

SOCIAL SECURITY - CHILDCARE
1999

'Strides made' in eliminating child labour

James Eedes

(298)

NEARLY 500 000 SA children were being used for their labour, but "important strides" had been made in the past year in combating the problem, Gauteng labour department director, Jesse Maluleke, said on Friday.

He was speaking at the first anniversary of the Global March Against Child Labour — an international effort to raise awareness of the plight of child workers.

In addition to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, which outlaws the employment of children under 15, Maluleke pointed to the formation of the Child Labour Intersectoral Group — a joint government, business, labour and nongovernmental organisation body which would consider child labour issues.

He said the labour department had devised an enforcement policy on child labour and had begun training inspectors to

monitor the problem.

Maluleke conceded the problem was inextricably linked to poverty, and that until poverty was alleviated the battle against child labour would continue.

A commemoration of the global march would take place on Human Rights Day, when the department would renew its commitment to a campaign to eliminate child labour, which would keep schools and business informed about the issue.

BD 18/1/99



National youth commission chairman Mahlengi Bhengu is confident that legislation which lays the basis for a national youth service would be finalised this year. She told the media in Johannesburg yesterday that the matter would be pursued with relevant bodies as soon as parliament opened next month.

Picture: ROBERT BOTHA

Unit to push for youth service projects

Pearl Sebolao

A YOUTH conference has agreed to propose that a unit be established in the president's office to ensure that government departments set aside a percentage of their budgets for national youth service programmes.

Delegates who gathered in Johannesburg for a two-day youth summit to discuss the green paper on the national youth service resolved yesterday that existing funds be used to finance projects to be implemented by the youth service.

It was felt there was no need to create a new fund, resulting in unnecessary bureaucracy.

"We are going to need a lot of innovation because of the limited resources available", commission chairman Mahlengi Bhengu said.

The unit, which would be under the supervision of the national youth commission, would also be charged with donor mobilisa-

tion and the setting of standards, especially in terms of accreditation and determining which projects are to be undertaken.

It was expected that the legislation process which would lay the foundation for the establishment of the youth service be concluded this year.

Bhengu said the commission would pursue the matter with relevant bodies as soon as Parliament opens next month.

The summit also recommended that pilot projects be implemented as early as this year, and that existing youth development and capacity building programmes by nongovernmental organisations and the private sector should be adopted and given a higher profile in terms of resources and accreditation.

Bhengu said consideration would be given to the unemployed youth using the youth brigades that were agreed to at the job summit.

Other medium and long-term projects in-

volving young offenders and students would also be phased in.

Bhengu disputed claims that SA's youth were apathetic. He said the concept of a youth service had been well received and young people were interested in the transformation of the country.

The overall lack of participation by the youth in voter registration had, Bhengu said, been because of how registration messages were "tailored".

"You cannot use generic messages when communicating with young people," she said.

The commission was working with the Independent Electoral Commission to address the issue. The concept of introducing civic education in schools, to inculcate "a sense of awareness about the rights and responsibilities of the youth", was also pursued.

Fraught with difficulties: Page 9

500 000 SA children forced into labour⁽²⁹⁸⁾

Sowetan 20/1/99

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

CHILD labour is on the increase in South Africa with an estimated half a million children in employment, a report by the Department of Labour has revealed

The department's spokeswoman Ms Georgina Lefifi said more than 200 000 children aged between 10 and 14 and another 200 000 aged between 15 and 18 were being exploited by employers.

Statistics South Africa is conducting a comprehensive survey on child labour to give a proper analysis which will be released soon.

Addressing a workshop to mark the Global March Against Child Labour anniversary in Johannesburg on Sunday, Lefifi said the exploitation of children had detrimental

effects them and society as a whole. This had prompted the department to promulgate Chapter 6 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act that prohibits the employment of children under 15

On January 17 1998, a historic campaign which brought together a range of civil society organisations and government agencies globally was launched and this has subsequently kept the spirit of the global march alive through initiatives to eradicate child labour

Significant steps

Lefifi said significant steps had been taken towards the elimination of child labour with the formation of child labour intersectoral group comprising non-governmental organisations, trade unions, business and Government departments

The department has also developed an enforcement policy on child labour from which a training manual is being developed to train labour inspectors and the society.

The African leg march anniversary will be held on March 21, starting from Cape Town to Beitbridge on the Zimbabwean border.

Network Against Child Labour chairman Mr Phiroshaw Camay also announced the proposed report to be forwarded to the International Labour Conference in June, which advocates the elimination of all forms of exploitation, particularly those affecting girl domestic workers.

Camay also noted the network's request for measures to ensure that children who were victims of the worst forms of child labour should have access to consultants and telephone lines to report abuses.

Figures reveal SA's child abuse shame

By Bhungani Mzolo

(298)

ABOUT 3 400 children become victims of violent crimes such as rape, assault and abduction in South Africa every month, according to the latest figures released by the police's child protection unit in Pretoria.

The statistics also show that about 140 000 children were victims of violent crimes such as rape, indecent assault, attempted murder, abduction and kidnapping in the period between 1994 and 1998. Of this figure, 53 224 children were raped over the four years. This means on average 887

Source for 5/2/99

Other crimes against children included 283 cases of attempted murder in 1996, 255 in 1997 and 155 in 1998.

The CPU's Superintendent Anneke Pienaar said: "The 1994-1995 figures exclude those from the former TBVC states, and also (areas) where there is no child protection unit."

In total, 141 265 children under 18 years were victims of rape, attempted murder, incest, assault and kidnapping.

In 1996 alone police reported that a staggering 13 859 children were sexually molested – a figure which increased by 864 in 1997 to 14 723.

In the period between January and June 1996, 7 046 children were raped.

Police were also inundated with cases of child abductions: 1 184 in 1996; 962 in 1997 and 478 in 1998.

In the first six months of 1998, 17 414 children were victims of various crimes.

Other figures show that 7 142 children were reported missing by their parents or guardians during this period.

● See page 2

Child-sex tourists target Cape Town's juvenile prostitutes

City hosting international talks on problem

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ARG 5/2/99

Fears are mounting that Cape Town and other South African cities will become known internationally as child-sex tourist destinations with an industry akin to that flourishing in south-east Asia and India.

Children's rights activists and police specialists acknowledge that prosecution of men who pay children for sex in South Africa is not easy.

With poverty driving thousands of children on to the streets, the juvenile prostitutes are easy pickings.

Next month, international experts on "sex tourism" will be in Cape Town for a conference organised by The Network Against the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children in a bid to tackle the problem.

The Network's Bernadette van Vuuren said the first reports of sex tourism were coming in, particularly from Cape Town and Durban.

"Cape Town is one of the top tourist destinations in the world and anywhere you get an increase in tourists, you get the tourists coming for sex," she said.

Ms Van Vuuren was concerned that unless the country sent out a clear message that child sexual abuse would not be tolerated here, there would eventually be a perception that "South Africa is an idyllic sex tourist destination".

She said that while South Africa had all the instruments of child protective legislation and treaties in place, the laws were valid only if they were "living laws, applied laws".

"In the legal system there is a far greater fear of violating the rights of adults than of not protecting the child.

"A child, who is already vulnerable, should be protected in law, and has the constitutional right to be protected by that law. Currently, that is not happening," said Ms Van Vuuren.

SPECIAL
REPORT

DI CAELERS



Philip Boulton of the police's child protection unit in Mitchell's Plain said existing legislation was difficult to enforce.

"Unless police actually catch the guy in the act we cannot do anything, particularly because children are mostly unwilling to give us affidavits."

He explained that if police intervened while the client and the child were talking, they could do nothing unless the child laid a charge.

"If, on the other hand, they allowed the child to go ahead and have sex with the client, they would be guilty of allowing a crime to be committed."

"We have been warned by overseas police that South Africa is at risk in respect of sex tourists because poverty forces children on to the streets."

"The pressure on Far East countries and the Philippines to clean up their child-sex trade also means that these tourists will start to look at other countries," he said.

In 1997, Brazil launched a publicity campaign among tour operators in an effort to attract eco-tourists to replace sex tourists. They warned of a crackdown and said foreigners caught having sex with children would be jailed.

In the United Kingdom, the Sex Offenders Act of 1997 gave courts there the power to try cases involving

Britons accused of committing sex offences against children in other countries.

The international pressure group, End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism, is campaigning for the introduction of a tourism industry code of conduct.

In Italy, a new law came into effect last November to compel all Italian travel agencies to print, on all travel tickets and vouchers, warnings against sexual contact with children.

Cape Town Tourism manager Sheryl Ozinsky said the growth in tourism that Cape Town and South Africa were experiencing was wonderful.

But, she said, there were always challenges, among them that increased tourism brought problems like sex offenders.

Ms Ozinsky said she welcomed next month's conference on the issue because South Africa needed to be proactive and address the concerns before they got out of proportion.

Glynis Rhodes, outdoor programmes co-ordinator for the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Task Force, said there were a lot of child-sex workers in Cape Town, boys and girls, some of whom were as young as seven.

She believed the majority of streetchildren were involved in some form of sex trade.

Ms Van Vuuren said there were two types of sex offenders coming here; those who were part of a recognised paedophile network who shared information and used websites to connect with each other, and then the ordinary tourist who looks for sex with children "by the way".

While the problem of child-sex offenders was primarily at a local and national level now, "the situation on a local level historically leads to international sex tourism", she said.

Kids as young as 10 bunk school to ply child-sex trade

Star 12/2/99 (298)

By ANNA COX

A child-prostitute ring is being operated in Fourways, north of Johannesburg, with girls as young as 10 being picked up daily by men in expensive cars.

The children bunk school, sleep all day and then hit the streets from 5pm, mainly along the R511 road near the Indaba Hotel. The girls come mainly from the impoverished informal settlement area in Diepsloot, said Glenys van Halter, a spokesperson for South African Stop Child Abuse (Sasca).

The problem was growing, yet no one appeared to be interested in helping to resolve it, she said.

"The local schools are desperate because they don't know what to do. They have con-

tacted the police, who have done nothing about it. They have now called us in to help and we are looking for places of safety for them. But we cannot act alone, we need the assistance of the police," she said.

A Randburg police spokesperson said the matter had been brought to their attention and action would be taken soon.

Nana Mdana, a teacher at Muzomuhle Primary School in Diepsloot, confirmed that child prostitution was a big problem in the area. She said one of her pupils, who is 10, is often seen standing at a local petrol station at night, waiting to be picked up. She sometimes drinks a beer while she waits.

"Her mother died recently and we are concerned about her. Her older sisters, who are

about 18 and 20, are also prostitutes and we believe they got her into this.

"Recently we found her and asked her to come back to school, but she refused, saying the school could not give her money like the men did. When the social workers look for her, she hides away so that they can't find her," said Mdana.

She believes the child-prostitution ring is organised by older people.

Van Halter said Sasca was also concerned about the large number of babies being born in Diepsloot to children under the age of 16.

Another concern was that 98% of girls asking for treatment at the Diepsloot Clinic were suffering from sexually transmitted diseases, she said.

UN R3-m (298) for young offenders

By Ido Lekota

A GOVERNMENT programme aimed at keeping children out of jail where they interact with hardened criminals has received a R3 million shot in the arm from the United Nations.

Yesterday a representative of the United Nations Development Programme signed an agreement with Justice Minister Dullah Omar in Pretoria giving sponsorship to the "youth justice" programme amounting to R3 830 800.

The programme, run jointly by the departments of Justice and Welfare, is aimed at providing alternative sentencing for young offenders who have committed petty crimes.

This involves sending children who have been sentenced for petty crimes — such as shoplifting and pickpocketing — to places of safety where they would be put on youth development and rehabilitation courses.

Speaking at the signing of the agreement, Omar said the sponsorship would largely be used on "improving the implementation of the legislation in

the area of justice; raising awareness among professionals in the criminal justice system and the public of the transformation of youth justice, and establishing an independent monitoring process of the programme".

Omar said there was a need to develop checks and balances "because the reality of the situation is that there are some youth who are committing very serious crimes in the country".

According to the project coordinator in the Department of Justice, Ms Oqshara Sewpaul, the programme was also aimed at protecting young offenders in pre-trial detention.

The sponsorship, she said, would also be used for the provision of secure care facilities and ensure that the rights of young offenders, who had to be kept in jail due to lack of facilities, were protected.

The department is currently also involved in a programme aimed at making the courts user friendly for children who have to give evidence, for example, in sexual harassment cases. This entails the use of one-way mirrors so that the children do not come face-to-face with their assailants.

More than 8 000 juveniles in jail

By Charity Bhengu

MORE than 8 527 South African children are languishing in jail for crimes ranging from murder, car hijacking, robbery and drug trafficking to rape, the Department of Correctional Services said yesterday.

This was against the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child which advocated that juveniles had a right to be diverted away from jail to avoid the stigmatisation of children and to promote accountability and rehabilitation.

