1997 year.

ACVV head social worker Alecia Brand said the children came mostly from low socio-economic areas.

The ACVV renders welfare services to families with children up to the age of 12.

"Unemployment, substance abuse, family violence, poor parental skills and homelessness are all factors that contribute to the increase in child abuse and neglect," Ms Brand said.

The economic climate also played a major role.

Low morale among parents led to physical and emotional neglect, abuse and abandonment, she said.

"These days we find that parents are not able to cope financially or emotionally because of low incomes and housing problems," Ms Brand said. This led to increased substance abuse, family violence and crime.

"Various sources report child abuse and neglect to us. We get reports from police, hospitals, schools and members of the public."

Children were sometimes left with family or friends but the parents never returned to fetch them.

"It is important to know that the welfare organisations firstly want to promote family unity and that we will remove children only when it is the last and only option and in their best interests."

"It is always the aim of the social worker to work towards placing a child back with his biological family," Ms Brand said.

Shawco social worker Rachel Evertse said that in the first three weeks of this month she had attended to 10 cases of sexual and physical abuse in the Kensington and Factroton areas.

"There is definitely a gradual increase in child abuse and neglect and the situation is not getting any better," Mrs Evertse said.

"Every year the numbers go up."

Mrs Evertse echoed Ms Brand when she said the children mostly came from low-income homes and that parents were frustrated with their meagre existence.

Statistics from the Child Protection Unit show that during 1996 627 cases of indecent assault were reported, 89 of grievous bodily harm and 14 of incest.

Police woman Irina Haupt said 50 percent of these offences were committed on children younger than 16 by parents, acquaintances and family members.

"In these instances we usually ask social workers to investigate the home environment," Captain Haupt said.
The image contains an article or editorial titled "Child Support Benefit: Too Low?" discussing the issue of child support benefits being insufficient. The text appears to be a continuation of a previous article, mentioning terms like "poor," "kicked out," and "benefits," indicating a discussion around social welfare or economic challenges. The text is fragmented and not fully visible due to the image resolution, making it challenging to provide a comprehensive transcription. The article seems to be from a newspaper, considering the layout and format.
Child welfare hearing
farcical – Black Sash

ARG 27/5/97 (298)

East London – A poorly attended public hearing in Umtata yesterday into the Lund Commission's recommendations on child welfare was attacked as "farcical" by the Black Sash.

East London Black Sash office director Zola Dabula said although the hearing was the only one for the Eastern Cape, no other organisations from Port Elizabeth or East London were present.

The Black Sash said that the recommendation to pay a welfare grant of R75 a child under the age of six was "patent nonsense".

The vast majority of needy East Cape children would battle to get their grant as 74 percent of Eastern Cape African children under the age of five did not have a birth certificate.

Sash casework had also shown that it took between one and three years for a social grant application to be processed in the Eastern Cape. - Ecna
Child maintenance must be adequate and equitable

Human rights commissioner Rhoda Kadaliie responds to Financial and Fiscal Commission chairman Murphy Morobe on the new child support benefits

The Financial and Fiscal Commission is one of the few institutions directly involved in developing the new child support benefit that is to replace state maintenance grants. It is therefore noteworthy that commission chairman Murphy Morobe deemed it appropriate to comment publicly (“Some misconceptions must be debunked,” Business Day, May 16) on criticisms levelled against the proposed system by trade unions, churches, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, as well as the Commission for Gender Equality and the Human Rights Commission.

Even more noteworthy is that Morobe acknowledges the validity of the criticisms and, in doing so, contradicts public pronouncements by Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi regarding the new benefits. It is therefore not inappropriate to ask: Whose misconceptions were being debunked?

Morobe concedes it “will be difficult” to target the grant on just 30% of children younger than seven for the same reasons put forward by civil society, namely it would mean having to distinguish between the poor and the poor. But whereas civil society argues this can be overcome by expanding eligibility to all children living with care-givers earning less than R800 a month, Morobe suggests “an alternative approach to assess (children’s) eligibility” should be considered.

He does not elaborate, but we know that the welfare department is investigating a means test whereby children will have to be taken to a clinic to be weighed and measured to determine their nutritional status, and only if they are malnourished will they get a grant. This will impose tremendous costs on the already overstretched health system and, given that clinics are not accessible in most rural areas, the very children the system should be reaching will tend to be excluded. A nutrition-based means test is counter-productive as it addresses malnourishment only once it has occurred, rather than preventing it. It could also perversely encourage children to be starved so they can get the grants.

With regard to setting the grant level at R75 a month per eligible child, Morobe notes there are “disagreements over the methodology used” to arrive at the amount. This underestimates the extent of the disagreement.

The minister claims the amount is based on the household subsistence level calculated by the Institute for Development Planning and Research at Port Elizabeth University. But Prof Johan Potgeter, who researches

the subsistence level, has stated publicly that R75 (in 1996 rand) covers only children aged 1 to 3, and not children younger than seven, as claimed.

The suitability of the subsistence level data is also questioned as it distinguishes between subsistence levels for blacks and coloureds and is thus premised on racial assumptions. Morobe’s call for further research to establish a suitable grant level echoes similar calls from civil society. We agree with Morobe that it is imperative to peg the grant to an inflation-linked standard to prevent its real value being eroded. The welfare department, however, has resisted this idea.

Morobe’s admission that “Of course there must be savings...” is the first time that anyone close to the process has publicly admitted this to be the case. Until now, evidence that a massive cut in welfare spending on children in the short term was inevitable was either questioned or rejected by the minister and department.

Morobe does not put a figure to the “savings”, but financial modelling done by the Institute for Social Development at Western Cape University projects cuts of R9.9bn over the next five years. Given wider acceptance that cuts are inevitable, the minister needs to find a mechanism to keep the funds in the welfare sector. The extent of savings could be reduced by not phasing in the new benefits as proposed, but giving immediate access to the other children. Any remaining savings could then go to a social development fund that civil society could access for development projects in the kind of development Morobe is promoting. It would be ethically and morally reprehensible for the minister to allow “savings” to be used to repay debt or cut the deficit.

Government’s priorities are at the heart of the matter. Morobe argues that the cabinet’s acceptance of the Lund proposals and its commitment to increase the budget for child maintenance from R1.3bn to R2.7bn over the next seven years reflects a strong political shift towards spending on poor children. But civil society regards the changes as woefully inadequate. Just 0.6% of the national budget goes to child maintenance. Increasing this amount by 10% a year over the next seven years is hardly a significant reallocation of government spending. As it is, inflation is 9% at the moment, so the real gains will be minimal.

Fraser-Moleketi often notes that “children are our greatest treasures”. Why not, then, prioritise caring for them properly? We agree that government must “clarify” its priorities. We go on to argue that the child maintenance budget should be increased over the next seven years to at least R26bn a year in 1996 rand. Apart from the moral and human rights arguments, reprioritising expenditure towards children is a worthwhile investment in human capital.

Such a budgetary increase for child maintenance would resolve the difficulties with both the means test and the grant level, by enabling the minister to deliver a grant of R135 to 80% of children aged 0-6 years old. It would show a strong commitment to children’s welfare within reasonable budgetary constraints.

It would avoid the untenable possibility, suggested by Morobe, of the finance department freezing the growth of the programme if the uptake of beneficiaries is greater than budgeted. This would entrenched an inequitable distribution of grants as rural children are likely to get access last. With the present plan, this is a real possibility as about 68% of children under 6 years old live with care-givers earning below R250 a month, which far exceeds the minister’s final update target of 3 million.

Morobe’s view that “the importance of an efficient administrative system cannot be over-emphasised” is precisely in line with what civil society has been arguing. Failure to transform the existing administration will simply replicate the present inequitable system, but at a far lower level of government. Children in rural, marginalised communities would continue to lose out.

Morobe refers to a range of substantive issues that need clarification if the new system is to succeed. It is unlikely this can be done before August 1, the proposed implementation date. So the minister is being called upon to delay implementation to allow more time to put the necessary administration in place. Failure to do so could seriously damage the credibility of the programme, when poor people in rural areas try to access it, but are unable to do so.

Despite the ongoing public hearings, civil society is being excluded from the “technical discussions” that are aimed at clarifying these very issues. This would seem to contradict the minister’s commitment to the principle of public participation, as set out in the white paper on social welfare.

We believe there is much in the present proposals that is positive. It is time the minister adopted a more flexible approach and sought to form a real partnership with civil society to ensure that a system of child maintenance is implemented that will be truly equitable, adequate and efficient.
Support for welfare minister over grants

BY NORMAN CHANDLER
Pretoria Bureau

Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi should not be criticised for recent welfare cuts because they are a result of the pruning of the budget deficit, it was said yesterday.

John Kane-Berman, chief executive of the SA Institute of Race Relations, said Fraser-Moleketi was being unfairly attacked for cutting back on grants.

"Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel won golden opinions in March for keeping his planned Budget deficit down to 4% of the gross domestic product. Now come the harsh consequences. Fraser-Moleketi deserves praise, not attack, for trying to cut her cost according to the cloth Manuel handed her," Kane-Berman said.

State maintenance grants (paid at a rate of R430 per parent plus R136 for each of two children) are to be phased out over five years.

These grants, the majority of which are being paid to Indian and coloured children, will be replaced with a flat-rate child support benefit of R75 a child per month, but only according to the results of a means test on parents and families involved. Grants will end when a child turns 6 years old.

The new grant is expected to benefit about 3 million poverty-stricken children by 2005.

"Fraser-Moleketi cannot be faulted for wanting to spread the benefit more widely and to reach the poorest of the poor. Obviously it would be desirable to lift the age ceiling and the amount," said Kane-Berman.

He added that one way of reaching the latter goal would be the elimination of fraud and corruption, which is said to consume 13% of the welfare budget annually.
No clear process for dealing with abuse

Child care system 'a mess'
W Cape youth commission mooted

RECOMMENDATIONS by the Provincial Youth Task Group (PYTG) for a Provincial Youth Commission to be established were welcomed yesterday by Education and Cultural Affairs MEC Ms Martha Ockers.

The PYTG, which started its investigation in May last year, found there was a need for a forum where the youth could voice their opinions.

Ockers said special attention would have to be given to urgent youth development projects and programmes identified by the task group. These included setting up multipurpose centres and a youth service corps. — Sapa

CT 30/6/97
Cash for kids: h

Anger over government plc

MINISTER OF WELFARE GERALDINE FRASER-MOLEKETI IS FACING A FURORUE OVER CHANGES TO STATE CHILD SUPPORT BENEFITS. WHILE CRITICS AGREE THAT REFORM IS ESSENTIAL, THE NEW SYSTEM, ALREADY APPROVED BY CABINET, HAS BEEN GREETED WITH OUTRAGE. JENNY VIALL REPORTS.

Child maintenance grants from the State are the first line of defence against poverty and malnutrition for many people. In South Africa an estimated 14.5 million children under the age of 15 live in poverty, of whom only 806 002 get maintenance grants.

Administrative barriers and lack of information have severely restricted access to the grants and the system clearly needs to be changed.

Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi says the new benefit system is premised on the need to de-racialise government policies. "We have a moral and constitutional obligation to extend benefits to those people who have not had access to public assistance in the past."

Everyone agrees with that, but not with the proposals.

The new system recommends that the primary caregiver gets a flat rate benefit of R75 a month per child under six. This payment will be subject to a means test (to be determined). Ms Fraser-Moleketi has said she hopes to reach three million of the 5.1 million children under six by 2003.

The present maintenance system gives a parent allowance of R480 (which falls away under the new system) and a child allowance of R185 for up to two children under 18 years old. These grants will be phased out over five years.

The proposed new system, based on recommendations by the Lund Committee on child and family support, has met with opposition from the Non-Governmental Organisations Coalition, Cosatu, church groups, human rights groups and the Gender Commission.

They say the grant is too little and too limited and will have disastrous consequences for the most vulnerable members of society: children living in poverty.

They claim there has been inadequate consultation on the new system, saying the Lund Committee did not call for representations from civil society before the report was published in August 1996.

The CSO, however, accepted the recommendations in March this year before the portfolio committee on welfare had the chance to discuss or hold public hearings on the recommendations. In April, when the portfolio committee did hear from civic society, warnings were sounded that the recommendations could seriously damage the welfare of children in South Africa.

Ms Fraser-Moleketi responded last week by saying there was no turning back. "The new child support benefit will become a reality," she said.

While government argues that it cannot afford to spend more than the R2.8 billion it will cost to implement payouts for children, critics argue that it cannot afford not to.

Conrad Barberton of Idasa's poverty monitoring service said debate on the proposals had tended to focus almost entirely on what the new system was likely to cost in terms of actual expenditure. "What it hasn't done is to go into depth at negative consequences of the proposal," he said. "Fiscal constraint is used to defend choices, but we need to look at other kinds of costs and consequences."

One of these is the high infant mortality rates in South Africa. "A decent system of social security will not be able to solve this but it could go some way to averting its worst consequences," Mr Barberton said.

UWC's Community Rehabilitation Project has said it is unrealistic for a child to survive on R75 a month, a sentiment echoed by many organisations. The household subsistence level for a low-income household in Cape Town in 1996 was R5 a month, excluding rent and transport (calculated by University of Port Elizabeth Institute for Development Planning).

The new system will have a disastrous effect on women and children from impoverished communities, the Women's Movement has said. "The minister has failed to re prioritise women and children's needs by reviewing the budget. She is determined to go ahead with the Cabinet decisions despite fierce opposition from women who are in dire poverty."

The Women on Farms project warned that while self-reliance should be encouraged, many mothers would not be able to provide for their children on R75 a month.

Long-term impacts on children included malnurtrition, which impaired a child's mental development and caused stunting. This in turn increased the burden on the health system and mental institutions, reduced the effectiveness of education spending and reduced the future productivity of the labour force.

Other negative impacts were an increase in child abuse due to poor economic conditions at home, which increased the burdens on nursing and the judicial system and increased social welfare costs.

Kumi Maitso, executive director of the NGO Coalition, said that until there was an effective cross-departmental strategy to combat poverty, the new proposals would exacerbate problems of child labour, prostitution and crime. "Is it not more cost-effective to invest government resources in social security for children than to spend resources on dealing with the consequences of child poverty?" said Mr Barberton.

The decision on the child benefit system has been based on fiscal constraint what the country can afford and the minister has taken a conservative approach, one says is factually unsound in both medium and long term. But critics say child maintenance grants should be based not only on what the Government says it can afford, but on what children need.

Mr Barberton said the Government had allocated little more than a "couple of crumbs" of the budget cake to address child poverty.

"If the department was serious asking for an adequate slice of the budget cake it would have taken these costs into consideration, and worked out the costs of not implementing an adequate system. It
has not done that," he said. It is assumed that the Government cannot afford to spend more than R12 billion on social security for children. No one - the Lund committee, the minister of welfare or the department - has explained why financial constraints on social security for children should be R2 billion and not more. Are these real or self-imposed?" asked Mr Barberton.

In the 1997/98 Budget only 0.6 percent of the Budget was allocated to social security for children. A third of the Budget, at least R66 billion, was "top-sticked" for priority spending on interest on government debt, improvements in civil servants' service conditions, carry-through costs for social pensions, RDP projects and commitment to the housing programme, among others.

"The Budget Council, which consists almost entirely of men, did not regard providing social security for children to be sufficiently crucial to include in the priority category of expenditure," said Mr Barberton.

Critics ask whether the new child maintenance system is being used to limit government spending on social security for children. Studies have shown that because of a lack of administrative capacity, the proposals will lead to a huge reduction in overall spending on child and family support. Administrative barriers and lack of information continue to be a problem in allocating grants, with rural areas worse off than urban areas.

"The Lund report did not address problems of administration in any detail," said Mr Barberton. "and this is the greatest constraint on access to the present system of state maintenance grants or any new system."

"Unless it's improved drastically and equally spread over provinces, take-up of new grants will be the same as the old system."

"Every aspect of the present cabinet recommendations is aimed at limiting expenditure to the absolute minimum without the system becoming a sick joke," the Lund Commission was established because the Government was concerned about the future affordability of grants. The commission came up with projected figures of between R5 million and R20 million a year if equitable access was to be achieved.

"These figures are so divergent. To use them as the basis of drastic policy change is not realistic and unrealistic assumptions, namely a perfect administration system and take-up rates of 100 percent, These are unheard of anywhere in the world," said Mr Barberton.

"The argument that the present system (of R135 a month per child) is financially unsustainable is based on two very optimistic and unrealistic assumptions, namely a perfect administration system and take-up rates of 100 percent. These are unheard of anywhere in the world."

Both Cosatu and the NGO Coalition have asked Mrs Fraser-Moleketi to delay implementation of the proposals and review the budget allocation to child support. The NGO Coalition has given the minister until June 10 to come up with revised proposals or face action.

"It's a necessary creative tension which will only strengthen our democracy" and we need to respect arguments forwarded from either side."
Child care at work

By Siza Ngqwebo

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions wants employers to set up child care facilities in the workplace.

Cosatu gender coordinator in KwaZulu-Natal Ms Bongiwe Mbeje expressed Cosatu's position at the Children's Day celebration in Durban yesterday.

Mbeje said employers should contribute towards setting up child care facilities.

Mbeje said that these facilities may be used as a means of combating the rise in the number of street children. "If we don't have a safe place for our children in the workplace, then we cannot have as many street children as we have now," she said.

To set up such facilities, she said the government, employers and workers must work together.
THE BIG STORY

Suffer the little children...

Masithethe project is taking street kids back home

Many people see street children as ruffians who constantly roam the streets mugging tourists and assaulting people in the city centre. But now a positive story on street kids has emerged, with a homestead programme aimed at rehabilitating them and returning them to their homes. City reporter Jermaine Craig looked at the programme.

When the Cape Argus team visited 15-year-old Nathan Ludick at his modest Philippi home, we found him playing outside with his younger brother and sister. He looked every bit the protective older brother looking after his siblings. Difficult to imagine, then, that only a week ago he had never before laid eyes on his younger brother and sister. He is only now beginning to get to know them.

What makes this family's story different from others is that Nathan left home at the age of eight and grew up on the streets of central Cape Town. Living a life of petty crime, his situation could so easily have had disastrous consequences.

Last week, his life took a new turn when he returned home.

For Nathan, his cloud seems to have a silver lining and for this new beginning he has Linda Nshinga and the Homestead Programme to thank.

Linda is a street worker on a programme called Masithethe (let us speak), aimed at rehabilitating street kids and getting them to return home.

Since the Masithethe programme was launched on April 1, Linda has managed to get Nathan and six other children off the streets and back to their homes. He also has interviewed 66 new children. Of these, 38 were new to the streets, 23 had been attending the Yizani Drop-In Centre and eight were runaways from existing Homestead programmes.

Linda, a 24-year-old SACS matriculant, and the co-ordinator of Yizani, and Shane Eyopi are entrusted with making Masithethe a success.

It is his job to patrol the streets, making contact with the children and establishing which ones are new arrivals. He has to gain their trust and try to refer them to Yizani, where many street kids come for meals and a little much-needed attention. Linda then tries to make contact with the street kids' families to see what the home environment is, with a view to getting them off the streets and back home.

It is a hard and thankless job, but Linda feels the reward comes when he is successful with children like Nathan.

Nathan's story is similar to that of many others out on the streets.

Born in De Doorns, he grew up in Belhar where he got along well with his friends and regularly attended school. Then his family moved to Philippi and he started mixing with the wrong crowd. He got caught up in petty crime, later refusing to attend school.

One day, seven years ago, Nathan and some friends took the train to Mitchell's Plain. When they tried to return home to Philippi, they found they had caught an express train which took them straight to Cape Town.

That day was the last time Nathan saw his home.

He met up with another group of friends in Cape Town and started a life of crime on the streets, where he was influenced by other streetwise kids. He used to sleep in shop doorways and begged for food and money. To survive the cold, he shifted glue and thinners regularly and got involved with a group who stabbed and robbed people in the city centre.

He continued this lifestyle for several years, but an incident two weeks ago made him change his ways and leave his life on the street — hopefully for good.

The leader of the group with which Nathan moved around was shot and killed.

With Linda's help, Nathan returned home and is now back "forever" and about to start working with his father.

He says his father used to drink, but has since stopped. He feels things at home are "going well" and he does not want to return to the streets.

His wish for the future is simple: "I am going to work and save money. I want to be a father of the house. I feel happy here."

I met Linda and Shane at the Yizani Drop-In Centre, bustling with destitute street kids who were looking for a hot meal and a shower. The kids do not stay at Yizani, but go there as a stopover before returning to the streets.

Once the kids come to Yizani, Shane and Linda try to motivate them to attend formal programmes and get them to sleep at Homestead’s shelters. They then try to establish contact with the families.

Linda says: "Masithethe's main objective is to return children to their communities, so that they do not get too street-wise. I keep in contact with the kids to establish which ones are new. I try to build trust between me and them and then try to refer them to formal programmes."