The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef) said juveniles were subjected to "unspeakable atrocities" in adult jails. They were raped, assaulted and likely to return to society as hardened criminals and housing them with adult prisoners was self-destructive and self-defeating.

Correctional Services spokesman Mr Vusi Shabalala said: "Children are extremely vulnerable and can be

easily influenced by adults and hardened criminals. They have to be taken care of in a separate and safe environment that is also specifically designed to be conducive to development and positive change."

Of 8 527 juveniles in jail, 1 822 were in KwaZulu-Natal, 1 629 in Gauteng, 1 287 in Western Cape, 1 168 in Eastern Cape. Other provinces had fewer than 600 young offenders in their jails.

About 3 866 of these children have been charged with car theft, bank robbery and housebreaking, 2 943 with murder, assault and gun-related offenses, 875 with rape, 179 with drug trafficking and 664 with petty crimes.

The number excluded 4 242 children awaiting trial. They were removed from jails after the launch of Project-Go in 1996 and transferred to care centres, foster homes and others returned to their families in line with the Department's child and youth care system.

Welfare Department spokesman Mr Anton Fischer said "Despite positive changes, there is still concern about the increasing number of children awaiting trial in prisons which is totally unacceptable and must receive attention."

Fischer said Project-Go was a mechanism to fast track the transformation of children in trouble with the law and it had proved through development assessments, that "we can make a difference in their lives".

Project-Go has cost the department about R33 million for building and upgrading alternative care centres for children last year. So far, only 1 792 children are accommodated at these centres.

In Gauteng, R2,8 million was used for the building of the Walter Sisulu centre. In Eastern Cape, R3,5 million was spent to upgrade a number of residential care facilities.

About R5,9 million went into the building of the Kroonstad secure care centre.

In KwaZulu-Natal, R4 million was spent for the Excelsior secure care unit. In North Province, a number of houses were upgraded into secure care centres. In Mpumalanga, Hendrina Child and Youth Care Centre was built.

In Western Cape, places of safety were upgraded into secure care units and Northern Cape upgraded the Molehe Mampe secure care centre.

Boesak's counsel hits out at state witnesses

CT 24/2/99 (298)

RHODA DAVIDS

THE state had based its fraud and theft trial case against Allan Boesak on evidence led by a "den of thieves", the Cape High court heard yesterday.

This was claimed by Mike Maritz, SC, counsel for the former anti-apartheid cleric ex-president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

Boesak is on trial for misappropriating R1,1 million in donor funds from the now-defunct Foundation for Peace and Justice (FPJ), of which he had been the director and a trustee.

Maritz said that the champion of the "den of thieves" was former FPJ bookkeeper Freddie Steenkamp — with Lucille Fester, Boesak's former personal assistant, and Steenkamp's wife Amanda completing the trio.

The state had relied on Freddie Steenkamp as their key witness against Boesak, but he crumbled under cross-examination by Maritz.

"Under his own admission Steenkamp lied when it suited

him, he lied and misled the court," Maritz said.

"We submit that he quite clearly fabricated evidence and that he had in fact stolen money over a period of five years."

Steenkamp was the bookkeeper who made all entries and he concealed his thefts by making false entries and gave false instructions to the auditors, the court heard.

Maritz said that, like Steenkamp, Fester also stole large amounts of money, the only difference being that Steenkamp had admitted to stealing and Fester had not.

"Fester authorised Steenkamp's loans and vice versa, they also signed each other's cheques but no records were kept of these loans.

"Like Freddie Steenkamp, she put the blame on Boesak to get away without prosecution," said Maritz.

He added that unless she had received some form of indemnity for her testimony there was no reason why she should not be prosecuted for theft.

Maritz said that Fester had

been an unsatisfactory witness motivated by self-protection.

Maritz also accused Amanda Steenkamp of lacking credibility as a witness.

"She pretended that she could not give the court details of amounts that she received from the FPJ.

"At times she resorted to evasiveness and she lacked integrity as a witness," he said.

He also referred to Thelma Saccos, a former employee of the FPJ who was dismissed by Boesak, saying it was apparent from her evidence and her performance on the witness stand that she was "a malicious and embittered woman with a long-standing grievance against Boesak, probably resulting from his dismissal of her".

Furthermore, Maritz submitted that the state's expert forensic evidence was a "complete shambles".

He also lashed out at the media, saying that there had been widespread allegations and rumours of improper conduct.

The trial continues today.

Child rape toll doubles since '94

(298)

Nylstroom - A total of 14 225 children were raped in the first 11 months of last year, police said yesterday.

Another 3 451 were indecently assaulted, according to figures released in Nylstroom, Northern Province, at a police conference on crimes against children.

Children falling victim to sodomy and incest numbered 679 and 171 respectively, divisional commissioner of human resources Neels Steenkamp said.

He said the child rape figure had almost doubled since 1994.

More than 7 400 children were the targets of other forms of assault between January and February last year. Another 1 116 were kidnapped and 914 were abducted.

Overall, 33 827 crimes against children younger than 18 years were recorded.

Steenkamp said efforts to stem the tide of sexual offences against children were to be boosted by making more use of

police social workers in the investigation of such crimes.

"With the assistance of funds from the Reconstruction and Development Programme, we are now in a position to intensify our efforts by training and using police social workers," he said.

The role of forensic social workers was to assess crime victims by means of therapeutic techniques and analysis. This enabled them to give information vital to compiling a court docket.

They could provide objective expert testimony in support of the victim's version of events.

"In the past, the vulnerability of the traumatised victims was often exploited by the defence of the perpetrators, which sometimes resulted in their release from prosecution," Steenkamp said.

In two recent cases, the courts found the expert evidence of the police social worker was sufficient to convict the accused. - Sapa

How our kids suffer at the hands of criminals

(298) ARG 16/3/99

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In two recent cases, the courts found the expert evidence of the police social worker was sufficient to convict the accused.

Commissioner Steenkamp said 20 forensic social workers had been trained so far.

"We will continue to address our training needs in priority areas such as crimes committed against women and children," he said. "From now on, the perpetrators will find it more difficult to escape justice," he said.

– Sapa

Authorities deny kids in prison get poor treatment

By Charity Bhengu

THE Department of Correctional Services yesterday refuted claims that babies who were forced to live with their incarcerated mothers at Johannesburg Prison are being subjected to poor living conditions.

This follows a report in a weekend newspaper in which it was claimed that the babies had contracted illnesses because of inadequate food and unhygienic conditions.

The claims were allegedly supported by the South African Prisoners Organisation for Human Rights (Sapohr).

However, spokesman for the Department of Correctional Services Mr Russel Mamabolo yesterday dismissed the claims as "vague" and challenged Sapohr to give specific names of prisoners concerned.

Yesterday the department invited the media to the prison's female section to inspect the cells and interview some of the inmates.

The head of the prison's female section, Mrs Mamoshabe Tloubadla, said the staff was managing well.

"There is sufficient food, toys, clothing and medication for the expectant women as well as mothers and

children."

However, some pregnant female prisoners complained of "being starved" and "overworked".

They said they were given small rations of food at 8.30am and 2pm before being locked up at 3pm for the night.

The two meals were not sufficient, and going without supper kept them "awake throughout the night", they said.

A woman who is seven months pregnant said: "We sometimes have to get down on our knees to scrub and polish the hard, cold floor. We think this is too much for a pregnant person."

She asked not to be identified.

In response to this, Sister Gloria Livi of the female prison hospital said: "They are only responsible for cleaning their rooms and not the whole section of the prison. Their work is like a daily exercise and not hard labour."

Livi confirmed that the pregnant women had two meals a day and a snack in between. She said this was sufficient. She said the meals were from 8.30am, a snack at 11am and then lunch at 2pm.

The prisoners where then locked up at 3pm for the night.



A female prisoner stands outside her Johannesburg prison cell with her nine-month-old baby.

The woman was seen by the media during a visit organised by the Department of Correctional Services. The media visit was organised in response to claims that babies, forced to live in prison with their mothers who are serving sentences, are subjected to poor living conditions.

PIC: ANTONIO MUCHAVE

School stabbing to end up in court

VRYBURG High School will ask the Mafikeng High Court this week to review a decision by the North West education department not to expel grade 9 pupil Andrew Babelle, who is accused of stabbing a matric boy about a month ago.

The school's lawyer, Mr Paul Colditz, said the urgent application was scheduled to be heard on Thursday.

Babelle (19) was suspended from

plinary committee subsequently found that the attack on Erasmus was premeditated and recommended that Babelle be expelled.

The department rejected the recommendation last week, saying Babelle's disciplinary hearing had ignored a number of "indispensable issues". Babelle returned to class on Friday.

Vryburg High School governing body deputy chairman Mr Erik de

"We believed at first that the court proceedings would be lengthy, which could have meant that Andrew would be at school for the entire year."

"Since the case will be heard this week, we decided to allow him to remain in class until the school term ends next week," De Bruin said.

The provincial education department cited apparent irregularities in Babelle's disciplinary hearing as the reason for its decision not to expel

'BE MORE ALERT'

Pro-active fight against world child sex abuse

21/8/99

A CONFERENCE in the city has brought together delegates from all over the world to share their views on effective ways to police and prevent child exploitation. **LOREN KOLEVSOHN** reports (298)

HUNDREDS of local and international delegates gathered in Parliament yesterday to fight increasing incidences of global child sex abuse and exploitation.

In South Africa, and on the streets of Cape Town, children as young as nine are involved in prostitution and pornography.

Speaking at the National Consultative Conference Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children, Superintendent Anneke Pienaar of the SA Police Service and Interpol SA, said there are large-scale paedophile and child sex networks operating within South Africa. The

only way to deal with them, she said, was with pro-active policing instead of reactive policing, the method used in the past.

This included a training programme recently completed in Pretoria for 20 forensic social workers, who will be able to give specialist witness testimony in court in any case relating to child abuse.

Detective Chief Inspector Bob McLachlan of Scotland Yard's paedophile unit said one of the ways to further prevent child sex abuse is to

provide "concentrated pro-active policing of suspected abusers identified through an intelligence-led approach".

This includes the ability of the police to recognise the range of typical offenders as well as the psychological effect that child pornography and erotica has on the abuser.

Speaking on behalf of End Child

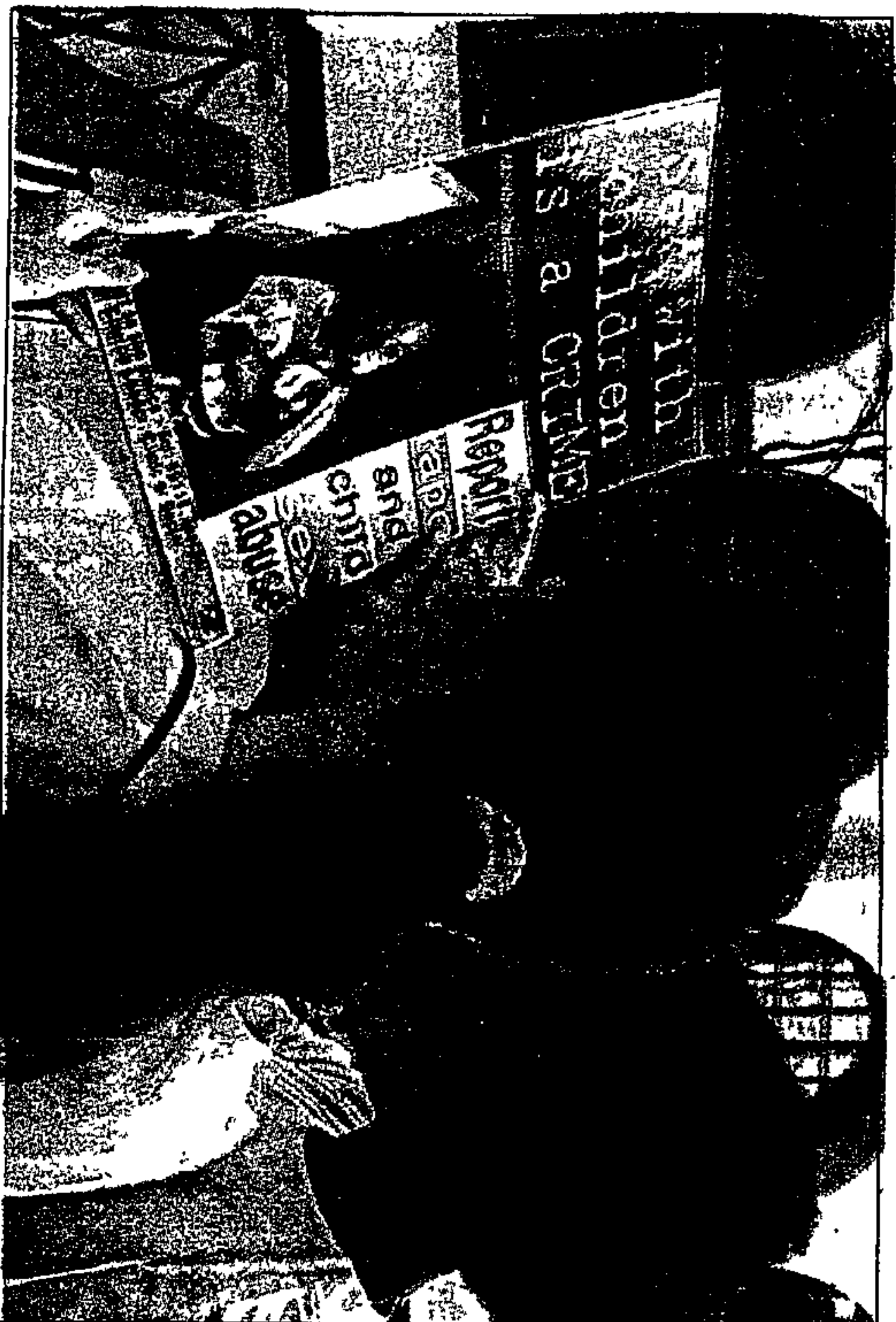
The trafficking of children for sex operates in the same manner as gun and drug trafficking

Pornography and Trafficking, Jayanta Chowdhury from India said the trafficking of children for sex operated in the same manner as gun and drug trafficking, except travelling with children was easier than travelling with ammunition.