What makes the Masithethe programme different from others is that it does not stop once the kids return home. Linda and Shane try to network with community structures, such as soccer clubs, to try and get the children to fit in. They do follow-up visits and take food parcels to the families.

Poverty is the umbrella cause. In some cases, there is a total breakdown of family structures and children are left to their own devices.

The outlook for street kids is bleak in most cases, but Linda is the perfect candidate to work with these kids, and she knows the importance of her job.

"I grew up in the communities they come from. I am ploughing back what I have got from the community. It is a great job," says Linda.
HSRC worried about child-abuse ignorance

The Human Sciences Research Council is concerned that the public’s perception of what constitutes child abuse falls far short of what child abuse and neglect truly is.

In a statement marking International Day of the Child yesterday, the HSRC noted that a recent survey had revealed that South Africans did not have a clear idea of what child abuse was. Very few realised that child abuse included physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as neglect.

This ignorance could have an impact on the rate of reporting of child abuse, the HSRC said, noting that its own study had revealed that a quarter of child-abuse cases were not reported.

Only 3% of the respondents in its study mentioned emotional abuse when asked what child abuse was.

“The respondents seem to be particularly unaware of the impact of emotional abuse on children,” the HSRC said.

Child abuse in South Africa had reached "epidemic proportions", with 32 653 cases - excluding offences under the Child Care Act such as neglect and abandonment - being dealt with by the police's child protection unit in 1996.

This represented a 43% increase on the cases reported in 1993.

“Only 3% of the people who know what physical, sexual and emotional child abuse is in order to be able to report cases,” said Evante Schurink, the HSRC’s programme manager for child and family welfare.

“They must also know what signs to look for to identify the abused child and what to do if they suspect child abuse or if a child discloses abuse.”

Schurink said voluntary action and the reporting of child abuse by the public constituted the core of the child protection system.

It was therefore crucial to monitor what the public perception of child abuse was. - Sapa.
Parents feel intimidated by the continued presence of the raptur

More kids sexually abused

By Nabil Mostafa

(28) Jarrowan 4/6/97
SA abandons child rape victims

BY IMBAL MODISI

The Government of South Africa has abandoned the plight of children who are raped. Despite numerous promises and commitments, the government has failed to provide adequate support and protection to these vulnerable children. The lack of resources and inadequate infrastructure in many areas has led to a situation where children are left to fend for themselves. The government's failure to act has resulted in a generation of children who are at risk of further harm. The situation is desperate and urgent action is needed.
ANC talks on child payments

CEIDE SWYER
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

The African National Congress is set for an intense internal debate on how to respond to the Lund Committee's proposed R75-a-month child support scheme. Some ANC MPs believe the R75 figure, described by critics as unrealistic, should be increased significantly.

The Lund proposals have infuriated non-government organisations in the welfare sector, who have given Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi until June 16, Youth Day, to rethink government endorsement of them. Cosatu and other NGOs have threatened mass action on June 16 unless the Government backs down.

'The National Assembly committee on welfare is to discuss its response to the Lund proposals soon.'
Cash crisis for youth empowerment scheme

BY DAIJY JONES

The largest nationwide youth empowerment programme, the President's Award, is turning to its own beneficiaries for funding as corporate and other sources of income dry up.

Even the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, which has similar aims, will cut its donation to the programme by half, and corporate donors are also reducing their donations.

Now the disadvantaged youth who are supposed to benefit from the President's Award are having to raise funds and dig into their own pockets in the face of the organisation's looming funding crisis.

The programme is a charity organisation which promotes business initiatives among the youth. It concentrates on equipping youngsters with skills.

The problem, says managing director Mzwabantu Nkanyeni, is that self-sufficiency will be difficult to achieve without interim financial support.

According to the President's Award's annual report published this week, "South African corporate donors tightened their purse strings at the same time as overseas funding dried up".

Spokesman Sarah Chapman says potential recipients of awards from the organisation have pledged to pay R100 to participate in the programme.

And past participants are involved in fundraising initiatives such as the formation of a travelling gumboot dance troupe, and teaching and building for the organisation.

Last year 7 600 youngsters received bronze, silver or gold awards, depending on the period of their participation in programmes. They raised R120 000 for the organisation, while corporate donors gave a total of R3.1-million.
Cash crisis for youth empowerment scheme

By Daisy Jones

The largest nationwide youth empowerment programme, the President's Award, is turning to its own beneficiaries for funding as corporate and other sources of income dry up.

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Minister to back down?

Pressure from lobbyists and ANC leaders may have forced a rethink

After weeks of standing firm, Welfare & Population Development Minister Geraline Fraser-Moleketi is on the verge of backing down on the implementation of her controversial new welfare benefit scheme.

Opposition to the implementation of the scheme—scheduled for August 1—has increased to such a level that sources close to the Minister have indicated a compromise may be unveiled by June 30 when she meets her critics.

The powerful parliamentary portfolio committee on welfare, which has held additional hearings on the matter in Umbata and Pietervis, is also set to recommend that the scheme be changed.

Though committee chairman Cas Saloojee said he could not comment on how it would rule, it is understood that committee members are almost unanimous in calling for the increase in grants to children. The committee will release its recommendations in two weeks.

The SA Nongovernmental Organisations Coalition has held informal meetings with Fraser-Moleketi and her task team in which it is understood, a reversal of her previous position was almost reached.

In the meetings, Moleketi admitted that her department’s figures had been “very conservative.”

Pressure for change to the system has also been increasing from within the ANC itself, from Cosatu and from church groups.

Northern Cape premier Marrie Dipico approached President Nelson Mandela two weeks ago to ask him to implore her to go softly on the issue. In a private meeting in Bloemfontein, Dipico is understood to have asked the President to postpone implementation of the scheme.

Dipico and the ANC in the Western Cape are fearful that coloured voters, who have been the main recipients of the scheme in the past, will switch their votes to the NP in protest. Mandela is believed to have pledged to consult further on the issue.

Under the barrage of criticism, Moleketi also appointed a task team to revisit the plan. The team is expected to report back to her next week and may also suggest a compromise.

In terms of Fraser-Moleketi’s plan, child and family support—now R430/month (parental grant) plus R135/child (for up to two children younger than 18) — will be replaced with a flat rate of R75/child aged up to six. Despite the intense lobbying against her plan over the last few weeks, she adamantly refused to budge.

But indications are that she may indeed increase the R75 allocation to R135 and ensure that present beneficiaries do not take cuts over the next five years as initially planned.

Moleketi’s plan will be fully operational by 2005 at an estimated cost of R2,78bn, which means an “additional cost” of about R1,8bn over the next five years for child welfare.

The lobbyists argue that the plan’s general approach was fiscally over-conservative and government will actually cut R2,98bn from the welfare budget.

According to Dirk and Claudia Haarmann of the Institute for Social Development at the University of the Western Cape, the department’s plan has two flaws: it assumes there will be a take-up rate of 100% when the plan is started, and that it will have an administrative capacity of 100%.

But this is practically impossible. A new system takes time to implement and the provinces are burdened with huge administrative problems.

“However, if the calculations are based on more realistic assumptions; the cuts in present spending will be far higher,” they say in an article prepared for the Institute for Democratic Alternatives for SA.

Assuming that there is a take-up rate of 40% in the first year of the new system and that administrative capacity is limited, they figure the cuts from the present budget level over the next five years would be R2,98bn.
Government under pressure to rethink child welfare grants system

POLITICAL STAFF

The Government is set to come under pressure to review its decision to replace the child support system and increase the monthly subsidy grant per child from R75 to R135.

Political parties represented on Parliament's welfare committee, including the ANC, indicated yesterday that in response to concerns by members of the public and non-governmental organisations they would recommend to the committee that the grants should be increased.

The committee is expected to submit its recommendations to Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi. In a report tabled yesterday after two weeks of public hearings in rural areas, the welfare committee said although communities did not propose an alternative amount, they made it clear that the R75 flat rate was not sufficient.

The Government has said that the new child support benefit should be seen as a supplementary income. The R75 was not meant to sustain an entire family. Expenses such as transport, rent, electricity and other incidental costs would also not be covered by the new child support benefit.

Non-governmental organisations, which included trade unions, sharply criticised the new system, approved by the Cabinet, and called on the Government to reconsider the child support benefit plan and to suspend its implementation.
ANC ALSO REJECTS WELFARE CHANGES

State told to rethink maintenance grants

IN A SHOW of multiparty opposition to the government’s budget squeeze, Parliament’s welfare committee has supported widespread public rejection of key proposals.

The ANC yesterday joined opposition parties in rejecting key changes to the child maintenance system, particularly the drastic reduction in monthly grants to R75 per child.

In response to concerns by the public and non-governmental organisations, parties in Parliament’s welfare committee, including the ANC, yesterday recommended the grants be increased.

The committee is expected to submit its recommendations immediately to Welfare and Population Development Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi.

In a report tabled yesterday following two weeks of public hearings in rural areas, the committee said although communities did not propose an alternative amount, they made it clear that the R75 flat rate was not sufficient. The amount was only accepted by four presenters. Proposals of what a reasonable amount would be varied from R80 to R650 per family, plus R100 per child.

Members of the communities also rejected the cut-off age for beneficiaries and called for a holistic approach to the child benefit system.

In a report on the public hearings compiled by advocate Ms Jenni Eksteen on behalf of the committee, the means test was not accepted by those who made submissions to it, along with a phase-in of the new scheme, a moratorium on new applications and payment into bank and postal offices.

"It was also made very clear that people in different regions had different priorities, whilst the basic concerns remained unchanged," Eksteen said. "For example, school fees, uniforms and other incidental education costs were very dominant at the Western Cape Parliamentary hearings. But transport costs weighed heavily on the minds of presenters in the Eastern Cape and Northern Province."

The government has maintained that the new child support benefit should be seen as a supplementary income. The R75 was not meant to sustain an entire family.

Expenses such as transport, rent, electricity and other incidental costs would also not be covered by the new child support benefit.

Eksteen said another issue to colour the discussion was the fact that the pre-Social Assistance Act amendment of 1996 regulations gave the grant until the age of 18 and older under certain circumstances. Whereas the post-Social Assistance Act amendment of 1996 reduced the age to 16 years.

Members of the public also suggested that recipients of the child support benefit or the current state maintenance grant should be exempted from paying school fees and that subsidies to day-care facilities should be increased.

Non-governmental organisations, which included trade unions, sharply criticised the new system, approved by cabinet, and called for its suspension.

Fraser-Moleketi said the new system sought to deracialise the current state maintenance grant and to target rural poor children. She said replacing the current system had become necessary in line with the Constitution.

The government intends to spread the grants from the present 203 262 recipients to three million.

— Political Staff
YOUTH DAY FEATURE 35

Youngsters need a skills revolution

Although the youths of today are receiving an education, they are now battling to find job opportunities.

Stuart Hess reports

MORE than 40% of young South Africans are neither employed nor in school, according to a study conducted by the National Youth Commission.

This alarming figure, which applies to young people aged 14 to 35, can be blamed on a number of historical and cultural issues, says commission chair Mahlengeni Bhengu.

The situation is prevalent among the country’s female population. “Many young women in rural areas are inhibited by a lack of opportunities owing mainly to early motherhood and the status of young women in rural areas where traditional law still exists,” says Bhengu.

Young people in such areas have found no opportunities in the job market — and no training system is in place.

Nklaabele Prusent, director of Employment Services in the Department of Labour, sees unemployment as a major problem. “Young people are nowhere in South Africa today,” she says.

She believes the government has to look at improving the skills of school-leavers, thereby enabling them to have practical experience before they enter the workplace.

“We need a skills revolution which looks at careers outside teaching or administration,” says Prusent. “We need youngsters with technical skills to be engineers or scientists.”

For this to happen, however, the attitude of teachers and other trainers needs to change. The government needs to become serious about implementing the many strategies and plans it envisages for young people — “to have a stronger focus on the needs of the youth in South Africa, especially in terms of job opportunities”, says Bhengu.

The commission praises the government for the “huge strides” it has made in recognising the important role youth play in South Africa.

The commission, established in 1996 to assist the government in developing a youth policy which would enhance job opportunities, skills training and education, will present its findings to the government at the end of the year.

Bhengu believes government’s higher education policy is “well co-ordinated” and provides the majority of young people in South Africa with opportunities they never had in the past.

African National Congress Youth League representative Thabo Masebe says the youth of today are fighting a different battle to those of 1976. “That generation [1976] was fighting for equality and against Bantu Education,” he says. “Young people today have the opportunity in terms of education, but they are fighting for jobs and other means of improving their lives.”

He believes the government has provided opportunities for the youth they have never had before, but in terms of employment opportunities the situation has not changed “that much”, compared to the period leading up to the elections in 1994. There is “a lot of hope” among young people today that the quality of life will improve.

The youth league views its role as “sensitising” the government about problems facing the youth today. “We will assist them with establishing initiatives and programmes aimed at accelerating youth development,” says Masebe.
But we know 800,000 who are
inheriting a mess.
People think our kids will
inherit a mess.
Child Support benefit dilemma

Takes are going on to work out the

By Jarry Cooper

Child Support benefit dilemma

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Child Support benefit dilemma

Takes are going on to work out the

By Jarry Cooper
No to cuts
Full welfare payments for all
support the fight for
- a 40-hour week - no child labour
- 6 months’ maternity leave
- a living wage for all

Protests at welfare cuts

A new women’s movement has been formed to fight against cuts to welfare payments. The movement is calling for full welfare payments for all and support for the fight to achieve these goals.

Ministry of Welfare’s announcement that it would be reducing the child maintenance grant from R135 per month to R75 a month. This will only cover children up to six years of age, unlike the previous system that covered children up to 18.

Neila Makan, spokesperson for the organization, said: “It is unacceptable that the government expects a budget used to cover 300 000 people to be spread among two million children.”

“The cuts are not realistic,” she added, “as we feel that the youth they are trying to uplift will be the ones who will be most affected by these drastic cuts.”

With the old system, children up to 18 years were given a maintenance grant. With the new system, which is expected to come into place on August 1, only children up to six years will receive a maintenance grant of R75.

“This will have a disastrous effect on the youth. How will unemployed mothers care for these children? This means that there will be fewer opportunities for these children, who already do not have many,” she said.

Makan said that under the existing system an unemployed mother received a R2100 grant and an additional R135 per child — but not for more than two children. So an unemployed mother with two children would receive R2235 a month.

Under the new system the government will support children only until they are of school-going age, when it will be the responsibility of the parents to provide for their children’s education and other needs.

“We support equalization but they must not do it at the expense of the poor — rather tax the super rich,” Makan said.

“I don’t think that the government has taken into account the inflation rate. What will R75 be worth in the year 2000?”

“The latest development is that there will be only a 30% coverage. How does the ministry propose to choose the children who will get maintenance and those who will not?”

“At the moment they say they will award maintenance to mothers with problems. Are they encouraging mothers to starve their children to get money?”
Fraser-Molekeli merits praise for attempt

New child-support proposal will cheer Manual and extend benefits to millions' wives

John Kane-Berman

at equity

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16/17
Plan to empty jails of kids facing trial
SA law deficient on child sex abuse – report

PRETORIA: South Africa's criminal law fails to offer children sufficient protection against sexual abuse, according to an SA Law Commission issue paper released here yesterday.

Few offenders are being convicted and most aspects of the existing legal position need to be revised, the document says.

"The criminal laws and criminal procedure, as it presently stands, as a mechanism to protect children from abuse, is to a great extent ineffective," the report said.

There is no criminal offence labelled "child sexual abuse" or even "child neglect" in South African law, and such crimes have to be dealt with in terms of common law covering a wide range of offences.

The Prevention of Family Violence Act of 1993, which provides for an interdict to prevent assaults on an applicant or child, is not commonly used to prevent child abuse.

"An ongoing reluctance in many police officers to involve themselves in issues of family violence is part of the problem, while bureaucratic delays and logjams are serious stumbling blocks," the paper says.

Presenting Deputy Justice Minister Ms Majesty Tshabalala with a copy of the paper, Commission member Mr Thandakarit E Nhlapo said the document was the first step towards drafting new legislation against child abuse. — Sapa
Move to boost child support

A PARLIAMENTARY welfare committee recommended yesterday that the child support benefit be set at R100 a month per child, 80% more than the R75 proposed by Welfare Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi.

Children between 0-9 years should receive the benefit, paid out to the first two children of the family, so targeting 80% of children, and not 30% (0-6 years) as the ministry recommended.

Owing to the current fiscal restrictions which necessitated the benefit being limited they agreed on an age constraint of 0-9, provided the limit be extended to its previous 18-years as soon as possible.

Non-governmental organisations, including the Black Sash and the South African National NGO Coalition, protested against the Lund Commission's recommendations for state maintenance grants.

The committee agreed with the Lund proposal for a means test which would be based on the caregiver's income. Care-givers earning R800 or less would be eligible for the benefit.

The old child support benefit should be phased out over five years, starting next January rather than immediately as proposed by the ministry.

The committee recommended that reform of the maintenance court system be given priority to ensure that fathers who could support their children be forced to do so. Also, children receiving benefits should be exempt from school fees.

The Black Sash's Ms Allison Tilley said they believed civil society's representations to Parliament and their consideration of those proposals had resulted in the committee's recommendations.

"There are some technical issues to be worked out, but the recommendations meet both the criteria of affordability and reaching as many poor children as possible," SA National NGO Coalition executive director Mr Kumi Naidoo said: "While we recognise that the recommendations do not go as far as many would like to see, it is a substantial improvement on the proposals as they presently stand."

The coalition would meet Fraser-Moleketi on June 30. — Sapa
Parties in wider child benefit call

Minister pressed

Clive Sawyer
Political Correspondent

14/11/97

Pressure on Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi to reconsider her proposed child support scheme is growing, with the National Assembly welfare committee officially recommending that benefits be widened.

Among the committee's recommendations is that the R75-a-month maintenance grant proposed by Ms Fraser-Moleketi be raised to R135.

Her own party, the African National Congress, was among those which backed the committee resolution. Others were the National Party, Inkatha Freedom Party, Democratic Party and PAC.

The plan, as originally approved by the Cabinet, proposed paying only R75 a month to children aged up to six. But the committee recommended:

- A R135-a-month payment for children aged up to nine, limited to two children per family, but said the age group which benefited should be extended to 18 "within the shortest possible time".
- The date of introduction should be January 1998.
- Phasing in - all eligible children within the age group, subject to the limitation of two children a family, will immediately qualify for the benefit.
- Phasing out - a five-year period, as recommended by the Welfare Department.
- A simple test based on the basic income of the "care giver", with those earning R800 or less eligible getting the benefit for their children.

The committee also recommended that reform of the Maintenance Court system should be given priority so that fathers could be forced to take financial responsibility for their children.
ANC group rejects child welfare benefit plan

Jacob Dlamini

CAPE TOWN — In a clear rejection of Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi’s proposed child benefit scheme, an ANC parliamentary study group yesterday presented proposals designed to cover more children at almost double the R75 suggested by the government.

The proposals, unveiled during a meeting of the parliamentary welfare committee, would cover between 3.9-million and 6-million children at an estimated annual cost of R6,3bn to R8bn.

Committee chairman Cas Saloge said the proposals had been drawn up in an attempt to address concerns over the government’s new child benefit system, which opponents said would leave many children beyond the poverty line.

At present single parents receive R435 and R175 for every child under 18. Fraser-Moleketi’s plan is to pay R75 for children between ages 0 and six in order to widen the system’s reach.

In terms of the first of three suggestions presented, children between ages 0 and six would receive R135 from January 1998. The group’s projections are that there will be an additional R1,7bn cost to the budget over the next five years and the final cost, using 1997 figures, will be R6,3bn.

This would benefit 3,9-million children.

Proposal two is that the benefit be set at R135 for children between the ages 0 and six. The scheme, targeting 80% of needy children, would be introduced in January 1998 while the present system is phased out over two years.

Additional costs to the present budget over the next five years would be R66bn while the final annual costs would be R8,3bn. The proposal would reach 3,9-million children.

The last proposal calls for the benefit to be set at R135 for children between ages 0 and nine. However, only two children per family unit would be allowed to get on the system.

The group’s projections are that this would add an extra R26bn to the current budget over five years and would cost an estimated R86bn a year. About 5-million children would benefit.
Law Commission proposes review of laws on sexual abuse of children

By Gill Gifford
Crime Reporter

The South African Law Commission (SALC) yesterday proposed a far-reaching review of laws designed to protect children from sexual abuse, which the commission said has reached alarming proportions.

The commission, in an issue paper made available in Pretoria, said 35,839 crimes against children were reported last year.

It identified several major shortcomings in the body of laws designed to protect children. These were:

- The practical problem of defining a sexual crime, which was now too narrow, excluded homosexual intercourse, and presumed that only girls and not boys under the age of 12 were incapable of consenting to a sexual act.
- Gender bias, which was regarded as a problem, with sodomy being defined as only a male-on-male offence and rape as solely a male-on-female offence.
- Procedural law, which involved a number of professions and structures in the reporting, investigating, court-

Children’s Allowance Boost of 80% Recommended

The parliamentary welfare committee recommended yesterday that the child-support benefit be set at R135 a month per child, 80% more than the R75 proposed by Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi.