"We should be more alert at our various international exit points when we see children leaving in the company of strangers or supposed relatives."

A policeman and a volunteer for Durban-based Childsearch, Lloyd Symes, said it is a myth that a child can only be reported missing at a police station after 24 hours.

"These initial 24 hours are the most crucial time for locating and discovering whether a crime has taken place. If one delays reporting a missing child, one risks finding a dead body," he added.



CHILD SEX IS A CRIME: This is the message being reinforced at a conference in Cape Town against the sexual exploitation of children worldwide. Two young girls told delegates about their horrific sexual abuse. **PICTURE: JACK IESTRADE**

How do you say 'No!' to your own mother?

LOREN KOLEVSOHN

IMAGINE being sold for sex by your own mother.

Two young girls broke their own silence on the sexual exploitation of children when they shared their abusive experiences with hundreds of local and international delegates attending a conference on child abuse yesterday.

Sexual exploitation of children is a global problem, where the offenders and the offences they commit are unrestricted by territorial, cultural or ethnic boundaries.

Josephine and Ramona, both aged 15, were out of public view as they spoke softly in Afrikaans of how they were raped, beaten by their abusers, sold by their mothers to have sex with other men, and how friends turned out

to be pimps.

Delegates at the National Consultative Conference Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children were transfixed by the emotional, hesitant voices of the two young girls who afterwards appealed to children around the country to report their cases if they have suffered similar fates.

"My mother sold me to a man when I was 13 years old. She was an alcoholic and used to beat me. She said she wanted to come to this conference today and swear at all of you," said Josephine.

Ramona has not been to school since she was raped by a man whom she now calls her boyfriend as "he asked me to go out with him".

"I left school because of him and no one has even inquired about me for the past two weeks. He once beat me with a

golf club. I went to the clinic, but the staff did not report my case to the police."

She added that she is afraid of her own father. "I want him to stop having sex with my cousin. I am afraid to the next to him in case he touches me like he does her."

Recent figures released by police showed that 14 225 children were raped in the first 11 months of last year.

Another 3 451 were indecently assaulted, while 679 fell victim to sodomy and 171 to incest.

According to Interpol SA, there were 21 204 reported cases of sexual abuse against children in 1998, almost double the number of offences reported five years ago, despite the fact that the number of staff and crime prevention units had doubled over the same period.

Corporal punishment against the law

By VIVIAN WARBY

Corporal punishment in schools is not only illegal, but also highly unethical and unprofessional.

And teachers who mete out corporal punishment would face the full might of the law, Bheki Khumalo, spokesperson for the minister of education, said yesterday.

"Corporal punishment is assault, and these teachers must be prepared to face the consequences of their actions. They are acting in conflict with the SA Schools Act, which rules out corporal punishment," said Khumalo.

A teacher who metes out corporal punishment could face three forms of action.

These are a criminal charge of assault, possible suspension by the provincial head of department, and disciplinary action which could include the teacher's professional licence being taken away by the SA Council of Educators.

The council is a professional body established to enforce the professional and ethical standards of the profession. The council's code of conduct

states that an educator must exercise authority with compassion; avoid any form of humiliation; and refrain from any form of child abuse, physical or psychological.

The SA Schools Act stipulates that every school must develop its own code of conduct, said advocate Eben Boshoff, the Department of Education's director of legal services and legislation.

"The guidelines show a move away from a disciplinary system based on fear and force to one of mutual respect, commitment and participation of all stakeholders."

Corporal or "cruel, inhuman or degrading" punishment are ruled out.

Punishment which teachers could apply against pupils in cases of minor offences include a verbal warning or written reprimand, supervised school work, replacement of damaged property, and suspension from school activities such as sport or cultural activities.

Khumalo said teachers should also consider involving social workers or psychologists to ascertain the cause of bad behaviour.

Star 18/3/99

(298)

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Landlords face jail for condoning abuse of children

SPW 18/3/99

Bill says people who use properties as places for sexual abuse should be punished severely

By JOVIAL RANTAO
Cape Town

Landlords who lease out their properties to people who use them as premises for commercial sexual abuse of children, and managers of such properties, face stiff penalties which will include a 10-year prison sentence and a hefty fine, or both.

The tough measures are contained in the Child Care Amendment Bill, which was approved by the National Assembly yesterday. The approval of the bill coincided with a conference, held in Parliament, to highlight the exploitation of children.

According to the provisions of the bill, a homeowner whose house is used for sexual exploitation of children will be deemed to have participated in the act and will be guilty of an offence.

Clause 50A reads: "Any person who is an owner, lessor, manager, tenant or occupier of property on which the commercial sexual exploitation of a child occurs and who, within a reasonable time of gaining information of such an occurrence, fails to report such an occurrence at a police station, shall be guilty of an offence. Any person who is convicted of an offence in terms of this section shall be liable to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding 10 years or to both such fine and such imprisonment."

Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said the amendment to the existing law made provision for legal action to be taken against people who have been evading prosecution because they were "indirectly" involved, for example procurers or pimps and those who become involved by making their premises available.

"Child prostitution is one of the most hideous, damaging and traumatic experiences for children and yet the most elusive. This is because the public goes along with the secrecy and

silence surrounding it. Its pervasiveness continues despite the popularisation of children's and women's rights," she said.

The SA Police Service says 91 000 complaints of child sexual abuse in the past five years have been reported to the police.

Superintendent Anneke Pienaar, head of the SAPS's child protection unit, said all forms of sexual crimes against children, including incest and sodomy, were on the rise, with 37 352 cases reported last year.

She said 15 732 cases of child rape, 3 744 of indecent assault, 739 of sodomy and 185 of incest were reported last year.

The reasons for the increase included a growth in the population, more public awareness and an increase in the number of child protection units.

“
**Prostitution
of children is
hideous and
damaging**
”

Plea for grants as children face sex abuse nightmare

Children's rights activists, appealing desperately for the reinstatement of maintenance grants, related incidents in which a child had sex for R2 to buy bread and another was sold by her mother for just R20.

They were speaking at an international conference in Parliament yesterday organised by the Network Against the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children.

Another child, speaking from behind a screen, told delegates how when she was 13 her mother took her to a stranger's home in Kommetjie and left her there "while she went to the shop".

"The man touched the child's breasts and she was forced to masturbate him, after which he gave her R30. That was how she learnt her mother had sold her for sex."

Suchilla Leslie, of the National Council for Child Welfare, said Gov-



HEALTH WRITER

ernment job creation projects were laudable but they "put the cart before the horse".

The state should seriously consider reinstating maintenance grants, even if only in the short term, because "you cannot do any meaningful work if basic needs are not met", she said.

Childline's Joan van Niekerk said South Africa's extreme poverty was directly related to sexual exploitation of children. Society was the criminal that had allowed chil-

dren to move into prostitution without adequate intervention.

"The money these children make supports not only themselves but often families or other children with whom they live on the streets."

Ms van Niekerk said the abolition of maintenance grants for single mothers was a "terrible indictment of where our priorities are".

The recent decision to spend R1-billion on fighter planes suggested "we are living in a country more prepared to make war than care appropriately for its children".

Ms Van Niekerk said many men chose to have sex with children because they were cheaper than adult prostitutes. In KwaZulu Natal it was possible to exploit a child for less than R1.

"They are also easier to manage in terms of the sexual act. A lot of men don't want to use condoms and a child cannot insist because they

will be easily overpowered.

"Also, the myth persists in KwaZulu Natal that having sex with a child will cure you of HIV," she said.

Rachel Khatlane, a sex worker and advocate for the rights of sex workers, said there was a terrible silence around domestic violence in poverty-stricken areas.

It was domestic violence that often made children leave home and end up selling their bodies to buy food and shelter.

"Children think they will have a better life on the streets but they end up being pumped by gangsters, they borrow to buy alcohol and drugs. When they cannot pay back the loans it is impossible for them to leave this situation."

"Children need to know where they can go when the violence in their homes means they can no longer stay there," she said.

Stop scourge taking hold in SA, urges top British cop

South Africa, with its fledgling tourism industry, could be at the cutting edge of an exercise to stop the scourge of child sex tourism taking hold, a British specialist on paedophiles told local activists.

Bob McLachlan, of Scotland Yard's paedophile unit, addressed nearly 250 delegates from South Africa and abroad at a conference yesterday to examine the common and sexual exploitation of local children.

He will also address members of the police Child Protection Unit on Friday. Unit head Anneke Pienaar told delegates that South Africa was unlike Europe, where child sex offenders could cross borders quickly and easily to have sex with children in other countries, returning home and believing themselves safe from prosecution.

South Africa was a long-haul

destination and it appeared that child sex tourism did not come here partly to have sex with children. But because of the easy access to child prostitutes once they arrived, they exploited children while here.

Detective Chief Inspector. Among the factors Detective Chief

Inspector McLachlan stressed were poverty, lack of opportunities for education or employment, homelessness, criminal networks and the breakdown of families.

He added: "Abusers see sex with children as easy, cheap and safe. The object is to make it difficult, expensive and downright dangerous."

Muirgham O'Brien, executive director of Eng Child Protection, Abduction and Trafficking in Bangkok, said she was horrified to learn that up to 600 children spent every night on Cape Town's streets.

"People must lobby the government to implement a national plan (for the protection of the country's children)," she said.

Campaign against child abuse gains momentum

By Malcolm Ray

THE Network Against Sexual Exploitation of Children decided, at its national consultative conference held at Parliament in Cape Town yesterday, to wage war against the commercial and sexual exploitation of children.

The initiative, the first of its kind in South Africa, brought together a range of stakeholders, grassroots activists and regional and international delegates to "search for meaningful solu-

tions to child abuse and exploitation". This follows a call for action to deal with the problem on a global scale by an international conference in Geneva three years ago.

University of Natal researcher Ms Vasintha Veeram said current national initiatives against child abuse were limited when measured against the problem.

Recent statistics show that the number of sexually and commercially exploited children is increasing at an alarming rate. Crimes against children

increased by 66 percent between 1993 and 1996. During this period the reported number of child rapes went up 60 percent and there was an increase of 65 percent of child abuse cases. Last year 328 child prostitution and 1 886 sexual abuse cases were reported.

Veeram said most cases of abuse and exploitation were under-reported, "creating a crisis of awareness in society about the incidence of the problem. More importantly, the victims of abuse and exploitation are not aware

of their rights." (298)

The network will build awareness.

"Most communities have little or no knowledge of child exploitation. The victims come from backgrounds where there has been no positive reinforcement," Veeram said.

She said there was need to "close loopholes in legislation". The Government recently adopted a national plan of action and will soon table the Child Care Amendment Bill to Cabinet.

However, Veeram said, insufficient

money and infrastructure has dogged the implementation of legislation and programmes. "The relevant legislation should be made accessible and be more widely disseminated. Legal frameworks are not enough. Positive enforcement mechanisms are needed to implement our policies and programmes," she said.

The conference will push for greater coordination between NGOs, Government and the police as part of its campaign to eradicate the problem.

SA children under siege

(298) *Journal 19/8/99*
By Charity Bhengu

IT IS Human Rights Week but, ironically, South Africa has witnessed an escalation of violence against the most vulnerable group in society — the children. Figures released this week reveal that 14 225 children, some as young as two, were raped in the first 11 months of last year.

In Johannesburg the child protection unit reported that 22 new cases of child abuse — involving rape, assault and abandonment — have been reported since Monday.

A 14-year-old girl was raped, brutally assaulted and kept prisoner in a house in Lotus Gardens, Pretoria.

South African Stop Child Abuse spokesman Mr Tutu Mgulwa said yesterday that the girl had apparently been assaulted by her mother but it was still not clear who had raped her.

This is one of 15 cases of child abuse reported to the organisation this week.

Terrible state

Mgulwa said they found the girl in a "terrible state". She had cut her face and arms with a razor blade.

"The matter was reported to us by a concerned neighbour," said Mgulwa. "We went to visit the area and spoke to the girl through a burglar-proofed window."

"She was alone and kept banging her head against the wall, wanting to be let out of the house.

"Since we had no right to break into the house, we reported the matter to the Pretoria West police. We spent the whole night there but the police did not show up."

Pretoria police said they had no knowledge of such a case and would investigate.

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation's trauma clinic said yesterday that children were the most affected by the high incidence of criminal violence in South Africa. It is estimated that a child is raped every 15 minutes in this country.

Trauma clinic spokeswoman Ms Helen Hajjiannis

said: "The exposure to a traumatic event often leaves them with emotions and behaviour that are not in keeping with their normal behaviour."

Hajjiannis said children responded to trauma in a manner that could affect them negatively in future.

South African Human Rights Commission spokesman Mr Robert Nkuna said: "It is very worrying, especially when the country has good policies aimed at protecting the rights of children, that violence against them is continuing."

Nkuna said it was the responsibility of all citizens to implement policies meant to protect children.

The National Assembly approved draft legislation this week aimed at clamping down on the sexual exploitation of children.

Welfare Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said the issues raised in the legislation were important for the transformation of the childcare system.

The Child Care Amendment Bill empowers the Government to punish those found guilty of using children as prostitutes or commercial sex workers.

These are some of the incidents of child human rights abuses reported this week:

- At Uxolo High School at Khayelitsha in Cape Town there was a clash between pupils and teachers. When the police arrived pupils began stoning them. Police retaliated with teargas and set dogs on them;

- In Fordsburg, Johannesburg, police reported the case of a six-year-old girl who was brutally assaulted by a teacher who allegedly broke her arm;

- In Badplaas, Mpumalanga, eight boys allegedly assaulted a nine-year-old boy;

- At GaMakgatho village in Louis Trichardt a 12-year-old boy ended up in hospital after being mauled by dogs belonging to a white farmer; and

- In Vryburg, North West, the case of schoolboy Andrew Babeile, who stabbed another boy, ended in court for prosecution.

- See page 2.

Stiff sanctions for child abuse

(298) 21/3/99
New laws aimed at uprooting scourge

By ZOLILE NQAYI

SEXUAL exploitation and abuse of children and measures to combat the scourge came under the spotlight in Parliament this week.

Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi announced that the Child Care Amendment Bill had been approved by the National Assembly.

The legislation provides for severe punishment of people found guilty of using children as prostitutes and sex workers.

The National Assembly also debated the Films and Publications Amendment Bill, which seeks to regulate the publication of child pornography on the Internet.

At a conference held in Parliament on Wednesday the Network Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children, a coalition of non-governmental organisations, vowed to go all out in its fight against the abuse of children.

Delegates praised the new laws aimed at uprooting child abuse.

The conference heard that there is a close link between child pornography, child prostitution and sexual abuse. Pornographic material is



SCARRED FOR LIFE ... One of thousands of abused children.

used to influence the child by making him or her think it is normal and acceptable.

Fraser-Moleketi in her budget speech said South Africa's "horrendous statistics on child abuse" was an indication that more people were reporting abuses.

"Over the past five years we have put in place policies, legislation and

various guidelines to protect children. This is not enough. We need the support and commitment of all South Africans to protect our children from abuse. We need you to speak and report abuse – for the sake of our future," Fraser-Moleketi appealed.

Child abuse can also be prevented by controlling child pornography on the Internet. Because of its trans-border nature, publication on the Internet is difficult to ban, let alone control.

Home Affairs Deputy Minister Lindiwe Sisulu said in Parliament that SA will be co-operating with European countries on child pornography in cyberspace.

"Parents and stake holders are concerned about the loophole with regard to child pornography on the Internet. The government is charged with the duty to protect children from any mental or psychological harm," Sisulu said.

Sex tourists turn Cape Town into Bangkok of Africa

BOBBY JORDAN

(298)

ST 21/3/99

CAPE Town is becoming one of the world's sleaze capitals, attracting sex tourists who pay as little as R50 for sex with a child.

Police and social workers say the city could soon become as infamous as Bangkok, Amsterdam and Rio de Janeiro unless drastic steps are taken.

"It has become known that children are easily available here," said Bernadette van Vuuren of the Cape Town-based child-rights group Molo Songololo. She added that child prostitution was on the increase in all major South African cities.

"In two years the situation has deteriorated; it used to be under-reported and invisible. Today it's visible and still under-reported."

Estimates for the number of child prostitutes in Cape Town vary between 500 and 1 000. Many believe the figure is substantially higher.

The total number of Cape Town prostitutes, male and female, stands at about 4 000. This figure includes street-based "strippers" and those employed at about

140 "officially recognised" agencies that include massage parlours, escort agencies and strip clubs. It does not include sex workers operating in townships or in squatter settlements or for one of the many "invisible" agencies.

The matter was hotly debated at a conference held this week in Parliament on the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Delegates raised concern about increasing numbers of foreign sex tourists attracted by tales of a carte-blanche approach to under-age sex and virtually non-existent law enforcement.

Police say although there is no evidence of organised sex tours to Cape Town, it may be "next on the list" following clampdowns on child prostitution in some Asian countries.

"As one door is closed, as was done in the Philippines, we can expect other countries to become prone to the problem," said Superintendent Jan Swart, spokesman for the Cape Town Eastern Metropole Child Protection Unit.

"And a typical country [for child prostitution] is one where children are poor. We certainly fall within that category."

Last year his unit handled 2 000 cases of sexual abuse against children.

'Little men' who live like 'animals'

□ *Streetkids in Hillbrow are overlooked, undervalued* □ *They beg, steal and search for food in rubbish bins*

MANDLA MTHEMBU spends a sad night with the homeless kids in the streets of Hillbrow. He discovers they have developed strong values and a spirit of brotherhood.



HARDLY a day passes without seeing these young lads around the centre of any big town. From a distance, they look like old men in dirty clothing who have not had the pleasure of a bath for some time.

These are the "streetkids" or *abondabanda* (as they are called in the township) who have been deprived of their youth and face adult challenges at a young age. Some of them grow no other life than the streets.

They are an unbearable sight - little men living like animals. They beg, steal and search for food in rubbish bins in order to survive. They also sniff glue to keep themselves warm and forget about their troubles.

This week I spent a night in Hillbrow, disguised as a "streetkid" to find what it is like to be in the same situation as these homeless kids.

There I was, dressed in a worn-out jersey, old pants and a hat. As I made my way through the streets, I saw a group of "streetkids" gathered at a corner - their "shacks". I approached them with uncertainty as I expected a hostile reception.

After introducing myself as "Mandlos", I told them that I wanted to join them. I explained that I had problems with my parents and did not want to go back home. They did not trust me immediately.

But in no time I felt at home, thanks to Jabulani, the 23-year-old who appeared to be their leader. He saw to it that I shared with them whatever I had, though I had to decline some of their offers.

Jabulani was very talkative and looked mature. I was careful not to ask questions that would make the boys suspicious, as they dislike being asked about their lifestyle.

"Usually tell people who question us to mind their own business," said Jabulani, adding that he also left home because of "abondaba" (go-sisters).



"We will not demolish our shacks even if police threaten to arrest us."

Even though their dwelling is a far cry from the warmth of a proper home, the boys were proud of it. "We will not demolish our shacks even if police threaten to arrest us," one of the boys said confidently. The police have accused the "streetkids" of causing crime in the area. I sat patiently in that dingy "shack" watching Jabulani and his friend "Scarface" (who appeared to be about 21 years old) sniffing glue. They wanted me to join in, and I pretended to oblige, but I blew out

my breath instead of inhaling. The glue had been stuffed with some sweets, they said.

They claimed that glue sniffing cleanses their lungs and leaves them "healthy". But they added that the glue also makes them hungry.

As we were still sitting in the "shack", a beautiful girl (who seemed to be about 20 years old) came in. She had also come to sniff glue.

Jabulani told me that there were a number of girls who came to their "shacks" every night to sniff glue. Being a "newcomer", I had to be introduced to the ways of survival in the streets. I was told how the "streetkids" made a little bit of money. They have fancy words for their ways of making money: "ukhulunda" or "ukuphanda".

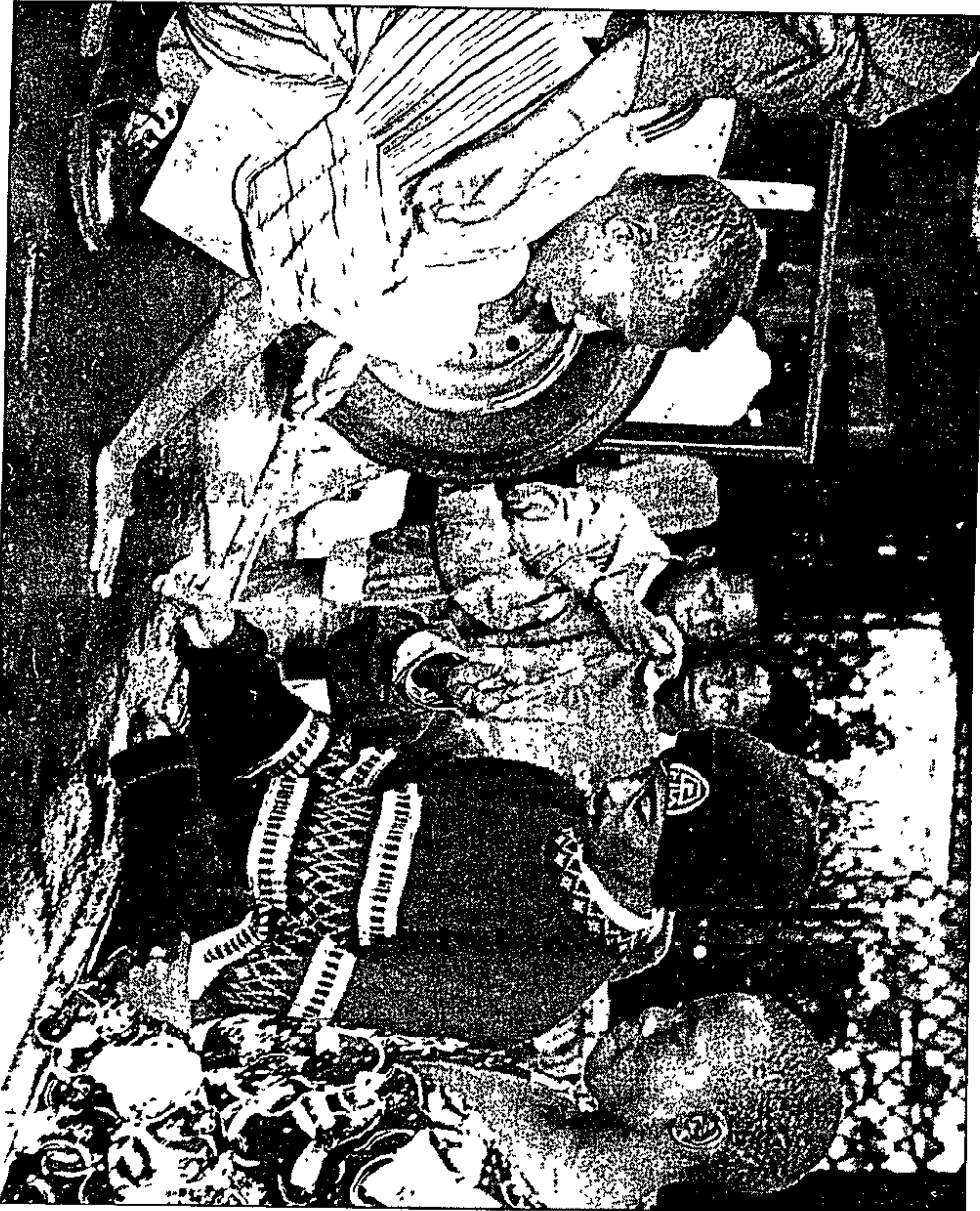
Apart from stealing, begging and helping with gardening in the suburbs, Jabulani said they also made money by helping with the parking of cars.

I found that this assertion was true, as I made about R10 within 30 minutes while helping motorists park their cars. But I had to abandon the task as other boys started to fight for the parking lots.

Since it was already after 10 in the evening, and most shops had closed, Jabulani suggested that we go out and steal. But first we had to look for food in rubbish bins.

We found some vegetables abandoned by street vendors. We also picked up some chicken to add to our meal.

The other boys seemed not to mind, but I felt embarrassed when passers-by uttered their "shames" and "ag sies togs" to us.