Children between 0 and 9 years of age should receive the benefit paid out for the first two children, thus targeting 30% of children and not 30% (0-6 years) as the ministry recommended.

Due to current fiscal restrictions that limit the benefit, the committee agreed on an age constraint of 0-3, provided that the limit be extended to its previous 18 years as soon as possible.

Non-governmental organisations, including the Black Sash and the SA National NGO Coalition, protested against the Lund Commission’s proposals for state maintenance grants.

The committee agreed with the commission’s proposal for a means test that would be based on the care-giver’s income. Care-givers earning R830 or less would be eligible for the benefit.

The old child-support benefit should be phased out over five years, starting in January, as opposed to immediately as proposed by the ministry.

The committee also proposed that children receiving benefits should be exempt from school fees.

The Black Sash and the SA National NGO Coalition welcomed these recommendations. – Sapa.
THE ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS HAS RESTED IN LITTLE OR NO DISCIPLINE, AND ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF CONTROLLING PUPILS HAVE OFTEN PROVED INEFFECTIVE; REPORTS

SABATA NGCAI

Most black communities believe that caning is the most effective way to discipline an unruly child.

Hence there was an uproar in township communities when caning at schools was banned last year.

Most teachers and parents disagreed of the ban because they feared pupils would become undisciplined.

Some schools, like Mastyjile Secondary School in Khayelitsha, continued to use caning last year in defiance of the ban. And at Bulimbo Secondary School in Khayelitsha last year teachers were assaulted and their cars stoned by pupils who went on the rampage because their parents had agreed that teachers could cane them if they misbehaved.

Teachers were even held hostage by students until they were released by police who fired teargas. There was no schooling for about three weeks because teachers feared for their lives.

Lack of discipline in the Cape Flats schools now threatens to turn school campuses into battlefields, with teachers sometimes being the targets.

Pupils have manhandled women teachers and used abusive language, and fighting on school property has become commonplace.

Detention, a punishment many schools have opted for, has not worked in many cases.

Frequently parents have called on teachers to use the cane to control undisciplined children. But so far, the temptation has been resisted by the teachers because it is illegal in terms of the South African Schools Act.

At Manenberg Senior Secondary School, where pupils have manhandled teachers, the principal, Abderashman Petersen, says the abolition of corporal punishment has tied the hands of teachers and brought about mayhem.

“Taking away corporal punishment is a disservice to children, and to education as a whole,” he said.

“We have to call in parents every time children get unruly. We detain them (the children), but this does not work on many occasions. The children defy us because they know there is nothing we can do.”

“Sometimes we suspend unruly children, but this is a tragedy because it deprives the child of an education. Discipline fell away after corporal punishment was abolished last year. The boys swear at and manhandle women teachers. If a child knows they can be punished, they will behave much better.”

“When corporal punishment was still enforced, there was not a single parent who came here to complain about his or her child being abused. The child knew that if they did wrong they would be punished,” said Mr Petersen.

In terms of the Schools Act, any teacher supplying corporal punishment could be charged with assault. The new code of conduct for teachers even prohibits them from using abusive language if pupils refuse to do it because it is illegal,” Mr Appel said.

The pupils themselves always remind us that we are not supposed to touch or scold them.”

He said teachers requested the assistance of parents when they had to discipline the pupils. The school even went to the extent of suspending unruly pupils, with the consent of the parents.

Other teachers attributed the lack of discipline in schools to the problem of bigger classes, which made it difficult for teachers to cope.

At Joe Slovo High School in Khayelitsha, principal Balakhan Mdina said the school was faced with the problem of truancy. “Discipline will continue to be a problem until the right environment conducive to learning returns - the ideal goal of Curriculum 2005,” she said.

“We are faced with problems of bigger classes and we are still grappling with the new teaching methods of the new curriculum. The learning environment leaves much to be desired,” she said.

But at Gugulethu Comprehensive Secondary School giving extra work to a naughty pupil seems to be working. School principal Nontobeko Msengana says the school involves parents in any decision-making on how to punish the pupils.

“For each naughty child we call a parent and discuss the matter with the child involved,” she said.

“We apply our punishment, which on many occasions includes forcing the child to clean up a particular area at the school for a day or two. It works very well and in recent months it has acted as a very good deterrent in restraining pupils from doing wrong,” she said.

While some of the teachers feel they were left in the lurch by the Government when it abolished corporal punishment without providing an alternative, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) is planning to explore how to use discipline at schools in a positive way.

When completed, the project is expected to bring about a radical change in methods of maintaining discipline.

The HSRC said it discovered that many teachers tended to equate discipline with corporal punishment, expelling culprits and using other negative practices, but put little focus on the positive aspects of discipline.

The HSRC drew a sample survey from Pretoria, the West Rand, East Rand, Johannesburg and the Vaal Triangle, which revealed that all schools were looking for an alternative to corporal punishment.

In its survey, the HSRC found that educators agreed discipline in schools was essential. But the vast majority felt it was basically the responsibility of the parents to teach children obedience, responsibility, respect for others, self-control and discipline.

According to the HSRC, however, teaching children to distinguish between
right and wrong and instilling democratic values was the combined responsibility of parents, schools and churches.

The HSRC survey concluded that some psychological and physical forms of disciplinary action were harmful to the child. As far as the physical punishment was concerned, the surveyed teachers found it totally unacceptable to throw a book or chalk at a child, to pull his/her ear or hair or to pinch the child.

Yet the majority of the respondents found spanking a child acceptable. Spanking was thought to be more acceptable than sending a child out of the class or sending him/her home.

In the same vein, the respondents thought that it was totally unacceptable to belittle a child, to tell the child that they were stupid, or to threaten or to ignore the child.

The majority of the respondents felt that a child’s behaviour should not be ignored, and that the transgression should be dealt with. More than a third considered suspension as a viable option.

Parents of pupils at primary schools differed slightly from the parents of secondary school pupils when it came to suitable ways of dealing with transgression. Parents with children at primary schools were more in favour of letting the child stand in the corner, pleading with the child to stop his/her ill-behaviour, threatening orspanking the child and ignoring the behaviour of the child.

Parents of secondary school pupils were more inclined to agree to sending the child, sending them home or suspending them. The vast majority of the respondents thought that giving the child extra assignments and detention classes were good options for dealing with transgressions.

In the HSRC survey, parents were asked how seriously they regarded certain infringements by teachers.

Sexual harassment of children, staying away from school without a valid reason and doing private work at school were viewed as serious transgressions. Not being properly prepared, not checking children’s books regularly and being untidy were also viewed as serious.

Although it was generally accepted that it was the task of the teacher to maintain discipline in the class, the question arose as to whose responsibility it was to represent the teacher.

The respondents assigned the main responsibility to the school principal.

Although traditionally the line of responsibility runs through the department of education, very few respondents regarded the school inspector as some body who should represent the teacher.

Several parents assigned this responsibility to the school governing body. The HSRC said the pilot study did not attempt to come up with solutions to the problem of discipline at school.

The aim was rather to explore some issues that required further investigation.

The HSRC said the search for solutions would have to involve all stakeholders. “Parents have a right to be involved with the governing of schools and ensuring that discipline is maintained,” a HSRC spokesman said.

“Teachers should also be empowered to deal effectively with discipline in schools while maintaining the right of children to fair treatment. Finding ways to protect these various rights will be a challenge, but we need to find solutions if a culture of learning is to be promoted.”
condition, with some showers out of order. Plugs are missing, floors are soaked in water and dirty piles of clothing lie around.

This year the home has had a problem with its hot water supply and on two occasions the youngsters have had to wash in cold water for several days at a time.

The children attend school in the morning and complain of boredom the rest of the day because of lack of facilities at the home.

They claim staff take home luxury items such as biscuits, fruit and chocolates and that some children steal food to sell in order to buy cigarettes and dagga - this is in addition to allegations by staff that colleagues are stealing basic food meant for the children.

The management team told the commission that in recent months some children had escaped from the barely secure premises and allegedly had stolen from farms to raise cash for dagga and cigarettes.

Mr Paschke said management members "appear to have the best of intentions, but seem to be out of touch with fundamental issues affecting the institution".

He was disturbed by allegations of insufficient food and that no-one seemed to be in charge. "There appears to be a management crisis at the institution."

Approached to comment, the Department of Social Welfare head, Virginia Petersen, said the department had launched a full-scale investigation into the institution earlier this month after allegations against staff.

She did not know when it would be completed.

She said her department had become aware of the problems in the middle of last year and attempts had been made to rectify them by providing guidance and training for staff.

But stronger intervention had become necessary because of "high levels of collusion by staff" and their inability to apply their new training to the job, resulting in a progressive deterioration of standards, she said.

Mr Paschke welcomed the investigation and said the commission would monitor it and call for a report on the outcome.

LINDSAY BARNES
Chief Desk

Small children at a Stellenbosch place of safety are going cold and hungry this winter as staff allegedly steal their food and older children take their clothes and shoes.

The Human Rights Commission has heard "disturbing" accounts of suffering among young children at the Lindelani Place of Safety, most of whom are there through no fault of their own.

Only a few of the 70-odd children are awaiting trial. Most are there because of they have been abandoned or abused.

The commission did a spot check of the home last week after hearing allegations of fraud, theft and mismanagement.

It has been alleged that staff and some children steal food from the kitchen and that older children steal clothes and shoes from the younger ones, leaving them shivering in the bitter winter weather.

The children who steal food allegedly sell it for cigarettes and dagga while the other children go hungry.

The commission heard from the home's interim management team that staff morale was low and that in the past absenteeism had been high and children had often been left to take care of themselves.

During the inspection, members of the team running the home in the absence of a manager for the past 18 months at first refused to talk to commission legal adviser Ron Paschke, because they did not have permission from the Department of Social Welfare. But they later agreed.

They said that although most of the children, aged six to 17, had been traumatised at home and had behavioural problems, there was no money for a psychologist to treat them at the refuge.

Lindelani is home to about 50 abused and neglected children who have been removed from their parents' custody, and to an average of 10 awaiting trial on criminal charges at any one time.

They are cared for by a staff of 32, including social and child-care workers.

During the commission's tour, it emerged that the youngsters, who are Xhosa and Afrikaans-speaking, are constantly short of such basics as towels, toothpaste, soap and toilet paper. Three children have to share one toilet roll a week and when this runs out, they say they use their clothes, scraps of fabric or hands.

Ablution facilities were found in a poor
Storm over street children plan

Residents fear that proposed shelter would affect property prices and lead to excessive noise. Yet conditions have improved.
Social-work team for abuse unit delayed

Oct 17 1997
by Gill Girton

Overburdened child protection unit workers in Johannesburg and Soweto, who were promised the back-up of a team of five social workers offering a 24-hour standby service today, will have to wait another month before the team is officially in place.

Captain Edward Hutchens, head of the Johannesburg CPU, said the social workers would help police with serious abuse cases and necessary removals in which abused or neglected children are taken out of their homes.

The implementation of a social-work team qualified to step in and help with the effective handling of our most serious cases, especially one on call around the clock, will take a huge load off the CPU's shoulders," Hutchens said.

He added that while CPU members were looking forward to the additional help, it was possible that the five-member social work team would be too small.

But Gauteng welfare and population development officials' assurances that police would have which-needed support in traumatic cases as from today are to be delayed for various reasons.

That stalling, according to police, has been caused by the fact that suitable candidates have not yet been found. Four of the five social-work positions have been filled, and an interviewing process is under way to fill the remaining post.

But the project cannot ever advance until the full staff complement is in place.

A spokesman from the social worker said intensive work had been done to establish the social-work service for the Johannesburg and Soweto CPUs, and that promises to have the team in place by today had been "ambitious".

"The current system in which we are working is cumbersome. We intend to start the CPU social-work service next month, and the vacant post will be filled once all the normal channels have been followed and the appointment is made official," the spokesman said.
Youth trust forced to cut back on targets

Dustin Chick 80 3/7/97 (298)

A STRUGGLE for funds is forcing the trust which runs the President's Award for youth empowerment to cut back on its targets.

The community service programme dates back to 1983 when it was a government-supported project for white schools and a minority of black youth organizations. This changed radically after President Nelson Mandela was appointed patron-in-chief in 1994. The awards trust has grown into the largest youth development programme in the country, whose aim is to empower disadvantaged youth.

The programme is aimed at people from all walks of life, between the ages of 14 and 25. Of the 12-million people in this age group, only 3-million can be absorbed into the formal economy.

The programme comprises three awards — gold, silver and bronze — which take three years to complete. Participants must be involved in three areas of community service, a team-orientated expedition, a skill or a hobby and a physical recreation aimed at encouraging goal-setting and achievement.

Operations director Vanessa Westcott said that a lack of funds was the organization's most pressing problem. Last year's enrollment of 7 000 candidates had to be lowered to 5 000 this year.

Westcott said the trust was looking for donors, on whom it was entirely reliant as it received no state subsidies. JCI and Johnnie were currently sponsoring the award.

The President's Award had created a number of endowment funds to ensure self-sufficiency by the year 2000, Westcott said.

The fund had raised R3.22m last year, most of it from corporate donors. Participants had committed themselves to raising R100 each.

Westcott said one of the principal aims of the award was to create suitable job candidates. A youth placement programme had been implemented, and a national register of participants had been drawn up, listing their skills and other attributes. The trust had also opened several career information centres to help members in writing CVs and to give them a better understanding of career opportunities.
SEVEN percent of five-year-olds in SA have tried smoking, a newly released study by the Medical Research Council and Wits University reports.

The study shows 19% of five-year-olds wanted to smoke when they grew up and 29% could identify cigarette brand names. More than 70% were exposed to environmental tobacco smoke.

The research forms part of the birth-to-10 study of the health and development of more than 4 000 children born in Johannesburg and Soweto in 1990. Researchers found children appeared to have well-developed beliefs about tobacco and smoking well before they had direct experience of it.

Wits researcher Thea de Wet said that by understanding why and when children decided to smoke, interventions could be undertaken to discourage them from smoking and to prevent tobacco companies from targeting children as potential smokers.

Another Medical Research Council project, being conducted at the University of the Western Cape, has shown that if a mother smokes during pregnancy and breastfeeding, the baby’s lung growth and development are permanently impaired.

In its annual report, the council said the testing of a new vaccine against viral diarrhoea would begin soon.

The viral diarrhoea strain is responsible for about 28% of deaths from diarrhoea among SA children. Studies in Venezuela showed the new vaccine protected nearly 90% of children against this strain, but work in Africa with the original vaccine failed.

The link between TB and HIV/AIDS is another focus of the council’s work. Researchers have calculated that, with the HIV epidemic, the incidence of TB could increase fourfold in 10 years.
Head repetst children's abuse claims

Shelter kids prey on staff
Room in child convicts

1. The number of mother of child convicts

Security care and lodgers at the Welfare Study Centre - most important

...
Youth body proposes formation of national youth service by 2000

Kevin O'Grady

The National Youth Commission's annual activity report, which was given to President Nelson Mandela recently, contained proposals for the implementation of a national youth service by 2000, chairman Mahlengi Bhengu said yesterday.

Speaking after a two-day constitutional meeting of commissioners in Pretoria, Bhengu said the idea was one of a range of programmes being investigated by the commission.

Commission CEO Stephen Mokwena said the voluntary service would aim to "reintegrate young people into the economy" and would attempt to "find synergies between the need for young people to develop skills and a work ethic and the need for communities to be serviced".

It was likely it would be based on international youth corps and peace corps models, Mokwena said, although a framework for the service's operation still had to be drawn up.

The commission had also proposed a parallel programme targeting young people at universities and which would be "an innovative way of financing higher education". In terms of this proposal, young people who could not afford the expense of tertiary education could "collect credits by spending a certain amount of time in community service".

He said the commission decided at its meeting to appoint a team of experts to draw up a framework outlining how the service should be run.

The commission had some ideas, such as the need for it to be a nationally co-ordinated programme that could be implemented by communities and nongovernmental organisations. It was also important that the work carried out by those involved imparted skills of a technical nature which would make those involved more marketable.

It was hoped that people would volunteer for service on a large scale, but its potential for growth depended on it being implemented from "grass roots". The commission was not envisaging a situation where "hundreds of thousands of people are force-marched into service".

Bhengu said he believed the commission's annual report would show the body, which had been established in terms of the National Youth Act last year, had had a productive and visible year.

In addition to the youth service programme, the report highlighted the commission's work towards a comprehensive youth policy for SA by the end of this year. The commission intended its report to be made public, but this was subject to the discretion of Mandela's office.
Child support grant increased to R100

Bonile Ngqiyaza

WELFARE Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi has made a partial climb-down on the implementation of her controversial child welfare benefit scheme, increasing the proposed R75 a month child support grant to R100.

The concession followed an African National Congress national executive committee (NEC) meeting at the weekend and widespread opposition from civil society organisations and from within the ANC itself.

Shortly after the announcement yesterday, welfare ministry spokesman Brian Sokutu said the R75 figure had "always been a projection rather than a principled position".

Asked if he thought the increase would appease parties opposed to the original proposal, Sokutu said they should understand that the ministry was doing its best with the resources at its disposal and within the budgetary constraints it faced.

"Poverty alleviation is a challenge, not for the welfare ministry alone, but for the country as a whole — which is why we went to the NEC."

He said that after the technical committee on welfare had finished its work in August, the department would make another announcement regarding the child support grant's implementation.

Black Sash national director Hillary Morris welcomed Fraser-Moleketi's shift, but expressed disappointment that no announcement had been made regarding the original cabinet decision to target only 30% of children under the age of six.

She said even the ministry's technical advisers believed targeting at such low levels would be difficult to implement, and in a recent workshop on the issue had recommended that the 30% target needed to be reviewed. "The failure to take this expert advice on board is baffling. At least six out of every 10 children live with caregivers earning less than R250 a month."

Sapa reports Fraser-Moleketi said the new child support benefit would reach 10 times as many children as at present and the R100 cash grant would be paid to a "primary care-giver", and not necessarily simply to mothers in needy families.

The benefit, to be implemented from next year, would cost the state "about R1,088bn a year", and would be phased in over three years, Fraser-Moleketi said. The existing state maintenance grant — to be phased out over five years — cost the state R1,088bn a year.
A new vitamin-enriched biscuit has been developed to help feeding schemes fight malnutrition among impoverished primary school children.

The biscuit, popularly known as ndunakazi, has already improved the health of children in the village of Ndunakazi north of Durban in a pilot programme.

It forms part of a programme jointly run by the Medical Research Council, the Sasko baking and milling group and residents of Ndunakazi. The biscuit has so far reduced vitamin and mineral deficiencies by half in the town.

The biscuit contains more vitamins and minerals than found in normal staple foods.

Nonnie Vorster, Sasko's product developer, says the biscuits are cost-effective at 23c for three and have a shelf life of three months.

Lenore Dunnett, deputy director of nutrition in the Western Cape, says they could be used nationally.

The results of the Ndunakazi project were handed to Abe Nkomo, chairman of the parliamentary health committee, in Cape Town yesterday.
New support plan for SA’s children to cost R1,4-bn

Johannesburg — Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi says the Cabinet has accepted a recommendation from her ministry to introduce a new cash grant for children, the child support benefit.

The grant — a flat rate of R100 a child per month — would replace the state maintenance grant for women and children, Ms Fraser-Moleketi said yesterday. The child support benefit would reach about 10 times more children than the present grant.

Furthermore, the R100 cash grant for poverty-stricken children up to the age of six would be paid to a "primary care-giver" of the child and not necessarily simply to mothers in vulnerable families.

She said this approach moved away from the concept of a parent in the traditional sense and embraced the reality of different family forms in South Africa.

However, beneficiaries would be “means tested”, she said, adding that the requirements for a primary care-giver — whether it be a parent, aunt, grandparent or guardian of the child — were still being researched.

The child support benefit would be implemented by January 1998 as the existing grant needed to be phased out. The new cash grant would cost the state “about R1,384-billion a year,” Ms Fraser-Moleketi said, and would be phased in over three years.

It would be paid in quarterly instalments into the bank account or post office account of the beneficiary. The existing grant cost the state R1,068-billion a year, she said. — Sapa
Biscuit no threat to bread, jam

(295)

CAROL CAMPBELL

PEANUT butter and jam sandwiches eaten with a soya-based milkshake were a tried and tested way of combating malnutrition among children and would not be replaced by fortified biscuits in the school feeding programme in the Western Cape.

Mr John Viljoen, a spokesman for Peninsulas School Feeding, said the scheme would not dump this winning formula for the vitamin-enriched biscuit which was launched in the city yesterday.

The biscuit, which is made by Salko, the baking and milling group, has been used for a research project on combating malnutrition in Mnumakazi, a village in the Valley of a Thousand Hills, in KwaZulu-Natal.

It contains iron, beta carotene, linoleic and vitamin C.

The research, by the Medical Research Council (MRC), concluded that the fortified biscuit given to the children with a milkshake was cost-effective (42c a child a day) and practical and, with nutrition education, should be seriously considered by school feeding schemes.

"We have found the soya-based milkshake to be far superior to any of the biscuits or sachets of milk drink we have been offered," Viljoen said.

Feeding schemes around the country (with the exception of the Western Cape) have been dogged by corruption controversies since they were initiated as a presidential lead project in 1994.

Dr Spilunk Benadie, the MRC's programme leader for the nutritional intervention programme, said it was easy to monitor the distribution of biscuits.

"A certain number of biscuits go into a school and a certain number are consumed. There is little place for corruption," he said.

Peninsulas School Feeding has been feeding local children for over three decades. It runs 92% of the school feeding operations in the province which involves about 310,000 children at 840 schools.

It costs about 59c a day to feed a child the bread and milkshake — 50c of this is subsidised by the government.

Viljoen said the biscuit had been offered to the Mnumakazi community as a short-term solution to a nutrition crisis.

"Ultimately, we want the community to produce their own food."

A long-term agricultural project has been started, but it could take up to a decade before we reap results.

"Meanwhile, we had to do something about the nutritional status of the children."

A report, detailing the MRC's findings following the introduction of school feeding to the community, was handed to Dr Abe Nkomzo, chairman of the parliamentary portfolio committee on health at the biscuit launch.

"As a boy growing up near Pretoria, I felt the benefit of school feeding," said Nkomzo.

"The Methodist missionaries used to make us soup and when they eventually stopped it because of a lack of funds, the children were disappointed and really missed it."

Asked what he thought of the yellow, banana-flavoured biscuit, Nkomzo said he liked the taste and thought it would go down well with young children.
AN increased flat-rate grant of R100 per child, for any number of children under six in a disadvantaged family, was announced yesterday by the Minister of Welfare and Population Development, Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi.

The hike in the grant, under the Child Support Benefit System, means that the department will be forking out R1.384 billion, R300 million more compared to the R1.083bn originally allocated.

While welfare organisations welcomed the increase, they regretted that the age limit was upheld by Fraser-Moleketi.

At least 30% of the country’s poorest children will benefit from the system due to be implemented in January next year. The system, aimed at children only, will be phased in over the next three years.

Originally the grant was R75 per child. National public debate and outcries from welfare bodies prompted the department to re-evaluate the proposal.

The South African National NGO Coalition also welcomed the increase, although it was lower than the R135 suggested by them and the parliamentary portfolio committee on welfare last month.

The programme director of a national NGO said the increase reflected that R75 was an unrealistic amount for children. She said the department’s target of reaching 30% of the country’s poorest children would discriminate against a large number of people living in abject poverty.

"About 68% of children are living with care-givers who earn less than R250 a month. While we would like to appeal to the minister to increase the target, it is close to impossible to find a means test which is administratively viable and cost-effective," said Boule.

Johannesburg Child Welfare (JCW) said the increase was welcomed in the light of the budget restrictions within which Fraser-Moleketi operated, but regretted that the age limit remained unchanged.

"It is our hope that the government will in future allocate an appropriate portion of the national budget to social security for children of all ages because this would help us combat other problems, such as child labour and prostitution which result from destitution," a JCW spokesperson said.

Fraser-Moleketi said that R135 per child was not viable.

"We don’t want to put the beneficiaries at risk and need to realise the importance of having assured a poverty grant for children." 

Fraser-Moleketi acknowledged there was a much larger percentage of poor children, but said it was about making difficult choices when deciding that only 30% of the poorest children would benefit.

Under the previous system, a family received a maximum of R700, which included R430 for the mother and R135 per child up to a maximum of two children.

Fraser-Moleketi said she envisaged an efficient system to prevent fraud. The department would stick to quarterly payments and was negotiating banking facilities with post offices for women in rural areas. — Own Correspondent
Street child arrested

THE INADEQUACY of the justice system to cope with juvenile criminals led police to allow a street child, who ventured into crime at age 11, to walk free in spite of numerous arrests and convictions until he turned 18 and could be imprisoned. CYNTHIA VONGAI reports.

The case of Leon Eksteen is a glaring example of how the justice system in South Africa is failing. This Oudtshoorn-born teenager began a life of crime at the age of 11 — but police were forced to wait until his 18th birthday before they could finally arrest him and be sure he would be imprisoned.

During the intervening seven years he was arrested 33 times on several charges of theft, house-breaking and escaping from custody. Each time Eksteen, a street child, was arrested by police, he was either warned by the court and freed, or sent to a juvenile holding centre from which he escaped.

Eventually police from Central Cape Town got so fed up, they waited for his 18th birthday to arrest him again. No longer a minor, he was sentenced to three years for a theft committed in 1993, and is now in Pollsmoor Prison.

The extraordinary battle police had to jail Eksteen came about because of legislation which deals specifically with unconvicted juvenile offenders between the ages of 14 and 18.

Amendments to the Correctional Services Act by the Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Sipho Mzimela, in November 1994 makes it illegal for unconvicted minors to be detained in a prison, police cell, or lock-up facility.

Instead they are to be referred to “places of care” and only in extreme cases are the minors to be sent to lock-up facilities.

Eksteen escaped from the Cape Town and Wynberg reformatories and places of safety six times before his final arrest in April last year. He was sentenced in February this year.

Police spokesman Captain Andre Traut said police have a mammoth task in trying to arrest juveniles and then keep them in custody until they were tried and sentenced.

Superintendent Piet Taljaard, the unit commander for theft from cars, said most of the crime in the city was committed by street children.

He added that the most common crime was theft of car in the central business district.

“About 10% of these juveniles are hardened criminals. You’d expect that they could be housed somewhere until they appear in court.

But when it comes to this, everyone just seems to shrug their shoulders. There is no room in these places of care — and no one seems to want to tackle the problem. No one seems to want to take the responsibility to look after these kids.

“I think some state department should take care of these problems,” Traut said. “Unfortunately these places of safety do not keep these offenders inside. This is a cause of concern for us.”

A quarter of all crime in South Africa is committed by criminals under the age of 21, at a cost to taxpayers of over R15 billion a year, according to a recent media report.

Most of the 100,000 young criminals prosecuted each year are petty offenders who never strike again, but an estimated five percent become habitual violent criminals and the justice system is unable to cope with them.

“We call them ‘the untouchables’,” says Director Raymond Dowd, Cape Town police commissioner. “We try to put them behind bars, but the justice system allows them to slip through the net.”

Turn to Page 3
Limited child welfare grants come under fire

Organisations have welcomed increased grants but say decision to support only the poorest must be rethought

By Piscilla Singh

While welfare organisations have welcomed the increased flat-rate grant of R100 in the new child support benefit system, they have called on the Department of Welfare to rethink its decision to target only 30% of the poorest children in the country.

The new amount, applicable to any number of children under six in a disadvantaged family, formed the basis of changes in the Child Support Benefit System announced by Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi on Tuesday.

The South African National NGO Coalition (Sangoco) said it was deeply disappointed that no announcement was made to increase the target number of children who would receive the grant.

Sangoco president Rams Ramashia said, “With over 60% of South Africa’s children living in abject poverty, we find the decision to target just half of this unacceptable.

“We call for a simple cost-efficient system based on incomes less than R800 in a household.”

The hike in the grant means that the Department of Welfare will be forking out R1 384 billion, R300 million more than the R1 088 billion originally allocated.

While welfare organisations welcomed the increase, they regretted that the age limit was upheld by Fraser-Moleketi.

At least 30% of the country’s poorest children will benefit from the system due to be implemented in January next year. The system, aimed at children only, will be phased in over the next three years.

Originally the grant was R75 per child. National public debate and outcries from welfare bodies prompted the department to shift its thinking and re-evaluate the proposals.

Johannesburg Child Welfare said the increase was welcomed.

The decision to target only half is unacceptable

in light of the budget restrictions within which Fraser-Moleketi operated, but regretted that the age limit remained unchanged.

JCW spokesman Jackie Lofell said, “It is our hope that the Government will in future allocate an appropriate portion of the national budget to social security for children of all ages because this will help us combat other problems, such as child labour and prostitution which result from destitution.”

Sangoco programme director Jacqui Bouille said the increase reflected that R75 was an unrealistic amount for children.

“About 68% of children are living with caregivers earning less that R250 a month and, while we would like to appeal to the minister to increase the target, it is close to impossible to find a means which is administratively viable and cost-effective,” said Bouille.

Fraser-Moleketi said that the amount of R135 per child was not viable at this point.

“This amount is not sustainable,” she said. “We don’t want to put the beneficiaries at risk.”

Targeting workshops, planned for next month, will determine which children qualified for the Child Support Benefit System.

Fraser-Moleketi acknowledged there was a much larger percentage of poor children, and said deciding that only 30% of the most poor and vulnerable children in the 0-6 age category would benefit was a difficult choice.

Under the previous system, a family received a maximum of R700, which included R430 for the mother and R135 per child up to a maximum of two children.

The minister said she envisaged a simple and efficient system to prevent fraud.

She said the department would stick to quarterly payments and was in the process of negotiating banking facilities with post offices for women in rural areas.
It's our only income
are reduced
welfare grants
say mums as
we can't cope,

...
Nats slate minister on child poverty grants

Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi has gone against her own African National Congress caucus with her ruling on poverty grants for children, says Patrick McKenzie, National Party spokesman.

Ms Fraser-Moleketi at first backed the Lund Committee recommendations that the child welfare grant be set at R75 a month.

The ANC-dominated Welfare Committee proposed this be increased to R135 a month. Last week Ms Fraser-Moleketi announced the flat-rate grant would be R200 a child. She said R135 was not viable.

Mr McKenzie said the minister had ignored the workings of democracy "and instead shown the stubbornness with which she operates".

Fight for girls’ rights has to start in their homes

BY BONGIWE MILANCHE

The plight of young girls as victims of sexual abuse in South Africa has worsened, in spite of the commitment the Government and women’s organisations made in Beijing to promote and protect the rights of girls.

When the Beijing Declaration was signed in 1995, the country committed itself, among other things, to uplift women from poverty; to fight violence against women and to promote the human rights of women and girls.

Two years later, women’s groups agree that not much has been achieved. Police statistics show that child abuse cases involving young girls have increased by about 40% in the past two years. In Soweto alone about 300 cases are reported every month.

Fatima Shaik from the Nissa Institute of Women’s Development says as long as male children are groomed to be in control and aggressive, and female children are encouraged to be subservient, young girls will remain powerless and have a low status in society.

On Saturday, the country will observe National Women’s Day, and the low status and frequency of abuse of female children will be the main focus.

There is consensus among women’s groups that for the persistent violation of girls’ rights to end, the justice system’s approach to child abuse as well as society’s attitudes and behaviour towards girls will have to change.

They acknowledge that the Government has ratified several conventions in an effort to sharpen the laws that protect women and children.

However, these conventions have not improved the lives or protected the rights of hundreds of thousands of women and girls who are victims of abuse.

The conventions include the Beijing Declaration, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The recent case of Mamokgethi Malebane was an example of how the justice system fails abused children. Mamokgethi (?) was murdered by the man she accused of rape.

Society has found many justifications for abuse

Sheik says society has found many justifications for abuse, even using culture as an excuse. This has made people tolerant of the scourge.

Although society needs to change its mindset, Penny Mhlakali from the Network Against Child Labour says this will only come with extensive education, change of value systems and general respect from the public.

“Women and girls should not be taught not to accept being relegated to second place.”

Dhlamini points out that the future of abused girls is at stake and the challenge to fight further abuse lies in the hands of today’s women.

“If the present generation of women lose their fight against patriarchal attitudes and continued inequality there will be no hope for the women of the future who are today’s girls,” she says.
Investigates youth body, says member

Nomawanda Mathiene

A member of the Eastern Cape Youth Commission has asked the public protector's office to investigate the commission's activities or lack thereof.

National Party member Enoch de Wet, who claims to have been appointed to the commission by former Eastern Cape premier Raymond Mhlaba, said it had done no work since its induction last year and had instead taken study trips which produced nothing.

The commission had not come up with a single youth programme, in spite of its R10m budget and the numerous problems in the province.

National Youth Commission communications director Paul Johnson said he was surprised by De Wet's allegations because he had found the province to be hard-working where youth matters were concerned.

Eastern Cape chairman Thembi Mascelelani said he would meet premier Arnold Stofile to discuss the accusations.

National commission chairman Mahlanti Bhengu said yesterday that the body would hold hearings on youth policy to guide government in establishing youth development programmes.

She said the commission was not meant to be an implementing organ. It had a clear mandate to initiate and develop an overarching policy to govern the range of issues facing the development of SA youth.
projects ‘on track’

provinces were given tough final targets to meet. In addition, there was greater clarity on what was required from provinces in terms of their business plans and provincial supervisors were becoming more skilled, he said.
The slow start to delivery under the programmes related largely to delays in local elections and the lack of operative local municipal and community structures. "We are, however, confident that we will spend all of our allocated funds by the end of government's financial year," he said.
Of the 1,180 business plans submitted, 1,068 had been approved by the end of last month and funding recommendations issued. Figures showed that KwaZulu-Natal, the Northern Cape and North West still had to commit a small percentage of their respective R269.9m, R97.2m and R120.5m allocations.
The three provinces had disbursed R86m, R42.5m and R44.5m respectively of their allocations. The other provinces had committed all of their funds. The Eastern Cape had disbursed almost R135m of its R230.9m allocation, Free State R47.6m of its R92.7m allocation, Gauteng R70.1m of R135.7m, Mpu malanga R43.8m of R88.4m, Northern Province R35m of R200m and Western Cape R70.4m of R84.8m.

SA ‘taking advantage of Zimbabwean slackness’

HARARE — SA businessmen were taking over the region while their Zimbabwean counterparts preferred to blame President Robert Mugabe’s government for their lack of enterprise, Zimbabwe’s commissioner of taxes Geraham Pasi said yesterday.
“What is needed is for the private sector to be more innovative and show more initiative in the production of wealth,” Pasi told a seminar.
Pasi attacked a small group of “know-it-all economists” who expected the July 24 budget tabled by Finance Minister Herbert Murerwa to solve all the business sector’s problems. The government had provided a good enabling environment and it was up to entrepreneurs to exploit it.
Pasi told the seminar, attended by more than 400 accountants, tax advisers and treasury officials, that in view of Zimbabwe’s military assistance to Mozambique during its 17-year civil war its businessmen ought to be in a commanding position in the former Portuguese colony.
"But the South Africans are literally taking the country over," he said. Similarly, SA businessmen were moving into Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
Tax incentives represented a form of payment from the government which had to be made good by the remaining taxpayers, and incentives had to be phased out, he said.
Teenage Suicide Rate Shock
Teen suicides tied to depression

CT 14/8/97 (298)

sense of hopelessness and helplessness. Society provides no guarantees or security for their futures.

In addition, at least one in five who attend the centre — a psychiatric unit of UCT’s medical school and Groote Schuur Hospital — have been sexually abused.

"Increasingly, with both parents working, children are left alone and unsupervised in the afternoons. This lack of limit-setting leads to behavioural problems."

Although parents aren’t to blame, says Berard, they should be made more aware of the situation.

And because teenagers are seldom physically ill, they aren’t often seen by doctors. The diagnosis of depression is left in the hands of educators and parents, who, more often than not, ascribe bad behaviour or "acting out" to naughtiness.

Clinical psychologist Mr Gary Read, who heads William Slater’s research unit, investigated the trend in Groote Schuur’s emergency psychiatric ward last year, where two or three teenagers were admitted each day after suicide attempts.

Most of these were young women, who in 90% of cases, took an overdose of pain-killers or tranquilisers — often the property of one of their parents.

That girls are more at risk, reports another study, could be because they are more reflective and less likely than boys to direct aggression outward.

While most young women take an overdose of some sort, young men usually choose a more violent means to end their lives — like cutting their wrists, hanging or trying to shoot themselves, says Read.

"Death-wish" behaviour by some youngsters further clouds the issue, says Schlebusch. "The way they live — behaving recklessly, exposing themselves to AIDS, getting into gunfights and literally playing Russian roulette with their lives — might show they don’t give a damn," says Schlebusch.

Read found that 68% of those who attempted suicide suffered from some form of depression.

"Most kids who are depressed entertain suicidal thoughts. They may not attempt suicide but think about death."

Suicide attempts were normally unplanned, impulsive and precipitated by circumstance — usually an argument with a parent.

Common behaviour before a suicide attempt includes loss of concentration, a drop in school performance, social withdrawal and occasional disruptiveness.

"They may be rude to figures in authority," says Read.

"And, looking no further than the symptom, schools often react by placing them in detention. This exacerbates the situation. The community doesn’t understand depression when it comes to teenagers. We need to empower and educate teachers and parents."

While schools play an undisputed role in preventing teenage suicides, teacher-counsellors are failing prey to the education department’s rationalisation process.

Many schools have no counsellors at all and in others counsellors are expected to teach mainstream subjects and are allowed only a few periods of guidance.

The Western Cape Education Department says it’s unaware of the alarming trend.

It is in the process of promoting teacher support teams at all schools which will "provide first-level intervention and support" to pupils with problems, in addition to services provided at 17 school clinics throughout the province.

Preventing teenage suicidal behaviour is vital, says Schlebusch.

Suicidal behaviour "leads to a state of hospital admissions and expensive procedures, resulting in much psychological anguish and high health-care costs."

"This does not take into account costs incurred in post-hospital treatment and the treatment of devastated loved ones. Apart from the enormous cost in human suffering, health-care planners cannot continue to ignore the financial implications."

The William Slater Centre for Adolescents and Young Adults in Rondebosch is the only local day-care facility of its kind dedicated to the welfare of teenagers with emotional and behavioural problems.

Treating teenagers with suicidal tendencies forms only part of its service to the community.

The centre runs a 10-12 week programme for people between the ages of 14 and 22 who are suffering from depression, suicidal tendencies, eating disorders, sexual abuse, difficulty with interpersonal relationships or adjusting after stressful events, anxiety and the refusal to attend school.
At least R4.3m stolen from school feeding schemes – report

From the source
R4,3m stolen from feeding schemes

POLITICAL STAFF

SHOCKING figures from the Department of Health have revealed that at least R4,3 million was stolen from feeding schemes in South Africa’s nine provinces.

According to figures released by Health Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma in Parliament yesterday, the Eastern Cape accounted for a lion’s share of the misappropriation.

In that province, more than R2,3m had gone missing as a result of theft, corruption, fraud or mismanagement.

In a reply to a question by Democratic Party leader Mr Tony Leon, Dlamini-Zuma was unable to explain the circumstances under which the money had disappeared and whether charges had been laid against the culprits.

She said more than R796,8m had been spent on school feeding schemes nationally.

In the Northern Province, police have been investigating the theft of at least R1,5m after a member of the school feeding project committee used the money to buy food for “personal use”.

In Mpumalanga, at least R30 000 was lost when members of a project committee stole cheque books and used them fraudulently.

In one case, a school principal who paid R8 000 to a supplier without proof was convicted and sentenced to a fine of R600 or 12 months in jail.

In KwaZulu-Natal, at least R350 000 had been lost.

The Western Cape had the lowest number of cases misappropriations — three, involving R23 000 — and the North West was not mentioned in the report.

Leon said the DP calculated that the R4,3m that had been stolen could have provided meals to at least eight million school children. He called on Dlamini-Zuma to announce what steps, if any, she had made to ensure cost-effective and honest delivery of school meals.

“The minister’s answer illustrates how the scheme was misconceived and mismanaged from the start. In the Eastern Cape, the entire scheme was suspended, then reinstated in 1996 after a R35m grant from the Department of Health; yet no less than half the misappropriation happened in that province.

“In the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, where corruption and chaos were widespread, non-governmental organisations have been largely excluded from the scheme.

“By contrast, in the Western Cape, where a few misappropriations occurred, and North West which appears to be in the clear, NGOs have been at the forefront of the school’s delivery system.”
School feeding scheme lost R4m to theft and fraud

CAPE TOWN — More than R4m had been stolen, defrauded or misappropriated from the Primary School Nutrition programme since September 1994, figures supplied by Health Minister Nkosazana Zuma show.

In a written reply to a request by Democratic Party leader Tony Leon for information, Zuma said government had spent R76,810m on the scheme between September 1994 and May this year.

The worst affected provinces appear to have been the Northern Province, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

In the Eastern Cape, where the entire scheme was suspended as a result of widespread graft and then reinstated last year after a R2,5m grant from the health department, nine cases involving R2,3m had been recorded.

However, no-one had been arrested for the loss and Zuma said it was "unknown" if police were investigating the matter.

Among the cases was theft by a Northern Province project committee member who used money to buy goods for personal use. The money had been repaid and the police investigation closed.

Zuma's figures show that most of the losses were due to the theft and fraudulent use of cheques intended for the feeding scheme.

Leon said Zuma's reply revealed a "shocking and depressing picture of mismanagement and misappropriation of funds". The R4m loss meant government had lost the chance to provide 7-million meals to schoolchildren.