LIFE IN THE STREET... Mthembu (wearing a hat) plays a gambling game called "spinning" with the streetkids of Hillbrow. **■ P.C. GEORGE MASHINI**

This was served in a plastic container. More boys arrived, attracted by the smell of the soup. They ate the soup with bread and rolls given by a passer-by earlier on. They seemed to enjoy their meal, as they constantly licked their fingers.

I was also offered a piece of bread, but politely declined it. The boys were disappointed by my "bragging", saying "The night is still long, bra".

During my stay, I discovered that there are positive things about "streetkids", although the negative stories seem to overshadow them. I was amazed and touched by the bond that existed among them - they are real "comrades". They share almost everything they have, be it food, glue or whatever. You would hear them saying: "Don't finish the bread, Scarface (or whoever) hasn't eaten yet." They are unified and take care of one another save for some clashes now and then.

Their bond of friendship goes beyond their geographical turfs as they are affable even to other "streetkids" who they don't know. If a stranger were to attack one of them, they gang up in defence of their buddy.

The humanity (abunt) projected by these boys gave me a sense of belonging. I must admit I was a bit reluctant to move away from the warmth of their friendship. Indeed, if it were not for their unhealthy habits, I would have stayed longer!

As I went back to the warmth of my abode at home, I kept thinking but these boys are human beings. If only our society and welfare officials could realise that

Omar to review evidence rules in child sex abuse

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg – The cautionary rule regarding evidence given by sexually abused children will “no doubt” be reviewed, says Justice Minister Dullah Omar.

He has expressed “deep concern” about sexual offences against children after the acquittal last week of a Kempton Park creche owner on a

charge of indecently assaulting a three-year-old boy.

Responding to the outrage of the boy’s mother after Sydney Sidebottom, 40, was acquitted, Mr Omar said although he could not comment on the case specifically he had requested Gauteng regional justice representative Beryl Simelane to discuss its implications with various interest groups.

Ms Simelane said she planned to meet the Child Abuse Action Group next week. She said she would also visit the Kempton Park Regional Court to assess its facilities.

Sidebottom, owner of the Louther Kabouter creche in Kempton Park, was originally charged with molesting seven children two years ago but six charges were dropped. The boy’s mother said the court

was an unfriendly environment where her son waited in a filthy room for up to four hours waiting to testify.

At times she was too afraid to take him to the toilet because Sidebottom was outside, she said. But this did not prevent her son from coming face to face with his alleged attacker on several occasions.

Mr Omar said the Justice Depart-

ment had made progress in revising procedures to ensure justice was done to accused and victims.

Prosecutors and court officials were undergoing “sensitivity training” to deal with these cases and almost 200 courts had been provided with facilities where children could give evidence through intermediaries in a room next to the court to protect them from unfair question-

ing and from facing their accused, the statement said.

“Of course, in the case of a three-year-old child this is particularly difficult,” Mr Omar cautioned. The boy’s mother took issue with this. Her son had given evidence from a prosecutor’s office – in the court building – through an intermediary, who was ill-prepared and not qualified for the job, she said.

CASES

AR 8/4/99

(298)

The Department of Justice has taken various steps to ensure that women and children receive priority attention, writes Dullah Omar.



The recent statistics on violence against children in South Africa are most disturbing and call for a coordinated and coherent response to the plight of our children.

The Department of Justice has declared that violence against children and women constitute serious offences and that perpetrators must be dealt with severely.

It is within this context that we highlight the fact that prior to 1994, our criminal justice system did not have specific programmes aimed at dealing with crimes such as violence against women and children, car hijacking, organised crime and money laundering.

It is known that the priorities of the then apartheid government were only to deal with its political opponents. There was hardly any training for those responsible for investigations and prosecutions in these cases.

I am not trying to pass the buck but to reflect on how our justice system was structured.

We mention the legacy we inherited to enable us to understand what we have to do. All we want to do is to speed up the process of finding a lasting solution to these problems.

My department has since 1994 taken various steps - in collaboration with our National Crime Prevention Strategy partners and non-governmental organisations - to ensure that the position of women and children receive priority attention.

New respect

On June 16 1995 the Government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In so doing the Government committed its people to a new respect for all children, thereby placing a new emphasis on the justice system in all matters affecting them.

Section 28 of the Constitution is a milestone for South Africa. For the first time in our country, children's rights are constitutionally protected. Section 28(1)(d), in particular, provides that all children have the right to be protected from maltreatment, abuse, neglect and degradation.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) aims specifically to protect children against

abuse and torture and reaffirms the prohibition on the sexual exploitation of children contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The African Children's Charter places the rights of children in cultural perspective to make sure they are protected against harmful social and cultural practices.

These principles, embodied in the Constitution, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights instruments, underlie all our legislative reforms and administrative conduct.

The sectoral and intersectoral programmes that have already been put in place form an integral part of a process of beginning to realise the protection of the rights of the child.

Through the process of developing a National Programme of Action for Children, the Justice Sectoral Working Group was mandated to investigate the question of children in difficult circumstances, especially children in the criminal and civil justice system.

Issue of violence

The department hosted a Southern African Development Community Conference on the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children and subsequently adopted the SADC Declaration on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children.

A Progress and Accountability Framework for SADC countries on Violence Against Women, Children, the Elderly and People with Disabilities was also originally developed at this conference.

The issue of violence against children, particularly girls, is also one of the focal points of the national action plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

This plan constitutes an integrated and systematic national strategy to help realise the advancement of human rights in South Africa. It coordinated a public awareness campaign on violence against women and children between November 23 and December 10 last year.

In Wynberg, Western Cape, a special court dealing with cases of sexual violence was established in 1993. Spe-

On a mission to curb child abuse

(298) *Sowetan* 8/4/99



Flashback ... Nonto Primary School children march to Moroka police station demanding an end to child abuse in South Africa.

cialised prosecutors deal with these cases.

A task team was also appointed to establish pilot family court projects. When in full operation, these courts will provide extended counselling and support to child victims of abuse and separate special waiting rooms for these children and their families have been set up.

The first pilot project was launched at the Cape Town magistrate's court. The family courts will have jurisdiction over all family-related matters such as divorce, maintenance, domestic violence and children's court inquiries.

PIG CLEMENT LEKANYANE

Sexual exploitation of children is a very serious issue which requires serious consideration by all stakeholders. To this end, the department is committed to promoting and strengthening partnerships between state departments and organisations in civil society.

The Justice Sectoral Working Group - comprising relevant state departments and NGOs - also recommended that the South African Law Commission establish project committees to carry out important investigations on the protection of children.

The commission published an Issue

Paper on Sexual Offences in May 1997

It covers a range of offences found in various enactments as well as in common law and customary law with a particular focus on children.

It also addresses gaps in existing legislation such as the Child Care Act, the Prevention of Family Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act as it pertains to children, and proposes certain reforms.

The commission also produced *Guidelines For Handling Victims-Survivors of Sexual Abuse*, which were launched last September.

The purpose of the guidelines was to reduce secondary victimisation, facilitate the healing process for victims and to improve victim cooperation in the criminal justice process.

In addition, the Department of Justice installed about 185 closed-circuit televisions in both urban and rural courts to create an environment conducive to child witnesses. One-way mirrors were also installed in a number of courts where children testify.

As part of the department's awareness campaign on children's rights, we introduced a number of initiatives. For instance, the department held an art competition in Gauteng for children called *Children and the law*.

This art competition is part of an ongoing process in the department and will be launched in a further two provinces this year.

An information kit, entitled *Law Talk For Children, Play Your Part*, was launched last July. The aim is to provide some background to laws that affect children and to provide practical suggestions on how children can access the justice system with as little as trauma as possible.

This initiative depicts the beginning of a transformation process taking place in my department on a broader level. However, I agree that more work is required within the area of violence against women and children, in particular addressing the root causes of such problems.

(The writer is the Minister of Justice.)

Life gets tougher in the new SA

MG 9-15/4/99
The desperate poverty that is still rife in South Africa is taking its toll on the country's youngest citizens. Ian Clayton reports

Grim new demographic details show that life for most South Africans is not getting better, and may well be getting worse.

With an estimated 4.7-million people unemployed and looking for work, and only 5.1-million in formal employment, it is hardly surprising that life remains tough for ordinary people in the democratic South Africa.

But it is the figure of 22 865 infant deaths in 1995 — the highest infant death figure since 1991, and probably the highest ever in South Africa's history — that demonstrates the severity of poverty in the country.

The number of infant deaths recorded may be a reflection of more accurate official records, but the fact is the death of 22 865 babies is unacceptably high — and that an average of more than 62 babies died every day of the year in 1995.

These demographic statistics are contained in the latest issue of the *Bulletin of Statistics*, recently released by Statistics South Africa.

The report classified 9.1-million in various job categories, including

2.1-million working in private households, suggesting that about one in three potentially economically active people were unemployed and looking for work.

With fewer than 5.3-million people having paid jobs in 1997, formal sector employment has continued to decline, from more than 5.3-million in 1996 to 5.1-million in the fourth quarter of 1997.

A total of R2 217.3-million was paid in salaries and wages. The average salary paid in 1997 was R3 832 a year, an increase of R368 on the 1996 figure of R3 464.

Unemployment rates are particularly severe among Africans — 4.2-million looking for work — and particularly among young Africans: 1.9-million without jobs are under the age of 29, and there are 1.2-million people under the age of 24 looking for work.

The report is described by Statistics South Africa head Mark Orkin as an "excellent reference source" as it provides a bird's eye view of a year's, or even several years', statistics.

It gives figures on many different



Suffer the children: The 22 865 infant deaths in 1995 demonstrate the severe poverty in South Africa. PHOTOGRAPH: NADINE HUTTON

aspects of life in South Africa, including that 140 753 people were injured in traffic collisions in 1997 and 9 691 people were killed. Vehicles collided with 39 815 pedestrians and 6 846 cyclists.

There were also more divorces than before — 31 592 in 1995 — more than half of them involving whites. But these figures did include 8 174 divorces involving black people — and black divorces were not recorded until 1994.

One of the more disturbing sets

of figures are those concerning prosecutions and convictions in the courts. The number of prosecutions, for instance, dropped from 350 201 in 1995 to 291 774 in 1996. The number of convictions also dropped, from 260 887 to 218 394.

Police have claimed the crime rate has stabilised, but the decline in prosecutions and convictions indicates the justice system is not working efficiently — and that a significant number of criminals are getting away with their crimes.

Call for 'war' on child prostitution (298)

By Charity Bhengu

COMMERCIAL sexual exploitation of children in South Africa is escalating and has reached alarming proportions with about 400 new cases being reported a year, according to a recent study by child welfare societies.

The South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare (SANCCFW) said a total of 328 child prostitution cases were reported to them last year. The figure does not include cases reported to the police.

The SANCCFW called for a full scale war against child prostitution yesterday. It said child prostitution was a growing problem because of the high levels of poverty, especially in the black communities.

Children are forced into the trade

for their survival and the survival of their families. As young as 12 years of age, some are sexually exploited for amounts as little as 50c and R2.

SANCCFW director André Kals said: "There is an urgent need to embark on programmes that are geared towards helping parents to realise their protective roles and not force children into prostitution."

The amended Child Care Act of 1999 has made a provision that those found guilty of sexually exploiting children be given a maximum sentence of 10 years.

For instance in Bekkersdal, a small mining community on the west side of Johannesburg, there is a growing demand for child sex.

Poverty, lack of education and unemployment have contributed to the growing number of children in the sex

trade

Social workers said under these circumstances girls are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and "as can be imagined these children are at a greater risk of contracting HIV".

Gauteng department of welfare and population development spokesman Mr Lebelo Maloka said: "Programmes and projects to fight child prostitution are already under way."

He said the department had subsidised 271 NGOs to the sum of R46 million to render services to children and "this includes services to children who are involved in prostitution".

In addition, there were seven places of safety for children used to take care of children. Social workers and policemen are available to assist children through appropriate referrals on this number (011) 755-3918.

Win-win punishment fits juvenile crime

A ground-breaking idea is keeping young offenders out of prison in New Zealand and is saving taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

TESS REDGRAVE reports

On a warm summer's morning in a suburb of Auckland, New Zealand, 13 people are sitting in a circle in a small community centre.

A uniformed policeman stands and reads a list of crimes allegedly committed by Stephen Johnson, a dark-haired 15-year-old seated, his head bowed, between his mother and sister. The boy's father, divorced from his mother, glares at him from across the room.

Stephen is charged with driving without a licence and careless use of a motor vehicle. A month earlier, he lost control of a borrowed car at an intersection, smashed through two fences, drove through a garden and then sped away. Along with a friend, he is also charged with stealing and vandalising a pair of go-karts from an indoor recreation centre.