He blamed the exclusion of non-governmental organisations for the chaos and corruption, saying there were few misappropriations in the Western Cape and the North West, where such organisations were at the forefront of the scheme.
Child Welfare drafting new anti-abuse plan

By Charity Bhengu

SPURRED by growing concern at the high rate of child sexual abuse in South Africa, Johannesburg Child Welfare Society consultant Dr Jackie Loffell is drafting a child protection plan that will for the first time make provision for specialised services that are properly staffed and financed.

Social worker Loffell said the welfare society needed to deal with victims in a more specialised way because child abuse had become a complex issue.

She started research in the area four years ago, setting up a pilot project that compared the progress of abused children assisted by the new specialised service with those whose cases were handled in the traditional way.

"Funded by the Iris Ellen Hodges Fund and finished in July, 1996, Loffell's work indicated that the new specialisation strategy can reduce, secondary abuse", the trauma to which child victims are subjected while passing through the halls of the police and courts.

The study was based on a battery of tests over a period of two years on 40 sexually abused girls aged six to 12 years. Several patterns emerged, one of which was that lack of proper supervision during the day seemed to be a common factor in most cases.

"It was not possible to draw any firm conclusions from the test scores, due to a number of factors, including the unstable state of the child protection system and the fact that Child Welfare was involved in major restructuring at the time", Loffell said.

The study showed an urgent need for improved co-ordination of the different components of the child protection system - police, justice and welfare - and for a properly co-ordinated strategy to deal with offenders.

The work also highlighted the difficulties faced by poverty-stricken families whose circumstances forced children to care for other children and abuse their own children, while at the same time obstructing efforts to protect them.

It revealed a need to strengthen the position of mothers to enable them to assert themselves against the men who were abusing their children.

Loffell said, "Most of the mothers would face serious difficulties for their children as well as themselves if they took action against or left the perpetrator. This is because offenders tend to be providers of family income and accommodation in a socio-economic environment which offers few options for the women concerned and their children."

"A disturbing feature of the study was the lack of any coherent law enforcement approach. Although most offenders had been reported to the police, fewer than half had been prosecuted, and only nine convicted. Of those, more than half were acquitted, and only three were ordered to receive psychological treatment."

In the last cases, there was no proper system for monitoring treatment or dealing with defaulters. Finally, two abusers were imprisoned, but there was likewise no reason to believe that their psycho-sexual problems would be dealt with, given the lack of appropriate programmes in most prisons.

"It was apparent from the study that no mechanism whatever existed for dealing with the vast majority of offenders - those who were never arrested, or never prosecuted."

Loffell said the vast majority of offenders "simply fell through the cracks in both the criminal justice and the welfare systems and that those who did not, were ineffectively dealt with."
Stopping the rot in feeding schemes

A black empowerment company has devised a scheme to save millions lost to fraud, writes Charlene Smith

Government and some provinces are investigating whether “food cheques”, a concept-based system, could save millions lost to fraud and corruption in school feeding schemes.

Figures released by the Department of Health this week showed that at least R4.5 billion — enough to feed eight million children — has been lost in the past year alone.

Many small traders complain that they are being cut out of business by being forced to sell to schools that delay payment or don’t pay at all. However, a Department of Health official said schools were given the money upfront and there was no reason why they should not pay on time.

Many small traders complain that they are being cut out of business by being forced to sell to schools that delay payment or don’t pay at all. However, a Department of Health official said schools were given the money upfront and there was no reason why they should not pay on time.

Providing cheques on a monthly basis would also allow for better fraud getting. At present feeding projects receive cheques to cover three weeks of food, and often spend all the money long before the period is up.

Department of Health research shows that in Northern Province, for example, police are investigating the theft of R25 million after a member of a school feeding project crew stole the money to “buy food for personal use.” In another case a committee member used government cheques to spend R300,000.

In Mampumalanga, school feeding project members stole cash cheques and awarded themselves R10,000 each.

A school principal paid a supplier R1,000 in another instance, with no proof of any food having been delivered.

There are serious localized problems that vary from area to area, most of which range from a lack of capacity to communication problems and difficulties at delivery level.

We took over an imperfect feeding scheme from the national department in 1999, and are still trying to hone it.

However, while forensic audits have been introduced, at a cost of R5.6 million to identify and pick up fraud and maladministration, not enough has been done to eliminate the potential for abuse.

Green Thompson says that the good done by the feeding projects still outweighs the bad.

“ersistent are being avoided there is still a need for greater entrepreneurship in the administration of the scheme. Communities must be empowered to do watchtowers.”

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Committee's approval of the Balance was an important aspect of the decision-making process. The Committee's approval was based on a comprehensive review of the financial statements and the financial implications of the proposed projects and initiatives. The approval was significant as it provided a clear mandate for the implementation of the projects and initiatives.

The approval process involved rigorous analysis and evaluation of the financial projections and the potential impact of the projects on the financial health of the organization. The Committee's approval ensured that the projects and initiatives were aligned with the organization's strategic goals and were financially viable.

The approval process also helped to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of the organization's resources. It provided a clear framework for decision-making and helped to prevent any potential misalignment of the projects and initiatives with the organization's financial resources.

In conclusion, the Committee's approval of the Balance was a critical aspect of the decision-making process. It provided a clear mandate for the implementation of the projects and initiatives, ensured transparency and accountability in the management of the organization's resources, and helped to align the projects and initiatives with the organization's strategic goals.
LAND AREAS

The Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs, and the Minister for Environment, Water and Population Development, and the Minister for Finance and Planning, hereby announce that the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia has decided to implement a comprehensive plan for the conservation and development of land areas.

This plan will involve the acquisition and allocation of land for various purposes, including agricultural, environmental, and recreational uses. The plan aims to ensure the sustainable use and management of land resources, while also meeting the needs of the community.

The Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs, in consultation with the Minister for Environment, Water and Population Development, has directed the Department of Environment and Planning to prepare a comprehensive land management strategy for submission to the Cabinet for consideration.

The strategy will take into account the diverse needs of the community, including the protection of natural habitats, the provision of recreational areas, and the development of agricultural land for food production.

The strategy will also aim to promote the efficient use of land resources, taking into account the needs of both rural and urban communities.

The implementation of the strategy will require the cooperation of all levels of government, as well as the involvement of community stakeholders and the private sector.

The strategy will be a living document, with regular reviews and updates to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

The Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs, and the Minister for Environment, Water and Population Development, welcome any feedback or suggestions from the community and encourage all stakeholders to participate in the development and implementation of the strategy.
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Note: The above table is a draft and subject to further review.

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**The Minister of Health**
The Minister of Finance and Public Service, Hon. Andrew Goodnough, today announced a number of changes to the Budget. These include:

- A significant reduction in government spending.
- An increase in the minimum wage.
- New measures to reduce the deficit.
- A new tax on luxury goods.
- A focus on education and healthcare.

In his speech, the Minister emphasized the importance of fiscal responsibility and the need for tough decisions. He also highlighted the government's commitment to creating jobs and improving the economy.

The details of these changes will be outlined in the upcoming Budget document.
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The table above shows the data collected in the experiment. The results indicate a significant difference in outcomes.
Grenada 1992

Cabinet Meeting...
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

The National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978, as amended, provides for the organisation and provision of health services in Scotland. The Act gives the Minister of Health the power to make regulations and issue directions to local health boards in connection with the provision of health services. The Minister is also responsible for the overall provision of health services in Scotland, including the development and implementation of health policy.

The Minister of Health is also responsible for the provision of community care services, including social work and housing, to people who are assessed as needing such services. The Minister is also responsible for the regulation and inspection of care homes and other residential care settings.

In addition, the Minister of Health is responsible for health protection, including the prevention and control of communicable diseases, and for the provision of health education and health promotion.

The Minister of Health is accountable to the Scottish Parliament for the provision of health services in Scotland, and the Scottish Government's performance is regularly reviewed by the Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee.
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

Policy for the provision of drugs in the NHS

This paper has been prepared in consultation with the Committee on Safety of Medicines and the National Service Framework for Drug Misuse.

The provision of drugs in the NHS is governed by the Health Act 1974 and the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990.

The NHS Executive is responsible for ensuring that the NHS provides drugs in a safe and effective manner.

The provision of drugs in the NHS is subject to the following conditions:

1. The provision of drugs in the NHS is subject to the approval of the Secretary of State.

2. The provision of drugs in the NHS is subject to the approval of the NHS Executive.

3. The provision of drugs in the NHS is subject to the approval of the National Service Framework for Drug Misuse.

4. The provision of drugs in the NHS is subject to the approval of the Committee on Safety of Medicines.

The provision of drugs in the NHS is subject to the following conditions:

1. The provision of drugs in the NHS is subject to the approval of the Secretary of State.

2. The provision of drugs in the NHS is subject to the approval of the NHS Executive.

3. The provision of drugs in the NHS is subject to the approval of the National Service Framework for Drug Misuse.

4. The provision of drugs in the NHS is subject to the approval of the Committee on Safety of Medicines.
Children's Fund distributes R12-m

By Charity Bhengu

June 20 1995.

THE Nelson Mandela Children's Fund has distributed over R12 million for hundreds of projects to alleviate the plight of South Africa's poor children.

Chief executive trustee Mr Jeremy Ratcliffe said this was as a result of the support of individuals and companies who made donations and organised fundraising campaigns throughout the country.

In its short existence the fund had achieved remarkable results in the funding of children's projects, Ratcliffe said.

Mandela has donated one third of his salary to the fund since it was founded on

A total of R5 480 000 was donated to homeless, abandoned and abused children; R3 330 000 was given to education projects and disabled children got R2 912 000.

The rest of the money was given to young offenders, places of safety and disaster relief.

If attempts by SA Sweet Factory to raise more money prove fruitful, the fund will be about R3 million richer.

The factory has launched a national campaign to raise R2 500 000 for the fund through a competition. For inquiries phone Mark Barnblatt at (021) 439-3539 or 082 456 9068.
New system focuses on healing victims forced to face their criminals
Interdepartmental structure set up to service needs of youth

Bonile Ngqiyaza

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL government structure, which would draw together the efforts of various government departments and help assess and service youth needs and issues, was announced by the national youth commission yesterday.

An inaugural meeting of the structure was convened early yesterday and commission spokesmen said afterwards a basis had been laid for quality work in youth development.

Nine representatives from nine government departments — which include health, labour, education and environment, and the deputy president's office — make up the committee.

Commission chairman Mahleni Bhengu said the initiative was in line with the legislated task of the commission to promote a uniform approach by all state organs to matters relating to the youth.

Bhengu said the committee had been specifically established to draw all existing and planned government services, programmes, research and other initiatives affecting the youth in a range of ministries and departments into a comprehensive, co-ordinated national framework.
On my first sick day

A terrified teenager in solitary confinement

I AM a 15-year-old pupil at George Hofmeyr School, Standerton. I was placed at the school in February 1996 after the children's court decided that I had a parent who was unfit to have custody of me. I am a Grade 9A (Std 7) pupil and have been placed first in my class for most of the time I have been at the school. I hold school academic awards with a golden academic badge.

It is an industrial high school with about 160 girls. There are four residential hostels, one of which, Louwenburg, is the therapy hostel, known as the 'strookshuis' (punishment hostel).

Pupils are grouped according to their compliance with school rules and scholastic performance. At night, Louwenburg pupils in the C, S or SS groups are locked in their rooms and required to use a bedpan. The school encourages pupils to inform on each other. A pupil who does so is rewarded.

The school applies two methods of punishment based on isolation room arrest and locking up. Under room arrest a child is confined to her room and may not leave except to attend school or confirmation classes. She showers under the supervision of the staff member on duty.

Detention in the lockup is the most serious form of discipline, short of transfer to a reform school. The lockup is a small cell in each hostel, 2.5m by 4.3m, with a high ceiling, a single door with an inspection window and a single grated window. A low internal wall partitions off an open toilet. It has two steel beds bolted to the floor, each with a foam mattress and blankets but no sheets or pillows.

Children held in the lockup are not allowed to have any property with them, not even their schoolbooks, and they do not attend classes. They are not allowed to wear their own clothes and are provided with a school nightie. They may not wear underclothes, or have hairpins or rings.

The child has no contact with her peers unless another child happens to be held in the lockup at the same time. She has no contact with her teachers. She is not taken out for exercise. The child is not told beforehand how long she is to be confined. She is held in the lockup until Mr. Bester (the headmaster) decides that she has learnt her lesson. Usually it is for less than six days. But I understand that children have been held for between two and three weeks in previous years, and last year a girl was held for four days and then, on the next day, again locked up for a further 15 days.

The first time I was held in the lockup was on 26 April 1996. I was locked up for Satanism because I was playing a game called "matchman" that a neighbour at such hallucinations.

A pupil tried to commit suicide, was pregnant, and tore a string tied around her neck. She was taken to hospital.

One day during the mid-year exams, a pupil told us that we must not hostel. We did not hear her, and she went into the office and shouted, and we wrote out 100 times: "I speak to us."

I was angry with the teacher, and I said to one of the girls: "She's a car accident." The girl replied to Mr. Bester's office. He said, "I don't know, and I was depressed."

This time, I was held without knowing what was supposed to do, so we talked to each other. I cried, we sang, read, played games, screamed an hour later. I was depressed I talked to a dwarf. I was scared at night and blocks that looked like a man. I was held for five days.

The third time I was locked away on an outing and went back to school. I was never, and I never did anything right.

I was taken back to the school.
WN and the fear

Finement misses her mother

The cannot be the schoolgirl who is 

In the lockup, she

As we were walking

In the lockup, she

I was sick, with nausea and vomiting, and was given

After five days Mr Bester came to the lockup and asked what we had learnt. I told him I had learnt not to run away. I was released.

There were five of us in the lockup on this occasion, because there was not enough space for the children in the other lockups. We shared the two beds and slept together as best we could. We read the Bible, played games and sang. I sucked my thumb. I did not cry this time.

After my release, I was placed under room arrest for 15 days.

Four days after being released I was again placed under room arrest, this time for "lesbianism". I had received an affectionate letter from a friend and wrote back to her. It was written in friendship and was not a love letter.

One of the psychologists at the school was given my letter by my friend during counselling. He reported it to Mr Bester who announced to the whole school that I had written a lesbian letter and would be going back to room arrest for "a long time".

I was released on the day my lawyer consulted with me. I had been under room arrest for six days. It is humiliating to be locked up. The other girls avoid you, mock you and treat you like rubbish. The prefects shout at you more. I felt alone and unwanted.

I do not believe that punishment in the lockup has helped me. It has made me hard and I now have no feelings. I don't care what happens to me. The school can even have me moved to (the reform school in) Constantia (in the Western Cape). I don't want to be in this school. I did nothing wrong to deserve it and this place is making me insane.

Detention in the lockup is particularly damaging to some of the other girls, especially if they are held alone.
GEORGE Hofmeyr High School, which is home to 180 girls, does not feel like a place where teenagers live. It is far too quiet and the perfectly manicured lawns and flower beds make its grounds look unhived.

But the school's emphasis on order and discipline hides an ugly secret. Its four residential hostels, Bennet, Claasen, Louwenburg and Simmons, each contain a "lockup" — a 2,4m by 4,3m cell with a high ceiling, a door with an inspection window, a single grated window and a toilet that is partitioned off by a low wall.

Inside the cells are two steel beds, bolted to the floor.

It was in one of these cells that Katrina X was held as a punishment for "Satanism". She was also placed under "room arrest" a number of times — confined to her hostel room and made to shower under staff supervision after being accused of "lesbianism".

She is now taking the school and the government to court to try and put an end to these disciplinary practices.

The school's principal, Pieter Wilhelm Bester, said the disciplinary system was in place at industrial schools, reformed schools and places of safety nationwide.

"The previous education system made provision for isolation facilities and for detaining pupils."

He said pupils at the school had "behavioural disorders" and had been placed there under the Child Care Act. Many of them were there because of a lack of adequate parental care.

Bester refused the Sunday Times access to the school's hostels and contact with pupils.

Sited on the outskirts of the quiet rural backwater of Standerton, in Mpuhlanga, the school is surrounded by a high fence. Its flat and empty-looking grounds bare fall — there are no places to hide, no concealed corners.

In the austere facebrick hostels and school buildings, burglar bars are fitted to every window and all outside doors are fitted with security gates. They were all closed, despite the spring warmth.

The windows looking out of the hostel rooms are covered with netting and frill lace curtains, making it difficult to see in and, probably, out.

There is a stern and forbidding atmosphere, and staff members — teachers, cooks and gardeners — greet strangers with suspicion.

The institution is one of four industrial schools in Mpuhlanga.
Lifting the lid on the schools of shame

CARMEL RICKARD

ST 21/9/97

THOUSANDS of children at government-funded care facilities risk being “disciplined” through detention in special isolation cells where they are held in solitary confinement around the clock.

This form of “discipline”, under conditions similar to the detention provisions of the apartheid security laws, is thriving at schools of industry, places of safety and reform schools.

Some of the children at these schools are awaiting trial or have been sentenced. But others were removed from their parents because the courts have decided that the care offered them at home was inadequate.

The system to which they are moved, however, can sometimes be worse than that from which they came. Through no fault of their own, these children find themselves forced into a tightly regimented institution, where what appear to be comparatively trifling infringements of discipline are dealt with by punishment that systematically violates their rights under the Constitution.

A year ago this week, the government was warned that some of the methods of discipline in these schools contravened the Constitution’s Bill of Rights.

The report which lifted the veil on these practices was commissioned by the cabinet, and was written by the inter-ministerial committee on young people at risk.

Top officials said they were outraged to find that such conditions existed.

But, despite the initial outrage, the practices outlined in the report have continued. About 6 000 students, in 59 schools, could be affected by the discipline imposed at these institutions.

Now the central government and all nine provincial governments will have to explain to the High Court why they have allowed the practice of school-imposed detention without trial to carry on.

The writers of the report, handed to the government a year ago, said that isolation cells were widely used for punishment.

These cells were usually small rooms with a peephole in the door. Generally, there was an open toilet and, sometimes, a washbasin inside the small cell. No reading material was allowed, except, sometimes, the Bible.

“The child or youth placed in isolation at some facilities is permitted to wear only pyjamas.

“The duration of time in isolation cells varies. The average time is five days, but some facilities were found to be holding young people for 14 days and, at one reform school, for 28 days. During this time in isolation, children are deprived of education. They are generally not released for exercise. Meals are brought into the cell.”

The report mentioned one school where the blankets and mattresses were taken out of the cells during the day. Children were routinely held in isolation for as long as 28 days at this school.

The report said there was a serious lack of understanding of adolescent sexuality. Investigators discovered “a hysterical reaction amongst staff interviewed to same-sex experimentation, which is labelled as lesbianism or homosexuality, and is harshly punished.”
Athe provincial education departments to the
High Court, claiming "cruel and inhuman" punishment after she was locked up in an isolation cell for,
among other things, playing a schoolyard game that
was deemed to be "Satanist".
In a barrowingly affidavit, Katrina X, who is an award-
winning pupil at George Hofmeyr High School at
Standerton in Mpumalanga — and whose real name
cannot be disclosed — told how she wept, beat her
fists against the wall and hallucinated when she was
locked up in the cell.
Her application has stove the government into ac-
tion — a year after it was alerted to the grave human
rights abuses in special schools by a cabinet report.
Welfare Minister Geralda Fraser-Moleketi ad-
mitted there was a need for "desperate intervention
to take place". She said a team was being sent to
Katrina X's school to "help the staff to develop
alternatives to isolation".
Centra and the nine provincial
education departments,
which are being taken to
court, haven't yet said if they
will contest her action.
Pieter Wilhelm Bester,
headmaster of the George
Hofmeyr High School,
said he had suspended
the use of the lockup due
to the court application.
He said girls at the
school had "behavioural
disorders" and had been
placed there under the
Child Care Act.
"The previous educa-
tional system made pro-
visions for isolation facili-
ties and for detaining pupils," he said.
In her affidavit, Katrina X told of repeated periods
of "room arrest" and isolation in a special cell
where pupils were held around the clock, not al-
lowed out for classes, exercise or meals. They
were refused permission to wear underwear or
to have access to books or writing materials.
She was once held in the
lockup for playing a
guessing game involving
three matches wrapped
in tissue paper marked
"yes", "no" and "maybe",
which was deemed to be
an "occult activity".
On another occasion,
Katrina X says she was
given "room arrest" — a
milder form of isolation
— for writing a letter to a
friend that was deemed to be
"lesbian".
During her time in the
lockup she began halluci-
nating, wept and beat the
walls with her fists.
In his affidavit, which
forms part of her appli-
cation, clinical psychologist
Peter Johnson says that
isolation and confine-
ment alienates children
and prevents them from
forming trusting relation-
ships. It also leads to a
hardening of attitudes and
disregard for norms and
values. Katrina X is
one of thousands of chil-
dren who are disciplined
by "room arrest" or lock-
ing them into isolation
cells at reform schools.