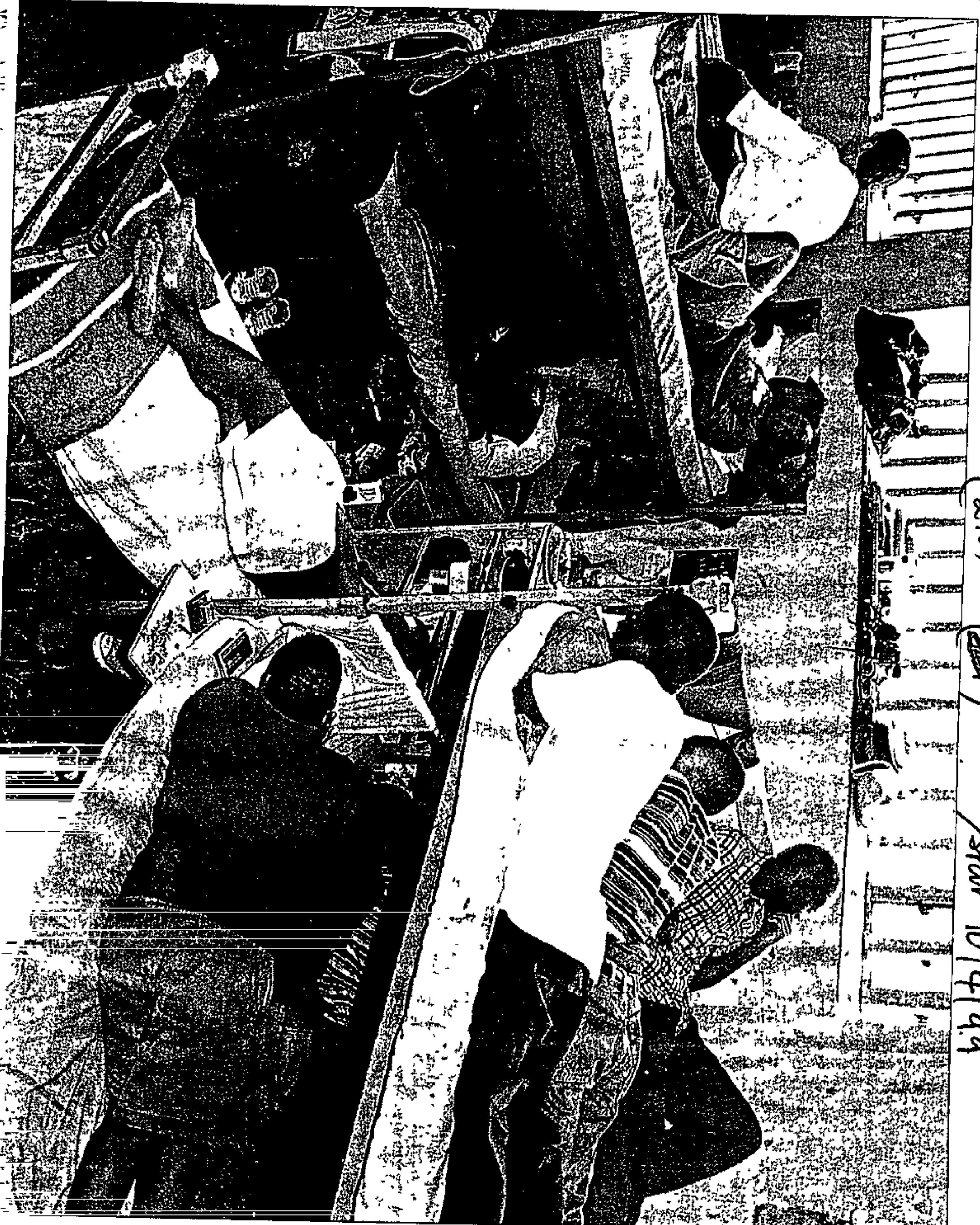
Four victims of Stephen's rampage sit in the circle. "You probably thought this was a harmless prank," says the recreation centre manager, "but it's going to cost me thousands to repair the damage you did to the go-karts." The elderly woman whose fences and garden were flattened says, "I don't feel safe in my home now. I hope you realise that."

Stephen's family is asked to decide his punishment. He will do 40 hours' labour for a local community group and fix the woman's fence. He will also pay all the money he earns doing odd jobs towards repairing the go-karts. "Stephen knows he must face the consequences of his actions," says his mother, "and he will."

In what legal experts claim is a world first, New Zealand has instituted a juvenile justice system that requires young offenders to be accountable to victims and makes their families share responsibility for the punishment they receive. The programme incorporates traditional Maori values that seek to reconcile criminals with their victims and communities rather than punish them in courts.

At the heart of the procedure is a family group conference, organised by youth justice co-ordinators of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Service, at which offenders aged between 10 and 16 admit their crimes to relatives, victims and police, then accept penalties determined by their family and agreed to by the other parties.

And it's working. Since the introduction of family group conferences in 1989, the ministry of justice estimates that the



In fact, the Maori principle that the family, not the state, has an obligation to look after children "is at the heart of New Zealand's youth-justice revolution."

The family group conference system is not without its critics. "It is a soft option and an exercise in futility," says an Auckland events manager who attended four such gatherings after a car he and his daughter owned was stolen and damaged. "None of the apologies I received was sincere. Those kids knew they could break the law over and over again without ever going to jail."

Police acknowledge that 5% of youngsters keep reoffending irrespective of how many conferences they attend. However, these offenders can be - and usually are - passed to the district court for conviction and sentencing. "Hard-core offenders need to be dealt with firmly," says Chris Groveson, national co-ordinator for Police Youth Aid, the police arm that deals with juvenile crime.

To ensure families are not too lenient, backstops are built into the system. "Police and victims have the power of veto at a family group conference," says Hay. "If they're not satisfied with the outcome, the matter must go to court." The court also acts as a backstop in cases where families can't or won't take responsibility for children, or offenders fail to meet the terms of their disciplinary programme on time, usually three to six months.

Police deny that the scheme effectively lets kids off. Says Groveson: "Most often they get a more severe penalty under this system, because families tend to come down hard on them."

And supporters say conferences allow for more creative punishments than many handed down by courts. When one teenager was caught stealing money from a primary school, it was agreed at his conference that he would attend a special assembly at the school to make a formal apology in front of students, teachers and parents.

Conferences can also open up opportunities for youngsters. When an Auckland teenager was arrested for assault and car theft, his conference ordered him to attend a six-month wilderness camp to isolate him from the influence of his friends, drugs and alcohol. There he discovered he loved the outdoors. Now he works for an environmental agency and has left crime behind.

More importantly, say police, conferences allow victims of crime more say than traditional court proceedings. Victims who get evidence in a courtroom must state only the facts of the case. "They cannot express feeling of anger, hurt, fear or violation," says New Plymouth youth-

determine by their family and agreed to by the other parties.

And it's working. Since the introduction of family group conferences in 1989, the number of justice estimates that the number of juvenile-court appearances has dropped by 75% and the number of children being jailed has fallen to about half of the 1989 figure. Savings in prison, legal and court costs run into hundreds of millions of dollars a year, according to Commissioner for Children Roger McKay.

"Family group conferences are a win-win solution," says Youth Court judge Fred McElreath. "By having to face up to their victims in the presence of their families, young offenders are held accountable but also offered support to reform. Victims have a voice and a much better chance of getting satisfaction. The police are in partnership with the community instead of

By having to face their victims in the presence of their families, offenders are accountable but are supported

fighting it, and our courts and jails are less burdened."

Adds Bill Davey, a retired Auckland policeman who has been involved with the system since its inception, "Criminal proceedings don't deter them from committing more crime. Once kids get a record, they can feel labelled as criminals and carry on breaking the law." The conferences also aim to keep children out of jail, where other prisoners may teach them more about crime.

For a typical example of how the conferences work, come to a small North Island town. In a small church hall, 15-year-old Ben Smith is seated at a family group conference with 11 victims of his offences, which include burglary, car theft, wilful damage and assault. "Every time I go into my bedroom I remember the mess after it was ransacked," one man tells Ben, shaking his head. "It's awful to know that someone has violated your home." A young woman has tears in her eyes as she asks, "Can you give me back my bracelet? I've had it all my life." Another man says, "It cost me hundreds to get my car fixed." Finally, an angry man challenges Ben, "What do you want to do with your life?"

The group is silent as Ben shuffles his feet and shifts in his chair. Finally, he raises his head and looks at them. "Please," he says, "I realise now how stupid I've been. I just want to clean up my act."

"This sort of thing doesn't happen in court," says Auckland child psychologist Glen Stenhouse. "There, some children feel intimidated. They block out rational thought, deny accountability or find it impossible to communicate." By contrast, the informal setting of a family group conference allows young offenders to comprehend the trouble they've caused, feel real remorse and experience an inner change of heart. Stenhouse says, "We see, time and again, that this is vital to rehabilitation."

LYING IN WAIT. Young offenders at hopelessly overcrowded South African juvenile facilities sometimes wait for months before appearing in court. If proposals to incorporate a radical New Zealand method of dealing with young criminals is enforced here, scenes like these may be a thing of the past.

While in SA some consider it a soft option

By PETA KROST

New Zealand's revolutionary way of dealing with juvenile justice has proved so successful in a South African pilot project that it is being replicated around South Africa and will be included in new legislation on juvenile justice.

The method is to have the victim, the offender and both their families meet with trained facilitators in a family group conference to thrash out the crime and its consequences, and to decide how the offender can right his wrong.

The local pilot project dealt with 39 cases of juvenile crimes in Pretoria, in which most of the charges against the offenders were withdrawn after they carried out the agreements reached by consensus in the family group conference.

"Although the idea emanates from New Zealand, it is in fact reclaiming a traditional African way of dealing with crime, where elders get together with all concerned to work out how best to deal with it," said advocate Anne Shelton, chairperson of the SA Law Commission's special project committee to draft the new child offenders law.

Nigel Branken, who co-ordinated the Family Group Conference Pilot Project, said "The family group conferences aim to make the young offender accountable for what he did to the victim and the community. With the victim present, the offender has the opportunity to see the impact and consequences of the crime on the victim and to accept responsibility for what he did."

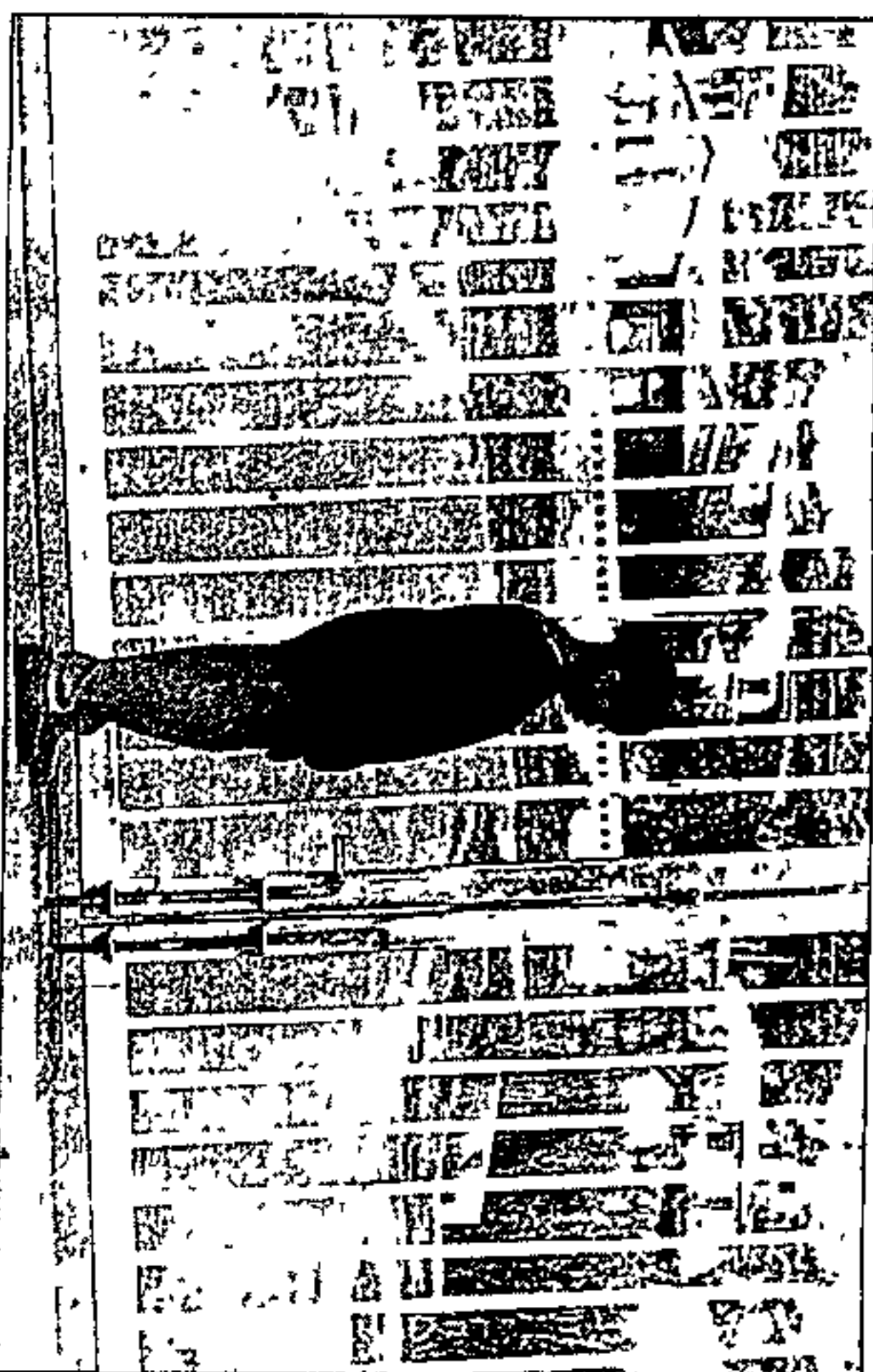
Branken explained that, to prevent the offender committing another crime, the group needed to agree to the offender making a verbal or written apology, somehow compensating the victim, and doing community service.