CARMEL RICKARD
and LAURICE TAITZ
industrial schools and places of safety.
Her High Court applica-
tion alleges that the meth-
ods of discipline used at
her school are common
practice among other
government care facili-
ties, but are not autho-
rised by any legislation.
According to the Legal
Resources Centre in Pre-
toria, which is acting on
her behalf, "room arrest" and "lock up" also breach
the Constitution for a
number of reasons.
They amount to unlaw-
ful administrative action;
they infringe the child's
right to be protected from
maltreatment, abuse and
neglect; and they are cru-
el and inhuman punish-
ments. They also infringe
the child's right to digni-
ty, the right to psycholo-
gical integrity, and the
right to be treated in a
manner which takes ac-
count of the child's age.
The centre adds that
South Africa signed the
United Nations Conven-
tion on the Rights of the
Child in 1995 and is, there-
fore, bound by the con-
vention. However, the
practice of "lock up" and
"room arrest" breach
many of its sections.
The centre also points
out that many of the chil-
dren at these facilities,
who are at risk of being
discharged in this way,
are very young and lack the au-
thority to enforce their
rights. They are often
poor and do not have the
resources to bring legal
action. They are often put
into these institutions be-
cause they do not have
adequate parental care,
yet the institution respon-
sible for their care is the
"perpetrator of these
practices".
Experts are experts have
welcomed the case be-
cause they say it will
focus attention on the
conditions in these care
facilities. They have criti-
cised the situation in
which the court removes
a child on the grounds
that the family is not pro-
viding adequate care, only
to have the child put
into a situation which in
some cases is worse.
Fraser-Moleketi said
that during the last two
weeks Operation Go had
been established by an
inter-ministerial commit-
tee, involving the depart-
ments of welfare and ed-
ucation, to assess what to
next.
"We will not gloss over
issues like these (the
forms of discipline used
in these care facilities).
We have given the
provinces detailed pro-
grammes of what must be
done to deal with the sys-
tem comprehensively."

A SCHOOLGIRL'S
STORY: Page 7
Multi-million rand project launched in Cape Town

Huge boost for fight against child abuse

Aisha Ismail
Rights abuses common at special schools — report

JOHANNESBURG: Human rights abuses, highlighted by the case of a 15-year-old Mpumalanga pupil who is taking the government to court for "cruel and inhumane" punishment, are common at special schools, says a recent report.

Mr Thami Mseleku, special adviser to Education Minister Dr Sibusiso Bengu, said the recent report of the inter-ministerial committee for youth at risk showed practices of this nature were "quite widespread".

The teenager's affidavit tells how she suffered while locked in an isolation cell for misbehaving.

She reportedly plans to take the government and provincial education departments to court for her treatment at the George Hofmeyr High School in Standerton.

Mseleku said such practices had been allowed at special schools under the old dispensation, but not under the Constitution and the new Schools Act.

"In many schools of the industry and special schools for children whose parents are not fit to look after them, the children are treated as delinquents. Yet they are the victims of their parents," Mseleku said.

Welfare Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi had promised "swift action", he said.

The Education Department recently set up a commission that recommended that special schools — which include reform schools — be integrated into the national schooling system. — Own Correspondent
PRETORIA: The National Youth Commission (NYC) yesterday dismissed a DP report calling for its demise as a meaningless document which had been "shoddily cobbled together".

"If any other statutory organ had produced a research document as shoddily cobbled together and factually inaccurate as the section on the NYC clearly is, it would have been vilified," spokesperson Mr Paul Johnson said.

The report, released by the DP on Tuesday, listed seven statutory bodies which it said needed closer examination. Serious questions had to be asked about their cost to the taxpayer, DP spokesperson Mr James Selie had said.

He had called for the scrapping of the NYC, saying its functions should be transferred to the office of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

Johnson said the DP's assertion that NYC chairperson Ms Mahlinga Bhengu was earning a salary of R380 000 a year showed what he called a fundamental misunderstanding of the pay scales.

"The salary component (of Bhengu) starts at R191 712 per annum. The gross package, assuming all benefits, allowances and schemes are activated, works out roughly to R350 000."

Reacting to the DP's criticism that Bhengu was 26 years old and inexperienced, Johnson said: "They have her age wrong. She is in fact 27."

He added. "It is surprising that the DP of all parties should raise this in relation to the principled issue of levels of public service remuneration."

Commission members, Johnson said, received a basic annual salary of R163 000, the same as a director in the public service. "I assume the amount of R276 000 the DP gave is what it will come to if you activate all benefits."

The NYC had only one office, he said, "not seven. The DP had failed to distinguish between the NYC and provincial youth commissions.

They had also been incorrect in putting the NYC's annual budget at R10 million. It was R6.9m.

Complaints by the DP that the body had failed to come up with a single youth development strategy were also ill-informed, Johnson said.

"These projects are not of the nature that they can be launched almost as soon as they are conceptualised. They require long-term, meticulous planning, preparation and canvassing."

Johnson, communication director, said the NYC had a staff complement of 21, but not all posts had been filled. He was, for example, awaiting applications for the position of his deputy.

Asked about the need for this, he said: "In my area you can argue that if they pay me double, I can do everything. But for what they pay me, I am not going to do more than what I am doing." — Sapa
Youth Commission rejects DP report

Stephané Bothma
Pretoria - The laziness of negative sensationalism was no substitute for the rigour of sound critical analysis, the National Youth Commission said yesterday in rejecting a Democratic Party (DP) report on selected statutory committees.

Reacting to the report recommending that the commission be scrapped and its functions transferred to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office, it repeated its commitment to operational transparency.

The report stated the commission was not provided for in the constitution and yet its 26-year-old inexperienced chairman was given a yearly salary of R362,362. The commission also failed to display the organisational skills needed to justify its budget and to devise a single youth development strategy since it was formed last year.

Commission Communications Director Paul Johnson said it was unfortunate that the report was factually challenged.

He said the commission's annual report to President Nelson Mandela had been completed but not yet formally presented because protocol dictated presentation at the convenience of the office of the President.

"Both the CEO of the commission and the chairperson are on the same salary scale — that of chief director in the public service," Johnson said.

The salary component starts at R191,712 a year and the gross package, assuming all benefits, allowances and schemes were activated, amounted to about R350,000. Full-time commissioners earned R165,000 a year.

The ANC Youth League also criticised the report, saying that it was not acceptable for the DP to criticise the commission on the basis of inaccurate information and ignorance. The Freedom Front also lashed out at the DP report, saying that the party had now declared itself an enemy of the Afrikaner.
Sactwu to join protest on child labour

SHERLEY JONES

DURBAN — The South African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union (Sactwu) will join the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers’ Federation, representing 220 unions and 8.25 million members in 120 countries, in a protest tomorrow against the abuse of workers’ rights.

A Sactwu spokesman said that while globalisation of these industries should spur growth and social development, the opposite was often the case, particularly in developing countries.

“Every day brings stories of underpayment of wages, excessive working hours, child labour, unhealthy and unsafe working conditions and the harassment, intimidation and even murder of those who try to improve conditions through trade union organisation,” he said.

“In these sectors, the majority of production is for export and is carried out on the orders of multinational manufacturers, merchandisers and retailers,” he said.

He said multinationals often plugged into seemingly inexhaustible supplies of poor, uneducated workers in Asia, Latin America and Africa. “Of over 250 million working children across the world, as many as 8 million, some as young as four, are enslaved in ... the textile, clothing and footwear industries.

“A visit to a factory in Bangladesh revealed children as young as seven working 20 hours a day. Many were sick, some almost blind ... Many of these children received only a couple of bowls of rice per day,” he said.

Similar stories came from Pakistan, China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, El Salvador and Haiti.

“Most of the 150 000 garment workers in Sri Lanka’s free trade zone live in converted cattle sheds and barns. These house 60 to 60 workers without sanitation. Wages are so low all suffer from malnutrition. They also suffer sexual harassment and rape.”

Sactwu said Lesotho’s garment workers were often locked into factories and not permitted to leave until the day’s quota was complete. Quotas were arbitrary, depending on orders. Working days were between 16 and 18 hours. Mistakes meant a beating with a knotted piece of fabric.

Tomorrow’s demands, which will be endorsed by Sactwu, include the implementation in every country of the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation, including the right to freedom of association and to bargain collectively; the prohibition of forced labour; child labour and discrimination; the implementation of all labour laws; the payment of living wages; the adoption of codes of conduct by all employers’ organisations and by individual companies; and a commitment by retailers to only sell goods made without exploitative conditions.
Hand Injured Power Focus Child to Work Photo: Stopping Avion

The Department of Labour believes that an injured child who has a power focus should be stopped from working in a factory. The Department has sent a letter to the employer warning that the child's injury is likely to become worse.

The letter states that the child's injury is due to the employer not following safety regulations. The Department has also asked for the employer to provide medical treatment for the child.

The employer has responded that they will comply with the Department's requirements. They have also offered to pay for the medical treatment.

The Department has agreed to allow the employer to continue operating the factory while they work to resolve the issue.

The Department has also advised the employer to take all necessary safety measures to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

The Department has reminded the employer of their obligations under the law and has warned that non-compliance may result in legal action.

The Department has also advised the employer to provide the child with appropriate training and supervision to ensure their safety.

The Department has requested that the employer provide regular updates on the child's progress.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's injury and provide advice on how to best treat it.

The Department has also suggested that the employer consider hiring a professional to assess the child's ability to work and to provide advice on how to best accommodate their needs.

The Department has also advised the employer to consult with the Department before making any decisions regarding the child's employment.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's psychological needs and to provide advice on how to best support them.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's education and to provide advice on how to best support their learning.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's social needs and to provide advice on how to best support their relationships.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's family needs and to provide advice on how to best support their family.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's economic needs and to provide advice on how to best support their financial independence.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's legal needs and to provide advice on how to best support their legal rights.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's religious needs and to provide advice on how to best support their spiritual development.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's cultural needs and to provide advice on how to best support their cultural identity.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's linguistic needs and to provide advice on how to best support their language development.

The Department has also advised the employer to consider hiring a professional to assess the child's personal needs and to provide advice on how to best support their individual needs.
Natal to pass youth body into law

DURBAN — The KwaZulu-Natal government planned to pass legislation establishing a youth commission at its next legislature session to ensure youth played a role in stimulating economic growth in the province, premier Ben Ngubane said yesterday.

Ngubane said no funds had been allocated in the provincial budget for the commission, it would become fully operational only during the next financial year.

He said he had received submissions from youth for the appointment of six commissioners, but he preferred three. They would act in a full-time capacity.

Ngubane’s announcement followed the Democratic Party’s (DP’s) call for the scrapping of the national youth commission as it was a waste of taxpayers’ money.

But Ngubane said there was a need for the body in KwaZulu-Natal as its youth was “traumatised” by political violence and AIDS.
Employment bill to go to Parliament today

Reneé Gravitzky

THE much contested Basic Conditions of Employment Bill will be tabled in Parliament today after Labour Minister Nto Mboweni decided that sufficient consensus had been reached with labour and business, despite them disputing this.

The Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) welcomed the tabling of the bill as it had called on Mboweni to do this since April.

Business SA (BSA) said: "It remains our belief that the issue cannot be resolved only as a matter of political judgment but must also have regard to the financial and economic concerns of the parties."

Cosatu's assistant general secretary Zwelini Zuma said that if an alliance meeting did not take place to sort out disagreements before public hearings were held on the bill, Cosatu would strike on the days when labour and business presented their submissions on the bill.

Meanwhile, Mboweni met a BSA delegation yesterday to discuss stumbling blocks to a negotiated settlement on the Skills Development Bill which is being discussed in the National Economic, Development and Labour Council this week. Nedlec has to complete negotiations by October 16.

Industry sources said the meeting was an attempt to clarify positions on the funding of training. Business was opposed to the centralised collection of an 1.5% levy on payroll to fund training and the establishment of sectoral education and training authorities.

Industry sources said there was agreement on large sections of the bill and the process was going well. Labour, the source said, had supported the bill but would have preferred the training levy to have been in the region of 4%.

Negotiations came to a halt on Wednesday when government and business negotiators could not find a solution to business's concerns, sources said. The parties agreed BSA negotiators should meet Mboweni.

Labour and business are concerned about the October 16 deadline. A labour source said "depending on how we conduct oursevles from now on we may not be able to finalise discussions by October 16 as it does not provide time for report-backs to members."

Crimes against children 'increase 108%'

Nomavenda Mathiane

THERE has been a 108% increase in the number of crimes committed against children under the age of 18 in SA since 1993.

Statistics released by the welfare department and the SA Police Service (SAPS) show that last year an average of 1.15 children were sexually abused, and 751 children were physically abused, each month.

A total of 1.106 cases of child neglect were reported last year, and of these 969 were physical neglect and 137 were emotional neglect.

This year 842 children were sexually abused and 1679 new cases of child abuse were reported to Child Welfare Societies in SA.

National Council for Child and Family Welfare consultant Ros Halkett said many were ignorant about what to do in the event of suspected child abuse.

Bruises, scratches, cuts, scalds and burns on a child were indications of abuse, she said. An excessively dirty and unkept child, skin infections, nappy rashes and poor hygiene could also mean abuse.

Halkett said if the abuse was obviously severe it should be reported to the SAPS's child protection unit. Suspended cases of abuse should be reported to a social worker.
Youth body found wanting

The commission has not made much progress despite claims by Bhengu

By Simon Zwane
Political Reporter

The Youth Commission came into being amid much fanfare on June 16 last year after President Nelson Mandela announced its founding at a Youth Day celebration.

Almost a year-and-a-half after its formation the hype has died down completely. All that is heard of it is the often stated criticism that chairwoman Hlengiwe Bhengu earns a monthly salary of R30 000.

When the commission handed its first annual report to the President recently the event went unnoticed. Even the strongest opponents of the commission did not bother to look at the report.

In the foreword Bhengu claims that the commission has scored a number of successes in its first year of existence. "As a non-implementing but facilitating organ, it is now breaking new ground in its mandate of assisting government in formulating policies and development programmes to address the needs and aspirations of young people," she says.

Stakeholders consulted

However, her claims are not borne out by the report. The 19-page report indicates that the commission spent the past year planning what it needs to do and how to do it.

All the programmes that have been identified as essential for youth development are still at a conceptualisation stage or at the stage where communities and stakeholders are being consulted.

- A technical committee is being established to draw up a national discussion document on the national youth services programme which aims to equip the youth with education, skills and work experience through community reconstruction projects;
- Consultation and resource mobilisation is still taking place to establish a pilot multi-purpose community centre in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal; and
- The establishment of the youth information service to empower young people is still being conceptualised.

Although the commission has been successful in holding a national youth summit in Cape Town on June 14 and 15, it has not yet been able to translate the summit's deliberations into a youth policy.

It still has to hold provincial summits before a first policy draft is produced. This would then be submitted to the national youth policy plenary session before it is tabled in parliament. The commission envisages that the policy will be launched by the President in December.

Limited time

To achieve this in the limited time before the end of the year, seems impossible.

There are at least seven provinces in which summits must be held and the draft would have to go through the slow parliamentary process before it is adopted as policy.

Although the commission has participated in a number of international youth summits and has developed relations with youth organs in other countries, these cannot be regarded as successes.

The youth of this country, and indeed the citizenry in general, will not judge the commission by the number of international relations it has forged but by its achievement in alleviating their plight.

The report therefore shows the first important step has been taken and a blueprint has been developed to ensure that new ground can be broken. A lot of work still lies ahead.
The Boksburg city council is trying to close the orphanage and education centre in Thabisile Mzezane's small house, reports

Swapna Prabhakaran

orphaned and runaway street children in Boksburg have been given something more than just a handout. They have been given the option of a better life, thanks to the hard work of Thabisile Mzezane.

Mzezane started the Sthablele Day Care Centre in middle-class Dawn Park in Boksburg early in 1994. What began as just a warm place where abused and neglected children could come for a meal has blossomed into a home and school for 35 children.

Some of the children are orphans, and others are from poor families on the farms around Boksburg.

Mzezane was a school teacher who left the profession because of ill health. Four years ago she was divorced and had two teenagers to take care of. She says she was tooing with the idea of starting an income-generating day-care centre.

But one day she noticed a small boy living in the corridors of a shopping centre in town. "He was not going to school. His parents could not afford to send him... I thought I'd better take him in. By the time I got back to my car, I noticed there was a whole group of these children. And so I started this centre."

Since then, the centre has grown in small steps, relying heavily on donations and contributions from the community. Mzezane wants the house to give R50 or R100, and local supermarkets donate bread. "We don't have a standing fund. The money sometimes comes from other people, but mostly it's my own money," Mzezane says. She does part-time work to meet the running costs, sometimes teaching extra classes in Johannesburg.

Mzezane initially used her own home to establish a secure world for these malnourished bodies and minds. Now, the modest three-bedroomed house has been taken over entirely by the project — every room houses eight or 10 children. In the back yard, two plastic buildings and a wooden shed serve as classrooms.

Mzezane had to move her own family out of the house when it got too crowded — she rented the house next door "Tokyo [Kowale] used to rent this house once," she grins.

The classroom was donated by the Canadian embassy, and in it Mzezane gives literacy lessons to underprivileged women from the area on weekends. During the week, the 10- to 15-year-olds use it, while the smaller children, some as young as two, use the lounge as a makeshift play-school.

"If this facility did not exist, these children would not go to school. They would end up abused or as child labourers," Mzezane says. Sipho (not his real name) is 11 years old. He is one of four siblings, all born of different fathers. His mother lives on a farm and cannot support them. Until 1994 he was on the streets. "I was living badly," he recalls. "I used to be sent by older boys from the farms to go to the shops and steal. Sometimes the adults would send me to steal cheese or chocolate."

Sipho and the other children at the centre now sleep on bunk beds donated by the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. Sipho says he is happy, and loves his teachers.

The centre depends on a staff of volunteer workers from the community, and two weeks ago a Department of Education teacher from the nearby primary school, Funway Park Primary, to teach full-time. The government's primary-school feeding scheme also kicked in, and so some of the children's meals are subsidised.

Mzezane is grateful for the help from the education department, but says the welfare department has still not endorsed her work. She says the Boksburg city council has tried to close the centre down twice, once because it is in a residential area, and once because the centre "does not meet the necessary criteria."

Gert Engelbrecht of the Boksburg city council says any application to open a new day-care centre would have to go through various official stages before it can be approved.

"The application will be circulated to the various departments of the council for comment, including the city engineers, the electricity department and the fire department. Once all the departments agree, a letter of approval is issued to the applicant, subject to certain conditions," he said.

Mzezane is impatient with such bureaucracy. "They have funds for projects like this, but I can't access them," she says. "They tell me I do not meet the criteria. A child is a child. What criteria?"

Despite opposition, Mzezane says she will continue what she is doing. "I will not give up," she says. "I have a job to do that I am doing for the children."

"I have a job to do that I am doing for the children," she says. "I am doing it for the children. I am doing it for the children."
Nonracial Social Grant Will Reach the Poorest

Indigenous children under the age of 6 will qualify for a payment of R100 a month when the bill is passed. By Donovan Fawunje
APARTHEID LAWS SCRAPPED

New welfare grants to cover poorest children

MAINTENANCE GRANTS are to be cut from R135 to R100 a month to extend support to almost three million African children, reports JOVIAL RANTAO, Parliamentary Bureau.

THE welfare pie will be cut thinner but spread farther now that Parliament has approved a non-racial social grant for the poorest.

Welfare and Population Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi piloted the Welfare Laws Amendment Bill through the National Assembly. It will now be referred to the provinces.

When the bill becomes law, children aged up to six will get R100 a month, down from the present R135 for children under 18, which is to be phased out over three years.

Following a public outcry and the subsequent intervention of the welfare portfolio committee, the new grant is an improvement on the R75 originally proposed by the government.

Fraser-Moleketi told Parliament the child support grant should benefit three million children, compared with the present 300,000 mostly whites, Indians and coloureds.

The legislation was passed by 203 ANC votes and was opposed by the National Party, Freedom Front and the Democratic Party.

The bill seeks to repeal all social pension laws of the former TBVC and self-governing territories and extend the Social Assistance Act to all areas.

This was imperative to overcome the inefficiency and fragmentation of the 14 different systems inherited from the past, Fraser-Moleketi said.

Increased uniformity would also limit fraud and corruption.

The bill also provides for the payment of the grants to be made to the primary care-giver of the child without undermining parental responsibility.

It also aims to amend Section 10 of the Child Care Act to exempt members of an extended family of the child from the prohibition against receiving and caring for children younger than seven years — apart from their parents — without the prior consent of a commissioner of child welfare.

"The child support grant programme, together with free primary health care to pregnant women and children under six, will lead to increasing child survival through lower mortality rates and improved child health," Fraser-Moleketi said.

"The grant is intended to focus on the child and not on the family. Fiscal constraints are acknowledged and hence the age level is confined to six years. The child support grant is one of the several programmes aimed at poverty eradication and relief.

Mr Mike Ellis, DP spokesman on health, called for the abolition of the ministry of sport and the rationalisation of the statutory committees so that more money could be channelled towards the poor.