After the pilot project, Branken set up the Restorative Justice Centre last year to promote this way of dealing with juvenile offenders. He is replicating the project in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg with funds from the Interministerial Committee.



FAMILY VALUES. Ancient Maori customs go way beyond this face-pulling welcoming custom. They are now being used to rehabilitate young criminals.

University, co-led a team that tracked 188 people who attended family group conferences. They found that offenders who did



A WAY OUT. Children behind bars are a common sight in South Africa. An alternative could be to make parents and culprits accept responsibility.

A special arrest, reception and referral centre is to be set up in Johannesburg, where the young offender will be assessed by a probation officer to decide how to deal with him. He might be referred to a family group conference or go through the normal court process.

However, while very much in favour of the New Zealand programme, Shelton's project committee decided not to make it

the compulsory way of dealing with young offenders.

One of the criticisms of introducing family group conferences as the way to deal with juveniles in trouble was having to "set up new workers with new skills", she explained.

Instead it would be used as a "diversion option and a way of choosing an appropriate sentence."

But a number of the ideas from the New Zealand family group conferences will be utilised, like the offender offering restitution to the victim, whether it be symbolic or practical.

The draft legislation is currently open to feedback from the public and legal practitioners, and the committee will draw up the final report, with the bill, for the minister of welfare and population development by September.

Branken mentioned that he had come across criticism that the family group conferences were a "soft option" in dealing with crime, in a country where it was such a huge problem.

But national projects co-ordinator for the Interministerial Committee, Zeni Thumbadoo, said "While it might be easy to blame a white judge for a young black man becoming a criminal, it is much harder for him to face his granny and tell her he raped the neighbour."

During the pilot project, it was clear that the victims and their families also felt this was the most appropriate way of dealing with young offenders.

He cited the example of two 14-year-olds, John and Tom, who lived in the same area and had an argument at school which resulted in John attacking and stabbing Tom, puncturing his lung and just missing his heart.

Both their mothers came to the family group conference, and initially Tom's mother demanded R8 000 to cover her son's medical costs. But after John's mother showed sympathy for what the other mother had experienced, and John made a genuine attempt to apologise, Tom's mother changed her attitude.

John and his mother wrote a letter of apology and agreed that John would pay Tom R1 000, which he would earn by helping his mother to sell vegetables. Both boys agreed to go with the policeman attending the family group conference to see what prison and court were like.

They also agreed to meet every week to make anti-crime posters which they would place in strategic places in their area.

times who get evidence in a courtroom must state only the facts of the case. "They cannot express feeling of anger, hurt, fear or violation," says New Plymouth youth-justice co-ordinator Trish Stewart, "but such emotions are encouraged at a family conference and help to heal victims." An elderly Auckland woman whose bag was

snatched by a teenager was reluctant to attend her offender's conference because she was afraid of him. But when she saw how young the teenager looked among the adults at the conference, she gave full vent to her anger, and her fears disappeared.

This reconciliation process can be so effective that victims sometimes extend friendship to offenders. At the end of Stephen Johnson's conference, the go-kart centre manager said he would consider giving him a job after he had completed his reparation.

Unfortunately, as family group confer-

The apologues were not sincere. The kids knew they could break the law again and again without ever going to jail

ences are gaining wider recognition they are threatened by a lack of funding. According to a New Zealand Institute of Criminology study, the operational budget for the juvenile-justice system has been cut to one-third of the 1991 figure.

"The continued success of the system depends on a greater financial commitment from the government," Maxwell says. "When you consider how much money the scheme has saved taxpayers, it's madness not to give it more support."

The success of the experiment continues to spread. Several other countries are following New Zealand's lead. Some form of family group conferencing has been adopted in most Australian states. New South Wales now has nearly 300 part-time youth-justice conference conveners. Pilot studies using conferences have been run in various centres around South Africa.

Nigel Branken of the Pretoria Restorative Justice Centre says their project was so successful that some juvenile offenders, victims and police agree that this is a very effective method of crime intervention. Proposed changes to the current legislation, with conferences as one option, are being put before the minister of justice.

Meanwhile, thousands of New Zealanders continue to prove the system's worth. In Auckland, 16-year-old Wayne Cunningham attended a family group conference in 1996 after he was charged with theft, wilful damage and assault. His punishment included a six week anger management course, an evening curfew, community work and letters of apology to the victims of his crimes. He has not committed any offences since and has completed a mechanics course.

"I'm grateful," he says. "My conference showed me a decent future and a better way to live." - Reader's Digest, South Africa

Street children on the increase (298)

By Charity Bhengu

THE number of children begging on the streets to support themselves or their families is increasing in Gauteng. Children as young as four years old can be seen standing on corners every morning.

A parent attributed this phenomenon to the extreme levels of poverty and unemployment experienced by some black people in the country.

During an investigation, *Sowetan* found that most of the children come to the streets with their unemployed mothers or guardians, who stand guard some distance away.

On a corner in Rivonia Road in Sunninghill, Sandton, little Elizabeth Baloyi (4) carries a roughly written cardboard sign which declares: "I'm suffering with my mother - no food, no money and no home."

Her sister Siphuwe (13), who begins begging after school, stands on the other side of the street, also carrying a cardboard sign. Their mother watches from some distance away.

The unemployed mother, Ms Maria

Baloyi of the Diepsloot squatter camp, north of Johannesburg, said she has no choice but to ask her children to help support the family.

"I tried selling vegetables but business was too bad to support us and I can't find a job."

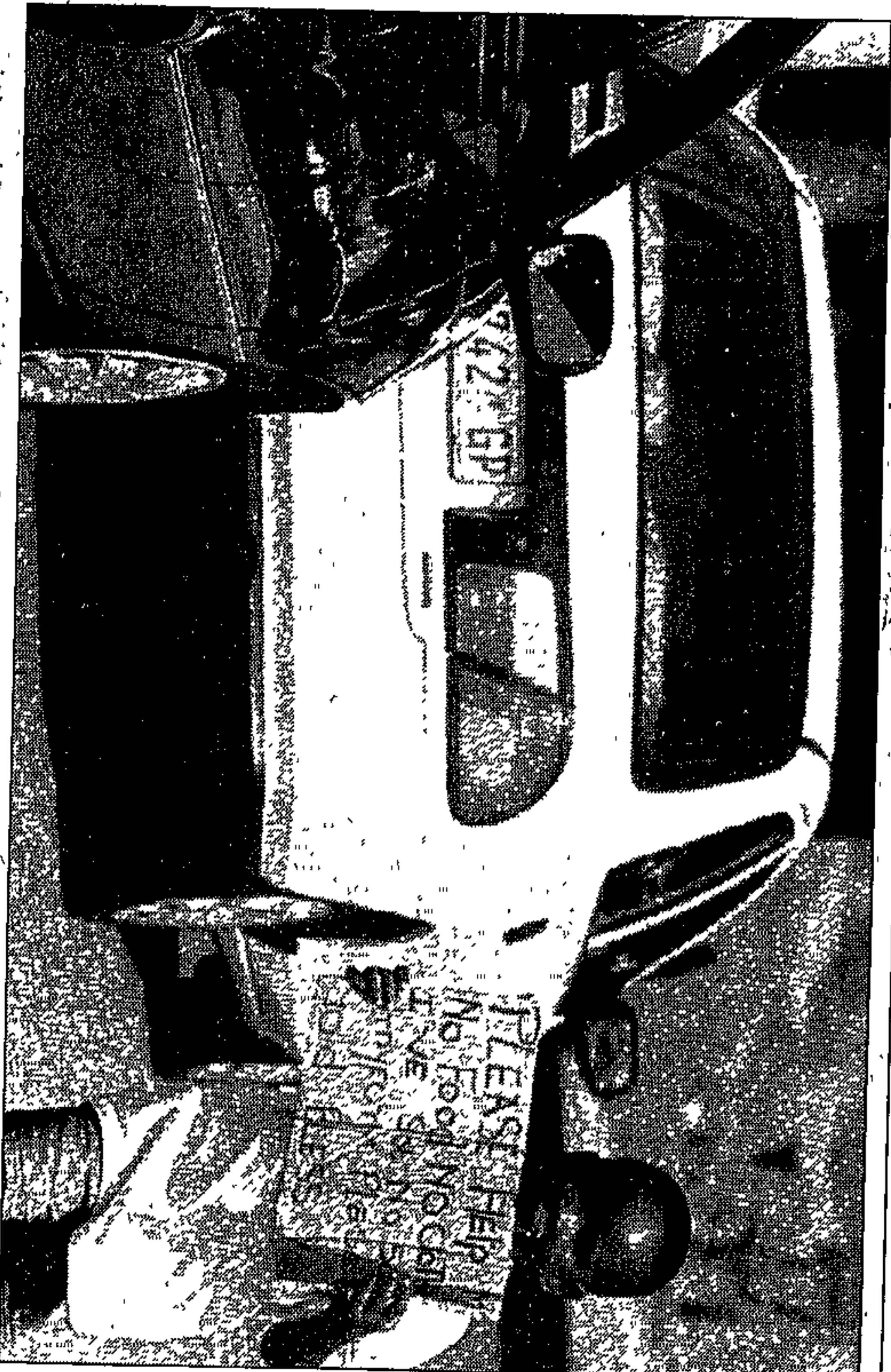
"When I started begging for money and food - the most humiliating experience of my life - motorists insulted me but they gave donations to my children."

However, what Baloyi does not know is that Gauteng's department of welfare has introduced a child support grant to support desperately poor children below the age of seven.

The grant - of R100 a month - would help Baloyi to support her four-year-old daughter. However, she would have to go to the welfare office and apply.

Baloyi can also benefit from the department's flagship programme for unemployed women with young children.

The programme aims at increasing the educational and training opportunities for unemployed women so that they can provide for basic needs of their families.



With the recession biting hard it is becoming a familiar sight to see children, often sent out by their parents, begging on street corners.



Happy at play ... children from Diepsloot Primary School threw their weight behind the Global Marchers Against Child Labour, an organisation against child labour.

Marchers in step over child labour

BY ANNA COX

(298)

Star 26/4/99

Representatives of Global Marchers Against Child Labour – an organisation dedicated to creating awareness about the scourge of child labour around the world – last week staged marches in several disadvantaged areas across Johannesburg in a bid to boost its campaign.

They have also presented a memorandum to Greater Johannesburg Northern Council mayor Danny Kekana calling for an end to child labour.

It is estimated that there are 250 million children worldwide who are forced into labour at a young age.

Thabisile Mnezane, who runs the Sithabile Child and Youth Centre in Dawn Park, Boksburg, said she got involved in the project after realising that child labour was rife in the Boksburg farming areas she had visited.

Mnezane, a retired school teacher gave up her house to accommodate abused children like Jerry Molefe and William Thanyane whom she rescued.

They were forced to start working on the farm where their parents are living from the age of eight. They are now permanent members, or

marchers, of the organisation.

"Children deserve no less than the fundamental rights we have promised (in our constitution)," Mnezane said. Mnezane has also rescued Maphefo Khoza (13) who was a child prostitute until a month ago. She started soliciting men together with her sisters after their mother's death last year. Khoza apparently refused to go to school because she was making a living out of prostitution.

Khoza's teacher, Nana Mdanda, had persuaded her to seek help at Sithabile Centre and she now lives with Mnezane.

"My teacher saved my life. I became a prostitute because my father couldn't look after us. Now I have joined the marchers and if money can be raised, I will join the marchers overseas," Khoza said.

Mdanda said it was the responsibility of teachers to look after children in their care.

"If we do not, what future will they have?" she asked.

The Global Marchers Against Child Labour last year travelled 80 000km between January to December and mobilised millions of people against the scourge of child slavery.

Untouchable kid criminals

Cops powerless to hold juveniles

GLYNIS UNDERHILL
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The number of juveniles arrested in the Western Cape is rising alarmingly, with many becoming habitual criminals and turning to violence.