The DP opposed the bill because it placed too much power in the hands of the minister.
Avalanche of children hits hospital

Demand on paediatric facilities has soared since child health care became free

By Mike Masipa

Johannesburg Hospital's paediatric ward intake has increased four-fold and it has been forced to turn away patients because of the shortage of beds and lack of staff.

Since the introduction in 1994 of free health care for children under 6, the hospital has been bursting at the seams and has seen the patient intake in paediatrics grow from 2 000 in 1990 to 8 000 last year.

Speaking to The Star yesterday paediatrics head Professor Peter Cooper said the fact that the hospital was the only one in Greater Johannesburg offering specialised paediatric care meant there was an even bigger influx because all major areas in the metropole were sending patients there.

"But our main problem is

One bed can cost R320 000 a year to provide the shortage of nursing staff. We have had to limit the number of patients we take in because of the shortages.

"But we also try to send incoming patients elsewhere such as the Chris Hani-Baragwanath, Coronation and Edenvale hospitals, depending on their condition.

"Some of the wards have been standing empty because of the same problem," Cooper said.

He added that Johannesburg Hospital was allocated the same number of nurses as before the institution began admitting patients of all races in the late 1980s.

"We have had several meetings with the Gauteng Department of Health in an attempt to have the situation improved but we were always told there was not enough money."

He said that his department currently utilised seven wards with 28 beds each at a cost of R900 a bed per day. A single bed would therefore cost more than R230 000 a year to run.

A nursing sister, who did not want to be identified, said the situation was worsened by the exodus of experienced nurses to the private sector.

"The trend has been going on since long-serving nurses took severance packages a few years ago. These, especially those with specialised units, were never adequately replaced as those who came in after them left for the private hospitals soon after gaining marketable experience," she said.

She added that bureaucratic red tape also ensured that those who left were not always replaced quickly.
A year ago Valery Jaftha of Ottery would have been too frightened to stand up to a drunk man threatening the breast-feeding mother of his child with a knife — but today she does it without a second thought.

Once, Ms Jaftha said, she regarded any aggression not aimed at her as “none of my business.”

Now she does not hesitate.

Ms Jaftha is one of the field workers for the Cape Town Child Welfare Society’s new “Eye on the Children” project, and has been trained to deal with domestic violence.

“Isiobantwana”, or “Eye on the Children”, showcases the society’s dramatic new approach to fighting the increasing number of child abuse and neglect cases in deprived areas of Cape Town.

An alarming shortage of resources, combined with the wish to empower communities, has resulted in the new approach, which involves community members themselves becoming volunteers.

Fifteen Ottery residents and 16 in Khayelitsha’s Site C have been trained and the intention is that they will run pilot projects in their areas independently, with Child Welfare guiding and supporting them.

If they are successful, it will be expanded into other areas.

From May to September the new field workers attended classes twice a week to learn how to detect, prevent and briskly deal with child abuse.

Having passed the tests that followed, some volunteers are even authorised by courts to immediately remove a child from its home, if this should be necessary.

The project involves key teams: a task team that co-ordinates, field workers, who will be the “eyes” watching out for child abuse, and safe houses where children can be sheltered in emergencies.

The advantages of fighting abuse from within communities are countless, says project supervisor Trix Marais.

“These people have no degrees, but they have a life experience that is just as valuable.

“They know the communities and often have better ways of dealing with cases.”

Because the volunteers lived in the communities, they were trusted and respected, which was not always the case with social workers.

“The community members themselves have identified the field workers,” she said.

“Another advantage is that the field workers are permanently present.

“They can be reached after hours and at weekends, when social workers and police are usually too busy to make it to the scene in time.”

In one case where Ms Jaftha intervened when a drunk man was threaten-
Child labour ‘at 200 000’

Pule Molobeleti

There were about 200 000 children working in SA, about half in the agricultural sector, labour director-general Sipho Pityana said yesterday at the International Conference on Child Labour in Oslo.

The figures did not include unpaid domestic work or children working in the informal sector, he said.

The Constitution and various legal mechanisms, such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, protected children from exploitative labour practices. The act prohibited the employment of children under the age of 15, but unfortunately, he said, it contained no enforcement provisions and did not protect children between 16 and 18. Pityana said Parliament was debating a new Basic Conditions of Employment Bill which addressed these weaknesses.

Pityana said SA, which ratified the Convention of Rights of Child in 1985, gave its unconditional support to the initiative for a new convention of child labour to target the immediate suppression of the most hazardous forms of child labour and put in place a time-bound programme for its eradication.

“We would support the total prohibition of work by very young children as well as the use of children in prostitution, pornography and the drugs trade.”
and Dad having sex
and see my Mom
wake up at night

Children who committed
Exposing to adult movies

can lead to rape - experts
Giving child protection full weight of law
Child prostitution, pornography on increase in SA, says UN report

The help of the media has been called in to help eliminate sexual exploitation of children.

By Marco Gianielli
New York

A United Nations report on child prostitution and pornography has identified South Africa as an area of “special concern”.

And the report has also warned of the growing dangers of the Internet in child sex exploitation.

The report by special rapporteur Ofelia Calcecas Santos said child prostitution was increasing in all major African cities but specifically highlighted South Africa’s major cities: “In South Africa, particularly in big cities like Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg, child prostitution appears to be a growing problem linked to the increasing number of street children who have left their homes for economic and social reasons or as a result of the breaking down of families and traditional values.”

Calcecas-Santos’ 29-page report contains shocking information of child trade, abuse, exploitation and prostitution around the globe and issued a clear warning about the danger of the Internet.

The report says the Internet is contributing to a growth in child pornography and prostitution and warns that the information superhighway is being used by paedophiles to contact each other to exchange information relating to their perversions and to find victims.

“The virtually inexhaustible categories of information which the Internet can provide include innovative and simplified means of sexual exploitation,” Calcecas-Santos says in her report.

She added that the lack of accountability made policing the net almost impossible: “No single entity, academic or governmental, corporate or non-profit, administers the Internet. There is no central point at which all the information is stored or from which it is disseminated and it would not be technically feasible for any one entity to control all of the information conveyed on the Internet.”

She said advances in technology had made the creation and distribution of child pornography “easier, cheaper and more difficult to detect”.

“It has developed into a multi-million dollar industry which can be run from within the exploiter’s home.”

The danger of the web was summarised in a case mentioned in the report of a 12-year-old Australian boy who committed suicide after discovering that photographs of his sexual abuse by an older man had been posted on the Internet.

Other concerns around the world include the continued abduction and enslavement of children for military or labour purposes in some African countries, the marriage for financial gain by parents of daughters as young as 11 in the Central African Republic, “widespread” trafficking in child prostitutes in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka (where the report estimates there are more than 2000 child prostitutes) and Taiwan (50,000 child prostitutes estimated).

Calcecas-Santos called on the media to help eliminate the sexual exploitation of children through education and awareness programmes.

“The media are powerful tools of mass communication nationally and internationally and their potential to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation should be explored thoroughly.” - Star Foreign Service
on children's rights

SA to present report

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is a universally binding international agreement intended to protect the rights and dignity of children around the world. Its ratification by South Africa is a significant step towards ensuring the well-being and development of all children in the country. The report submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child by South Africa will highlight the progress made in implementing the Convention and identify areas where further improvement is needed. The Convention emphasizes the importance of protecting children from exploitation, violence, and discrimination, ensuring them access to education, and promoting their participation in decision-making processes. The report is expected to reflect on these aspects and provide insights into South Africa's commitment to upholding the rights of children.
Accusations fly in wake of speaker’s axing

Pule Molebeleidi

ACCUSATIONS flew in Free State politics yesterday over the abrupt axing of the provincial legislature speaker, Rev Motlaapile Chabaku, by the African National Congress (ANC) on Wednesday.

The National Party accused “a radical element” within the ANC of being behind Chabaku’s sacking. It was the same faction that orchestrated the campaign which saw former Free State premier Patrick Lekota lose his position earlier this year, it said.

Provincial National Party leader Iona Aucamp said Chabaku was a “victim” of a radical element which had put enormous pressure on her, making her job nearly impossible to perform. Aucamp said the axing was symptomatic of the tensions within the ANC caucus.

Describing the development as “a tragic story”, Aucamp said despite the accusations of incompetence, nobody came forward to help Chabaku do her job well.

He said Chabaku was above average. “She has the ability, but was never helped.” It is believed, however, that unsound working relations among provincial ANC members in the legislature, lack of capacity and “old age”, were some of the reasons behind Chabakus’s axing.

ANC spokesman Gregory Nthatisi said the decision that led to the sacking of the speaker was made by the provincial executive committee at the request of the ANC caucus in the legislature.

Sources said the caucus complained that Chabaku lacked capacity and was not well versed with the procedures and processes of running the legislature. The sources said Chabaku had fallen asleep during legislature sessions.

Chabaku was not available for comment yesterday.

Her secretary said she might comment next week.

PRESS RELEASE


IA International, one of the 25 largest international accounting associations, is a network of 135 independent accounting firms located in 68 countries. Headquartered in Miami, Florida, IA International was founded in 1976 and is recognised by the United Nations Department of Transnational Corporations and the AICPA.

Adv. Du Plessis attended three days of intensive seminars covering such topics as International Tax, Exchange Control and Foreign Investments, and ISO 9000 Quality Management Systems.

Attendees at this meeting included representation from the four regions within IA International. This allowed interaction between partners from the Asian-Pacific Region, European & Africa Region, the Latin American & Caribbean Region and the North American Region.

“These meetings are essential for our Member Firms. Interaction with other IA members not only enables us to provide our clients with comprehensive International services, but also to draw on the varying expertise available from firms in the Association,” an excited Adv. Du Plessis concludes.

Maintenance laws will get tougher

Taryn Lambert

WELFARE Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi has welcomed new draft legislation published by the justice department yesterday which is aimed at reforming the maintenance system and giving magistrates new powers in handling maintenance defaulters.

The new maintenance bill was published for comment by magistrates, maintenance officers and members of the public before it is passed by Parliament.

Fraser-Moleketi said the bill would lead to “greater efficiency” in the private main grant system. The reason many beneficiaries had not received maintenance payments in the past had been because of inefficiency in the system. She said she “absolutely applauded” the new bill.

Deputy Justice Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang welcomed the bill, saying it was long overdue. “At present they cannot make a maintenance order against someone who does not turn up in court and cannot order the money to be deducted from his wages until he has been convicted of not paying maintenance,” Tshabalala-Msimang said.

The bill proposes that courts be allowed to grant maintenance orders in the absence of defaulters and that deductions be made directly from their wages. Courts would be able to make defaulters pay by stop order or by debit order.

A set of general principles and guidelines would be established to assist magistrates and maintenance officers in assessing the appropriate levels of maintenance and specialised staff would be employed to locate defaulters and serve court documents on them.

The SA Law Commission, which examined the maintenance system in August last year, would monitor implementation of the new system.

The bill was approved by cabinet and would be introduced in Parliament as soon as possible, said a statement released yesterday.

The justice department hoped it would be passed early in the next parliamentary session.
Law to get tough with dads who don't pay up

BY ARISH THOM

Errant fathers who dodge maintenance payments for their children will have nowhere to hide when the Maintenance Bill, which allows the courts to compel absentee dads to cough up, is passed by Parliament next year.

"This is going to free up the state welfare budget as people who, out of frustration, resorted to state maintenance will now seek out private maintenance grants," said Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi.

"Kids whose fathers can pay will now be forced to. There will be more effective tracing and more effective follow-up." asked how many children this would affect, the minister replied: "It would run into very large numbers."

The bill has been approved by the Cabinet and will be introduced in Parliament as soon as possible. The Department of Justice was hopeful the bill would be passed early in the next session of Parliament.

Deputy Justice Minister Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang said reform of the maintenance system was long overdue.

"At the moment the law itself ties the hands of maintenance courts. They cannot make an order against someone who does not turn up in court, and cannot order the money to be deducted from his wages until he has been convicted for failing to pay maintenance," she said.

The bill will also allow courts to make the liable parent pay maintenance by stop order or debit order. Other clauses in the bill deal with general principles and guidelines to:

- Assisting magistrates and maintenance officers in assessing the correct levels of maintenance.
- Improving the enforcement of maintenance orders.
- Appointing specialised staff to locate and serve respondents with court documents.
- Improving the quality of the legislation itself, to make it easier to read and understand.

The consultation document, published by the Department of Justice, presented two options for the way maintenance orders should be enforced:

- Keeping the current system of using criminal prosecution to enforce maintenance orders, while tightening up the procedure to ensure that more is done to recover unpaid maintenance once a respondent has been convicted of failing to pay maintenance.
- Keeping criminal prosecutions as a fall-back, while enforcing maintenance orders through civil courts with the emphasis squarely on getting the respondent to pay maintenance which has not been paid.
REFORM LONG OVERDUE

No longer easy to dodge maintenance

JOHANNESBURG: The long arm of the law, considerably beefed up, will soon be used to hunt down non-custodian parents who shirk responsibility for sustaining offspring.

ERRANT fathers who dodge child maintenance payments will have nowhere to hide when the Maintenance Bill, which allows courts to compel absentee dads to cough up, is passed by Parliament next year.

"This is going to free up the state welfare budget as people who, out of frustration, resorted to state maintenance will now seek out private maintenance grants," said Welfare Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi.

"Kids, whose fathers can pay, will now be forced to pay. There will be more effective tracing and follow-up in the case of divorce," said Fraser-Moleketi.

Asked how many children this would affect, she said: "It would run into very large numbers."

In the Cape alone — where the only recent research has been conducted — there were 13 613 maintenance cases between January 1995 and April last year alone.

Cabinet has approved the bill, and it will be introduced in Parliament "as soon as possible". The Department of Justice was hopeful the bill would be passed early in the next session of Parliament.

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- Keeping criminal prosecutions as a fall-back, while enforcing maintenance orders through civil courts with the emphasis squarely on getting the respondent to pay maintenance which may be in arrears.

Researcher at the Community Agency for Social Enquiry, Ms Debbie Budlender said instead of both parents paying 50% each towards the needs of a child, as at present, payments in terms of the bill would depend on income.

"A man earning more would be paying more," said Budlender, adding that the proportional split was not really fair. "The woman is not being paid for the fact that her earning opportunities are restricted because she has the child. It is a case of unpaid labour," she said.

Budlender said according to the law the man had to first support himself. But it was at the magistrate's discretion to decide whether he needed a TV or car. — Own Correspondent
Changes to give more protection

Stephanie Bothma

PRETORIA Policy changes aimed at transforming the welfare system and maximising the protection of children will be urgently expedited, Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said yesterday.

Reacting to a Sunday Times article headlined "Read this and weep, Minister", in which Johannesburg High Court judge Percy Bleden is quoted as saying that Fraser-Moleketi must share some of the blame for the death of a three-year-old boy tortured by his mother and stepfather, the minister said the headline could not have been more correct.

Sandra de Beer and Machiel de Beer were sentenced to 15 years in prison for murdering the three-year-old Eddie Pienaar.

The toddler died from a blow to his head three months after he was removed from the care of his grandparents and placed with his mother by social workers from Gauteng's welfare and population development department and the Christelijke Maatskaplike Raad of the Dutch Reformed Church — a state-subsidised welfare body.

Passing sentence last week, Bleden said the country's welfare system "failed this boy. Each and every one, including the social workers who just did not do their job properly, should accept equal responsibility for his death".

"The judge ordered that a copy of his judgment be sent to Fraser-Moleketi to study.

"I do indeed weep for Eddie and for the many other children whom our system continues to fail each day," Fraser-Moleketi said. She would obtain a copy of the judgment for close study.

She said that the child and youth care system was now based on a set of principles set down by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Angry mothers see red over lack of child support

By Nthabi Moreosele

THE ANNOUNCEMENT that a maintenance court will be opened in Soweto met with a rapture of derision at a workshop at Ipopeng Community Centre recently.

About 80 women attended the workshop organised by the Workers Educational Project, which was aimed at single, unemployed mothers. About 10 men also attended and were lauded for their courage.

While invited officials from the Ministry of Welfare, the Maintenance Court in Johannesburg and an inspector of the South African Police Services (SAPS) tried to explain how the system works, all the women wanted to do was air their grievances.

Their concern was that the system was flawed and that officials were dishonest. They felt the maintenance procedures were humiliating, too long and tended to favour men.

Constructive ideas

Ms Thandi Masemola, senior prosecutor at the Maintenance Court, said the Justice Ministry was doing all it could to address problems inherited from the past and asked the audience to let transformation take its course.

She asked for constructive ideas.

Masemola said the court had to work within the guidelines of the Children's Act, Marriage Act and Divorce Act. The court was not autonomous and had to work with the ministries of Safety and Security, Health and Welfare, and backlogs and communication breakdowns occurred.

Inspector F Legodi of Moroka police station, who is in charge of the warrant section, said her department had only one car to execute all warrants.

This made it impossible for the police to say on what day they would raid a recalcitrant father.

Nor could they always inform the complainant of an arrest because the warrants from the court did not have particulars of the complainant.

"If we have the particulars – which is rare – we will be informed that the complainant has gone on holiday to some far-off village," Legodi said.

"These women use very rude language and accuse us of favouritism, cheating and being in love with their ex-partners. We cannot win."

She said they received a high number of wrong addresses, sometimes the information was out of date.

Legodi said although the police often went out of their way to help complainants, they nevertheless often had abuse heaped on them by disgruntled women.

Also, the mothers of defaulters often denied knowing their son's whereabouts or claimed they no longer lived at home.

And when executing warrants, police are often assaulted, set on by dogs and even stoned.

The women at the workshop were divided equally in blaming the courts and the fathers of their children for their plight.

The chief complaint was that men preferred to be unemployed rather than pay up. One woman said her ex-husband had not paid maintenance for his three children for several years because he claimed to be jobless.

Three-day party

Yet the same man celebrated his 35th birthday with a three-day party complete with tents and a slaughtered beast. When questioned, he said his mother was footing the bill.

Another grievance was that there was no stop-gap finance while the claim was being processed. A case could drag on for two years while the children went hungry.

Another complaint was that men often chased their families out of the home and brought in their mistresses. The wife then had to build a home from scratch for her children.

"The court says we must both pay towards the children's upkeep. Everyone forgets that I have to buy a washing basin, food, blankets and beds while my husband lives comfortably on everything we have accumulated over the years," a bitter wife said.

Men were willing to obstruct the courts, women claimed, because they knew the penalty for doing so is a joke as the courts are unable to enforce the law effectively.

Harrowing tales of fights with in-laws were also revealed during the workshop.

Many women were reluctant to sue for maintenance because they were threatened with violence and that their children's lives were threatened.

For this reason women were totally opposed to giving visitation rights to their ex-partners. It was clear that men would in future have to fight if they wanted access to their children.

Masemola said there was a peace officer attached to the court. Anyone who was threatened could obtain a restraining order or an interdict against the perpetrator.

She said she was reassigned to maintenance courts because women felt male officers did not understand their problems.

Men could not understand why women applied for high maintenance payments for babies, for instance, as they did not know the price of babyformula.

Masemola however hoped women would come forward to the courts instead of complaining about their failure to access the system.
SA workers set for long march over child labour

Sactwu plans Cape-to-Kenya protest

Members of the SA Clothing and Textile Workers Union (Sactwu) will march thousands of kilometres from Cape Town to Nairobi next year during a worldwide campaign against the employment of under-age children.

The campaign is being organised and co-sponsored by the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF), of which Sactwui is an affiliate. Marches will also take place in Asia, Latin America and North America around the same time.

The Cape Town-Nairobi march is expected to last three months. Marchers will leave on March 21 and expect to arrive in Nairobi by May 1.

All those involved will then converge in Geneva at the end of May to demonstrate outside an International Labour Organisation convention on child labour.

Sactwui national education officer Andre Kriel said the union had not yet decided how many people would go on the long walk.

"It will not be hundreds of people," he said.

Rallies and other activities would be held in countries that the marchers were going to pass through, to highlight the problems associated with child labour.

The ITGLWF, which wants the minimum age of employment to be 18 years, estimates that there are more than 200 million children working around the world. They are mostly found in Asian countries such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, working in makeshift factories that manufacture items ranging from soccer balls to expensive carpets. Some earn as little as R60 a month.

However, the problem is not confined to the Asian continent. A South African newspaper reported last week that in the Northern Province farmers were employing young Mozambican refugees, some no more than 10 years old, in their plantations and were paying them about R100 a month.

Department of Labour director-general Sipho Pitjana told an international conference on child labour in Norway last month that there were close to 200 000 children working in South Africa.
Ministers at war over kids in jail

BY GLYNNIS UNDERHILL

Hundreds of awaiting-trial children as young as 10 are being abandoned in our overcrowded prisons, where some have been forced to sleep in toilets to protect them from adult prisoners.

A furious Correctional Services Minister Sipho Mzhimela said this week the horrific plight of these children was continuing and their numbers were growing "in leaps and bounds".

In May there were 245 awaiting-trial children held in prisons around the country. There are now 1,333 unsentenced children under 17 years old being held.

Almost half of these children are in prisons across Gauteng. Lebolo Maleka, a spokesman for the province's Department of Welfare and Population Development, said the numbers "tend to vary" each month, but he understood they usually average out at about 500.

An angry Mzhimela said: "No one really speaks for them. You have yet to convince me it is necessary to put an 11-year-old in prison."

He said these juveniles were the responsibility of the Department of Welfare, which was to blame for the crisis. "Plain and simple, they don't care. Children don't vote. We don't have to worry about them in 1999."

The majority are awaiting trial indefinitely for minor offences, and many of them are being thrown into prison illegally. Amendments to prison legislation currently allows for the detention of awaiting-trial juveniles between the ages of 14 and 18 who are suspected of serious crimes.

Mzhimela said he had held talks this week with the minister responsible, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, to discuss the problem.

"We talked about the issue and discussed how something has to be done by May. What that something is, heaven knows," he said.

The legislation prescribes that all the children must be removed from prison by May next year. Mzhimela said: "They are Welfare's responsibility because they are children. Yet Welfare keeps claiming they don't have enough places to house them. But they have plenty of places."

Fraser-Moleketi said it was unfortunate such "strong allegations" were coming from Mzhimela, when he and his department formed part of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (IMC).

The IMC, chaired by Fraser-Moleketi, was established by the Cabinet to manage the process of crisis intervention and support, and to design the transformation of the child and youth-care system.

She said the uncoordinated release and transfer of about 500 children awaiting trial on May 8, 1995 had exacerbated the long-standing crisis in the system.

"In attempting to solve these problems it became clear that piecemeal solutions were neither possible nor appropriate, and that a new vision for effectively serving young people and families was required.

"Prisons are not meant for children, whether awaiting trial or not," The committee, since inception, has made progress in the transformation of the child and youth-care system in the country," Fraser-Moleketi claimed.

However, Mzhimela said that at Nelstroom prison in Northern Province he had found unsentenced children sleeping in toilets. This inhumane arrangement had been made to try to separate them from the adults, he said.

"These children are brought to us by the police. I tell the prison authorities to tell the police that there is no room. I mean, if you go to a hotel and there is no room, you turn people away. If it is full, it is full. We simply can't keep any young children under these conditions."

TO PAGE 2
Jaied children

At Nelstroom prison, Mzimela intervened immediately and new sleeping quarters were found. "I told them they had to either release them or find another place to put them. They found another place."

What had really "sickened" Mzimela was the existence of a vacant place of safety, which falls under the Welfare Department, around the corner from Nelstroom prison.

Last week he intervened when he was informed there was a child of 11 awaiting trial in Bloemfontein who was being held in a cell with adults.

"I gave immediate instructions to the area manager to find the parents of the boy and take him home. They did so within an hour because I told them to."

At Pollsmoor prison in the Western Cape — where there are no school programmes — there were 42 unsentenced boys aged only 14 among 293 awaiting-trial children. Three prisoners have been murdered there during the past week, highlighting the high level of violence in the prison.

Prager-Molekel said in October 1995 that the brief of the IMC had been extended to the designing and facilitating of secure care for children awaiting trial, and in May 1996 undertook an investigation into state residential care for young people.

Public outcry

When, in a Saturday Star article in August last year, Mzimela highlighted the problem of unsentenced children being held in prisons, a public outcry followed. Yet the situation had continued to deteriorate, he said.

"It was one of the first things that the president said in Parliament: 'Let us rid our prisons of children.' Yet the numbers have grown in leaps and bounds."

The unsentenced children were being held in prisons in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng, Mzimela said. At Durban-Westville there were two or three aged just 10.

On May 4 1995 Mandela signed a proclamation declaring that awaiting-trial juveniles may no longer be kept in jails. Around 620 unsentenced juveniles were released to places of safety or back into their communities if no appropriate accommodation could be found.

But the public backlash against rampant crime by juveniles after the signing of the proclamation pushed the Government to consider amendments.

The moves to amend section 29 of the Correctional Services Act — which prohibits the holding of juveniles in prisons regardless of the circumstances — unleashed a storm of protest from Mzimela.

However, the move was widely welcomed by frustrated politicians, child-care workers and the police as burglaries, street muggings by gangs of youths and car break-ins soared.

Police claimed they had a major headache with juveniles escaping from places of safety, only to commit further offences. A private member's bill, proposed by former chairman of the parliamentary portfolio committee on correctional services Carl Niehaus, to allow for the detention in prison of awaiting-trial juveniles suspected of serious crimes, was also fiercely contested by Mzimela.

The bill was approved by the portfolio committee in March last year and an extension was given until May next year.

"The case of awaiting-trial juveniles has just got worse. The police pick them up and dump them, and claim they can't find the parents or guardians, when in fact they don't make the effort to locate the people responsible for them. I was forced by the legislation to take them," Mzimela said.
Children left in adult prisons

Fraser-Moleketsi, was established by the Cabinet to manage the process of crisis intervention and support, and design the transformation of the child and youth care system.

Ms Fraser-Moleketsi said the uncoordinated release and transfer of about 800 children awaiting trial on May 6, 1996 exacerbated the crisis in the child and youth care system.

"In attempting to solve these problems, it became clear that piecemeal solutions were neither possible nor appropriate and that a new vision and system for effectively serving young people and families was required," she said.

"Prisons are not meant for children, whether awaiting trial or not. The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk, since inception, has made progress in the transformation of the child and youth care system in the country," said Ms Fraser-Moleketsi.

However, at Nelstroom Prison in Northern Province, Dr Mzimela found there were unstructured children sleeping in toilets. This humane arrangement had been made to separate them from adults, he said.

"These children are brought to us by the police. I tell the prisons authorities to tell the police there is no room. We cannot keep children under these conditions."

At Nelstroom Prison, Dr Mzimela intervened and now sleeping quarters were found for the children.

Claims were made by some prison authorities there was not enough space to separate the children from the adults awaiting trial, he said.

"In some cases that is genuine but in other cases they just make up stories," he said.

At Pollsmoor Prison, where there are no school programmes for the children, there are 42 unstructured boys who are only 14-years-old. There are now 203 awaiting trial children being held at Pollsmoor.

Ms Fraser-Moleketsi said in May 1996 the IMC was requested by the Cabinet to undertake an investigation into state residential care facilities for young people, she said.

On May 4, 1996, Mr Mandela signed a proclamation declaring that awaiting trial juveniles may no longer be kept in jails. But the public backlash against rampant crime by juvenile criminals after the signing of the proclamation pushed the Government to consider amendments.
Pretoria march
draws only 5 000

By Pearl Rantsekong

CLOSE to three thousand men from all walks of life took to the streets of Pretoria on Saturday to join the historic Men's March against violence against women and children.

The march, from Church Square to the Union Buildings, was the first of its kind in South Africa.

It was aimed at breaking the silence that surrounds the issue of abuse and came two days before the International Day for Violence Against Women tomorrow.

Initially expected to draw about 20 000 men, the march was poorly attended by a crowd of about 5 000, some of whom were women and children.

Defending the participation of women in the march, executive director of the NGO Coalition and one of the organisers Mr Kami Naidoo said that the march did not have the same concept as that of the Million Men March in the United States.

It was meant to help men and women work together.

"Women are here at the Union Buildings to receive the marchers and show their support," said Naidoo.

He said that although the turnout was poor, he was happy that the main objective of the march was achieved.

"Our concept was to break the silence of abuse of both women and children and we have managed to do just that through reports by the media," said a proud Naidoo.

Addressing the marchers, President Nelson Mandela said the occasion was both a joyous and a sad one.

"It causes us all great pain that citizens of a free country should need to march in protest against this kind of violence.

"We fervently hope that such marches will not continue to be necessary, that the time will soon come when no single South African man shall behave to a woman like a beast to its prey."
Child abuse on the rise in South Africa

More children were being abused in South Africa than ever before, the SA Law Commission said yesterday.

Joan van Niekerk, chairwoman of the commission's committee on sexual offences against children, said in Pretoria the number of child abuse reports was increasing by about 30 percent a year.

Van Niekerk said the committee was in the process of compiling a discussion paper on laws dealing with abused children since existing legislation was seriously flawed.

"Even some professionals who work with abused children have no faith in the judicial system."

Many children felt that the judicial process, which included medical examinations and court appearances, was worse than the abuse they had experienced.

Van Niekerk said that there was a need for courts to be made more "child friendly."

Also, the people responsible for implementing envisaged new legislation would have to be trained if the legislation was to be effective.

These included members of the police and the departments of Justice, Correctional Services and Welfare.

New system needed

Ann Skelton, chairwoman of the commission's juvenile justice committee, said 1 153 children were awaiting trial in prisons, while more than 1 000 were serving prison sentences.

"There is an urgent need for a new system," she said.

Institutions to serve as alternatives to prison had to be built and should be served by trained personnel.

Skelton said the juvenile justice committee was busy compiling a discussion paper on the subject and would hold a number of workshops to get input from the community and from children. - Sapa
'Child-abuse reports up by 30% a year (213)

More children were being abused in South Africa than ever before, the SA Law Commission said yesterday.

Joan van Niekerk, chairman of the commission’s committee on sexual offences against children, said in Pretoria the number of child-abuse reports being received was unprecedented, and was increasing by about 30% per year.

“The state of child abuse in this country is worse than it has ever been,” Van Niekerk said.

She added that the committee was in the process of compiling a discussion paper on laws dealing with abused children since existing legislation was seriously flawed.

“Even some professionals who work with abused children have no faith in the judicial system.”

Ann Skelton, chairman of the commission’s juvenile justice committee, said 1,153 children were awaiting trial in prisons, while more than 1,000 were serving prison sentences.

Professor Belinda van Heerden, chairman of the committee responsible for reviewing the Child Care Act, said children’s rights were being violated on a daily basis.

Van Heerden added that currently more than 24 different pieces of legislation concerning children existed.

Many were not even compatible with one another.

“It is a fragmented system,” she said.

Her committee was working towards creating a children’s code which would encompass all existing legislation and also religious and customary laws.

The code should be completed by the end of 2000, and was aimed at protecting children’s rights. Sapa
Youth policy must provide clear direction and framework for their development with stress, Simon White.
Youth are not just the reserve team.
Youth summit backs national service

Midrand – Delegates attending a three-day national youth summit in Midrand voiced support for national service for young people.

National Youth Commission chairwoman Mahlengi Bhengu said at the end of the summit yesterday that the principle would be included in the draft national youth policy to be presented to President Mandela before the end of the year.

She said the 72-page draft policy, entitled “Youth Policy 2000”, explained the national youth service as programmes to involve the youth in national reconstruction and development.

“It also aims to provide accredited work and training experiences to young people,” Ms Bhengu said.

The draft was based on submissions made during the NYC’s national consultative process of 42 youth hearings, nine provincial summits and special workshops between June and November.

Key roles in the implementation of the programme were identified for the labour, education, welfare and health departments as well as the commission itself.

“We are confident that the draft is an accurate reflection of the hopes and needs of the youth,” said Ms Bhengu. – Sapa
NYC ‘had a good year’

Despite criticisms that the National Youth Commission failed to deliver, Mahlengi Bhengu argues that it succeeded... (298): Sowetan 3/12/97

and practices,

- Coordinate the activities of youth-related provincial government institutions in relation to the national youth policy, and
- Develop recommendations relating to any other matters affecting youth

The NYCC’s report to President Nelson Mandela highlights the achievement of a number of work targets arising from these mandates. Most prominent among these are:

- Organising the National Youth Summit, independently hailed as a historic event, bringing together as it did over 200 delegates from youth and youth-interest organisations to chart the road towards South Africa’s first national youth policy,
- Planning and implementing a comprehensive national youth consultation process in support of the national youth policy, incorporating nine provincial summits and 42 youth hearings within a space of five months;
- Developing the first draft of the National Youth Policy based on this public process,
- Establishing for the first time the Interdepartmental Committee on Youth Affairs, which will not only serve as the board for the implementation of the final youth policy, but also serve to promote uniformity of approach on youth strategies to avoid duplication through a cost-sharing rationalisation of these programmes,
- Initiating a series of issues-based specialist “sectoral” summits (in the areas of economic participation, health, social conflict, justice, education, communication and technology, environment and tourism) in support of the youth policy,
- Conceptually developing (in partnership with Telkom and others) the high-tech Youth-Line Information Services Project, provisionally set for launch in June 1998;
- Initiating and developing the concept of a national youth service programme for possible implementation before the turn of the century,
- Conducting high-level international liaison and research to ensure South Africa’s adherence with international agreements, particularly the United Nations World Plan of Action for Youth and the Commonwealth Youth Programme;
- Organising and convening the second National Youth Summit in the last consultative instance of the policy development process, and
- Establishing important bilateral support relationships within the framework of the Apartheid-Thabo Mbeki agreement, which has resulted in the provision of strong United States support networks for both the NYC and the development of South African youth.

Obviously our overwhelming task this year has been to initiate and manage the national process of consultation among youth and youth organisations in support of the youth policy.

Despite our self-imposed year-end timetable for this process, we have thankfully also managed to proceed with regard to the other projects detailed in the report.

Of course, if one is not prone to credit extensive planning and consultation processes as work, then the NYC could perhaps be viewed as having had the miserable year our detractors have claimed.

The bottom line is that despite meagre operational support, the NYC’s active work record is impressive.

A key moment was the recognition of this effort by the powerful SAYC.

We believe that the broad agreement between the NYC and the SAYC in areas of planning, management and delivery of youth development initiatives will prove to be an invaluable platform from which youth issues will be brought into the broader transformation process.

Despite expectations in some quarters that the organisation would adopt a critical disposition with regard to the NYC, the SAYC’s acknowledgement of mutual and collective social responsibility regarding youth development was refreshing.

Rather than being an easy target or the panacea for all youth ills, we were acknowledged as a partner on issues around which all reasonable South Africans should have little problem uniting.

These are the attitudes that will keep our society moving forward despite the nay-sayers. These are the attitudes that continue to give strength to the NYC.

Finally, the NYC’s principled commitment to operational transparency over the year is beyond dispute. We have served every request for information without hesitation or defensiveness.

With the planning and consultation phase drawing to a close, our mandates are clear — our commitment to accountability absolute.

(The writer is the National Youth Commission chairperson.)
Plan to open schools to delinquents

By ELLIOTT SYLVESTER

Children guilty of crimes ranging from murder to assault could soon be learning and playing alongside pupils in ordinary state schools across the country.

Next term, schools in Gauteng might have to start preparing to receive the new pupils.

A green paper to be debated in Parliament early next year proposes that reformatory inmates, as well as children in places of safety and industrial schools, be integrated into the mainstream schooling system in an effort to normalise their education.

In terms of the new policy, called “inclusion” by the national Education Department, even children convicted of serious crimes would be considered candidates because “their past crimes should not affect their chances at education”, a source in the department said.

This means parents who disagree with the system will not be able to oppose it, because it is a constitutional matter.

In Gauteng, physically disabled children, as well as those in places of safety and industrial schools, and “children at risk” in townships, will gradually be integrated into both primary and secondary schools. Gauteng, however, is the only province that has no reformatory.

In the rest of the country, the inmates of reformatories run by the Department of Correctional Services will be evaluated for admission on the basis of their ability to adapt and progress in society.

The only other criterion for admission is that the children do not have any serious learning disabilities.

Gauteng education department spokesman Evelyn Brandardow says the policy was born out of the new constitution, which guarantees the right of all children to a proper education.

She said schools could begin preparing for the “inclusion” policy as early as next month.

The “inclusion” policy was drafted by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training. Although scheduled to be implemented nationwide, the special needs of each province would be taken into account and the policy adapted to each of them.

An official in the Gauteng Education Department, who did not wish to be named, said disabled learners were currently being educated in institutions comprised solely of other disabled students. This posed problems when they left that environment and had to socialise with able-bodied people as well as the physically impaired.

She said disabled people had to live in society with both types of people, but the education system had isolated them. She felt the policy would address this problem.

She said Gauteng was at the forefront of this “groundbreaking approach” to education, which would place physically, visually andaurally impaired pupils in public schools.

South African Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu) national education officer Aubrey Matolos sees “inclusion” as having a dual advantage, not only for the disabled, but also for pupils in mainstream education.

“inclusion will change the psychology of learners and make them realise that disabled people can compete with them on certain levels,”

Matolos said teachers were in favour of the system, provided their jobs were not threatened.

But several teachers expressed concern for their pupils’ safety and educational progress if the plan is implemented. Although no definite structure has been established, these teachers believe that children with criminal histories will cause further disruption in already overcrowded classrooms.

The head of a Gauteng place of safety who did not wish to be identified because of the tentative nature of the policy, said bluntly: “Inclusion will not work. The community has always opposed our trying to register our children at the schools in the area, and I don’t see how it will be successful now.”

He said that although these children might be able to learn alongside normal pupils, they still had behavioural problems, which could cause huge difficulties in classrooms.

Budgets have not been allocated yet, but Brandardow says psychologists, counsellors and psychotherapists would, at great cost, have to be added to school staff to set the correct guidance structure in place. In some cases, total reconstruction of schools would have to take place, which could be very costly.
Constitutional Court Rejects Cosmetic Appeal Bid

Kwa-Thema Youths Give
up Violence for Soccer

Paragraphs of text are present in the image, discussing various topics. The text is not legible in its current form due to the quality of the image.
‘Crisis’ as young rapists, murderers are released

YOUNG CRIMINALS have been released from a reform school that apparently misinterpreted an education department instruction. Education Writer TROYE LUND reports.

CONVICTED juveniles at Porter Reform School call it the lucky "strooype" (straw) — a card they receive as a pass for the Christmas holidays.

But this year the "strooype" had no return date on them.

The misinterpretation of an instruction by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has led to rapists and murderers ranging from 14 to 20 years old being released for good.

All inmates, except for those 25 who arrived within the past three weeks, went home on Friday.

A psychologist at the school, Mr. Billy Goei, said: "This is nothing short of a crisis. Some of these boys are hard-core criminals — rapists and murderers. They have been released into communities with no support structures. They will be a danger to themselves and the community."

He was speaking at a press conference yesterday called by the South African Democratic Teachers Union and the National Health Workers Union.

According to psychologists and teachers at Porter, the education department told principals at reform schools, schools of industry and places of safety in November this year of a move to "unblock" them to make way for children awaiting trial in prison and for children in need of the programmes ran at the institutions.

To move as many juveniles out of the system as possible, they said they had been given specific criteria to consider when deciding which juveniles to release.

Porter staff and the unions said:

These were:

- Boys from other provinces
- Boys over 18 years of age.
- Boys who had relatively good home environment to go to.
- Boys who would have been released before March.

A teacher at Porter, Mr. Laurence Hoepner, said: "These categories are in line with the interministerial committee’s (IMC) document formulated after an investigation of residential care facilities for juveniles.

"It is an excellent document aimed at transforming the system, but it makes it clear that structures have to be in place in communities to receive boys that are sent home. This is not the case. The boys we sent home are not coming back and will go straight back to crime."

One boy, who was released, has already committed another crime.

A teacher in Porter’s psychology department, Ms. Charmaine McQueen, said: "We sent through release forms for all the boys, they are not coming back."

However, the WCED said it had not instructed Porter or any other school to release inmates for good.

The other five reform schools in the Western Cape said that they had not released inmates permanently as the release criteria had only been verbally communicated.

Inmates at these schools had been sent home for the holidays only. The schools said most inmates did return, only about 15% absconded.

IMC spokesperson, Ms. Leslie du Toit, said Porter had made a grave mistake if they had let all the boys go. Although the idea was to "unblock" the system there was no intention or instruction to "wilfully nilly" send juveniles from these institutions home.
Drive to improve youth care system

TROYE LUND

Ms Leslie du Toit said: "The system has been in crisis for a long time and although remarkable strides have been made in some schools the education and welfare departments have been dragging their heels about transforming the institutions."

Because the IMC investigation found that most children in these institutions were being kept there for longer than they should be, the aim of Project Go is to "unblock" the system and to ensure children move through it quickly.

Project Go's aims are:

- To improve the assessment and referral system so that children do not go to institutions when they can await trial at home and so they are placed in appropriate care for an appropriate time. The emphasis is on moving from statutory intervention to prevention and early intervention.
- To review every child in the system with a view to placing them back in communities with support systems.
- To improve the training of all staff at these institutions.

"It is not about more money. It is about doing the job better and making the system work for the benefit of the children," said Du Toit.

Most children in these institutions are being kept there for longer than they should be.

As a result an initiative called Project Go has been put into motion as an urgent drive to ensure that the transformation of child and youth care systems proceed as quickly as possible.

Because the Western Cape has more than 60% of the country's juvenile residential care facilities and because children from all corners of the country are sent to these institutions, it is the hub of Project Go's national campaign.

IMC and Project Go spokesperson,
Government homes turning sick children away

No room at the inn for HIV babies