Superintendent Niels Nielsen, who heads the provincial child and youth desk for the police, said many arrested children were simply released back on the streets and he believed they were "untouchables".

Frustrated police say that as a result of the leniency of the justice system on juveniles, older criminals are now using youngsters to commit crimes for them because the chances are good that juveniles will walk free from court.

About 1 300 juveniles, aged between seven and 17, have been arrested in the province each month in the past year, compared to an average of 1 000 a month in 1996.

Many are released with a warning to appear later in court, or are sent back home by the courts.

Magistrates were unable to send children to prison unless

they were arrested for serious crimes, in accordance with legislation, and the designated places of safety were usually full, said Superintendent Nielsen.

Most juvenile arrests are for minor crimes such as housebreaking, theft, shoplifting or fraud. But 21% of juveniles are now being arrested for violent crimes including murder, robbery or rape.

Police are frustrated at the criminal justice system, which they believe is failing the children and everyone else.

The juveniles are committing theft and housebreaking because there is a ready market for stolen goods, they say.

The 14-year-old arrested for the murder of photojournalist John Rubythorn last month had been released just days before the killing after being held on a housebreaking charge.

The Correctional Services Act provides that juveniles can be released and placed in the care of a close relative for minor

crimes, such as housebreaking or theft, but magistrates do have judicial discretion to keep a child in custody.

Hishaam Mohamed, head of the Department of Justice in the Western Cape, said a R10-million computer data system was being installed to allow justice officials to tap into police records. The system would allow officials to run checks on people appearing in court and improve vigilance in the case of juveniles, he said.

Superintendent Nielsen said poor socio-economic conditions were leading to a breakdown of the family unit. He had recently been in contact with an 11-year-old who had been arrested for rape in Cape Town. The youngest child arrested in the city had been an eight-year-old picked up for housebreaking, he said.

When the children were sent home, there was no support system to work with the families.

"We need more intervention and preventative measures in place for when a juvenile enters the system, so he or she can be placed back with the family."

Alan Jackson, director of Child Welfare in the Western Cape, said some of the places of safety were full of gangs and, in many cases, were not the answer to the problem.

More resources had to be given to programmes dealing with the rehabilitation of children. "If you catch it early, you can turn their lives around," he said.

Superintendent Nielsen said he had recently interviewed a 13-year-old sent to live on the streets by his mother.

The child begged on the streets and was arrested three times for housebreaking. On the first two occasions, there was no room at any place of safety in the Western Cape.

It was only after he was arrested for housebreaking a third time that he was sent to a place of safety.

"The system strives to protect these children, but due to a lack of supporting

Rubythorn killing: Boy was on wanted list

In spite of police asking that the 14-year-old street boy arrested for the murder of photojournalist John Rubythorn be detained, he had been released after appearing in court on a housebreaking charge two days before the fatal stabbing. The child was on the police list of wanted criminals at the time of the killing. See page 3

Gang member 'Lastig' Solomons goes free after bungled police investigation

Page 5

Untouchable kids run wild

ARG 3/5/99

From page 1

infrastructures, it is not always possible," said Superintendent Nielsen.

The Government has launched the Transformation of the Child and Youth Care System, a project designed to try to improve the system affecting juveniles in trouble with the law.

In spite of these efforts, the number of children awaiting trial in prisons in the Western Cape has doubled in the past year.

Unsentenced children were all scheduled to have been released from prisons on May 10 last year.

To page 3

FEATURE

Place of last resort for troubled teens

Star 5/5/99
(248)



Poetal futility ... having nothing to do and unable to go anywhere, one of the boys in the adolescent ward naps in a sunny spot on the floor. As a result of severe budget cuts, the hospital is unable to provide its patients with many sources of occupation or entertainment, a critical necessity in a closed ward housing both habitual offenders and 'naughty kids'.

Sterkfontein Hospital's adolescent ward is the last resort for desperate parents unable to cope with boys between the ages of 13 and 18 years.

The "closed" ward is presently home to 15 boys. Not all of them have a mental disorder. Most have a conduct problem.

"These children have been in and out of institutions and finally ended up here," says Hanli van Rooyen, clinical psychologist.

Although officially all patients at the hospital have to be certified in terms of the Mental Health Act, some of the boys are "naughty" or "problem" children who could not be certified.

"We've made special arrangements for these kids to be admitted," says Van Rooyen.

The hospital's aim is to restore the boys to their homes by working closely with their families.

Many of the boys have been sent to Sterkfontein by the courts

for observation in terms of the Criminal Procedures Act.

"We might find that the child has been arrested on several occasions for petty theft and the courts and social workers don't know what to do with them anymore," says clinical psychologist Frank Bergmann.

The ward operates with a multidisciplinary team consisting of three intern psychologists, a psychiatric registrar, a consultant psychologist, an occupational therapist, a senior nurse and a social worker.

"This team works together very closely, and medication is only given to the patient when deemed really necessary," says Bergmann.

Van Rooyen says the boys are gradually reintroduced into their community, earning two days' leave and, later, a month's leave.

"Sometimes we have no clue where they came from. The parents simply drop them off and we

need to do a lot of tracking to find their homes," Bergmann says.

The ward treats a broad spectrum of children, "from rich kids to glue-sniffing street children".

"Sometimes we manage to reunite the street children with their families, but in other cases the welfare department finds a shelter," Van Rooyen explains.

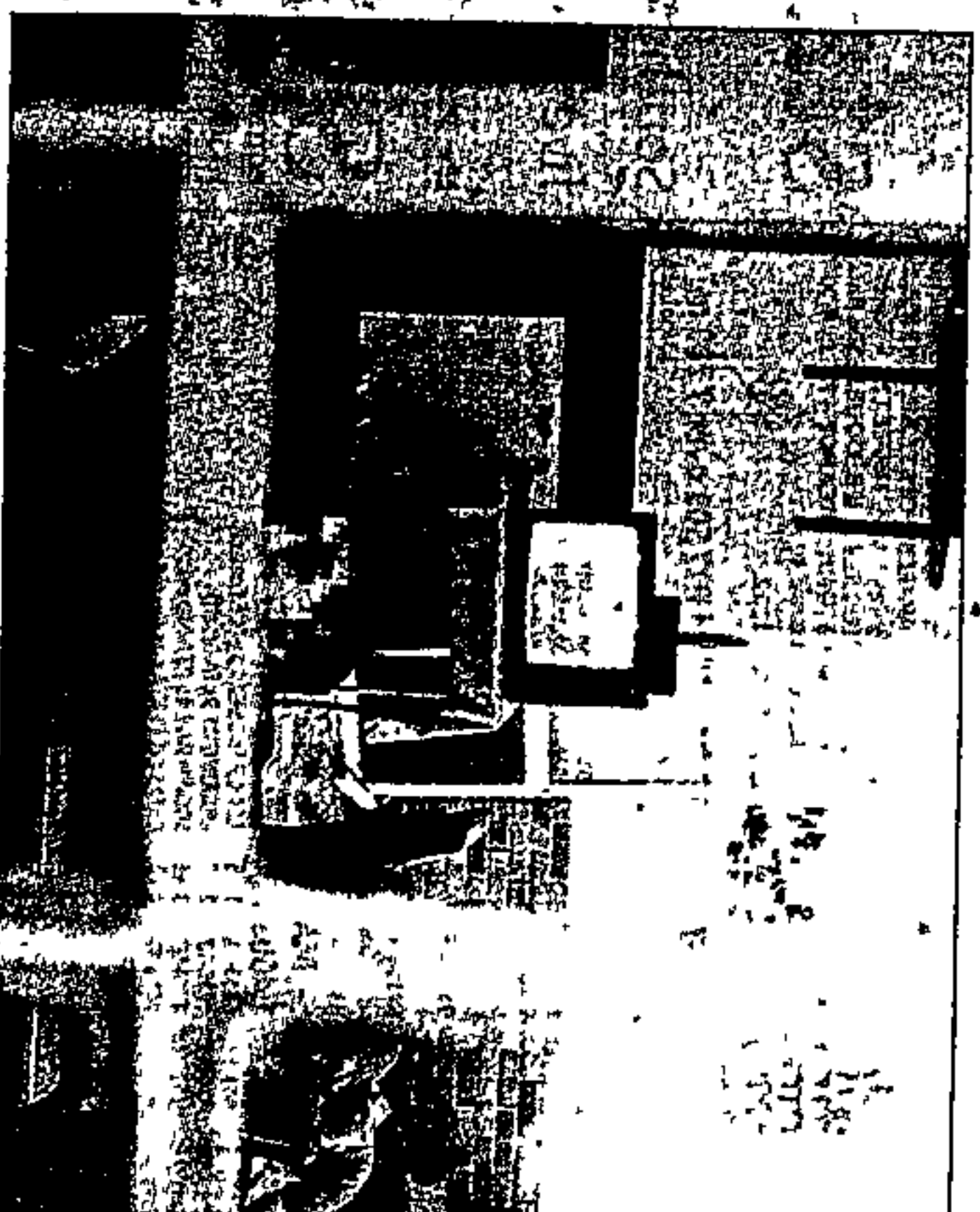
She points out that the ward is not a rehabilitation unit although substance abuse is treated as part of other psychiatric problems.

One of the ward's biggest problems is finding ways to channel the boys' energy constructively.

"They become irritable when they have nothing to do and break things," says Bergmann.

The ward is desperately looking for a retired teacher to volunteer on a regular basis.

Anyone willing to donate teenage novels, magazines, videos or CDs can contact Bergmann at (011) 956-6324, extension 270



Institutional irony ... One of the few sources of entertainment for the boys in the closed adolescent ward is television. Yet they often damage the TV set and the video cassette recorder beyond repair in frustration at having nothing to do and not being able to go outside, or in outbursts caused by their mental conditions. The boy on the far right is a picture of dejection.

Limited cover for people with terminal illnesses proposed

By CATHY POWERS

Regulations of the Medical Schemes Act, due to be released today, will provide limited cover for people living with HIV and Aids and other terminal illnesses.

According to health economist Alex van den Heever, the prescribed minimum benefits contained in the regulations will mean full cover for specific conditions. But people living with HIV and cancer, for instance, will receive cover

limited in terms of the efficacy of the treatment.

"When the treatment can restore health, the patient will be covered," said Van den Heever.

The regulations on the Medical Schemes Act, signed by Health Minister Nkosazana Zuma yesterday, mark the culmination of months of controversy and debate.

However, Dr Aslam Dasoo, chief executive of the Board of Healthcare Funders, said he did not expect any major surprises.

On a cursory examination of the regulations, Dasoo said the regulations reflected "pretty much what had been discussed" by the technical task team, consisting of the Government and industry players.

The regulations give effect to clauses in the act, due to come into effect in August, which establish how medical schemes will be regulated.

Dasoo said the three areas the regulations will govern are: ■ The prescribed minimum benefits which all medical

schemes will have to provide complete funding for.

■ Medical savings accounts and the level of contributions that can be transferred to these accounts.

■ Open enrolment. According to the act, anyone able to afford medical scheme premiums should be given access to the scheme. The only differentials in premiums placed on members are income and number of dependants.

One argument against this provision was that if a voluntary

medical schemes environment was opened up, people would not join until they were ill.

Van den Heever said there would be penalties for people who had opted out of joining a scheme until older age.

Dasoo said a change from a voluntary to a mandatory medical schemes environment would oblige all employed people to contribute to a scheme, along the lines of social health insurance.

Zuma has invited comment within the next three months.

Plea to tell communities of known paedophiles

By GILL GIFFORD
Crime Reporter

Child rights activists have reacted with consternation following the lengthy interview with a self-confessed paedophile which was broadcast on national television on Tuesday night.

A 30-minute piece, entitled "Confessions of a Sadistic Paedophile" and screened on SABC3's *Special Assignment* on Tuesday night, showed a large man, named only as John, describing in vivid detail how he picked up children and abused them in Pretoria.

Miranda Friedman of Women

Against Child Abuse (WACA) said that while she was not shocked by the documentary, she was glad it had been broadcast and hoped it would prompt strong reaction from people in power.

"About two years ago, police knew of 20 paedophiles in Gauteng alone. We feel that, even though these offenders have served their time, the community has a right to know who they are," she said.

She said WACA was lobbying for Megan's Law - a piece of US legislation requiring that a community be notified when a known paedophile moves into their area - to be introduced in South Africa.

"Megan's Law, which has been endorsed by (US President Bill) Clinton, was devised by the parents of a little girl who was murdered. It basically entails paedophiles being registered, and their location made known to people," said Friedman.

Friedman said it was unfortunate that a paedophile could confess his actions on television, while police were unable to arrest him. Superintendent Anneke Pienaar, national head of child protection, said that while actions related to paedophilia constituted a crime, claims to have hurt children did not.

(298) Star 6/5/99

Ericsson G SIM Card ar

When you get a new 24-month

The forgotten people

Pity them, hate them or fear them, you can't avoid being affected by the hundreds of children who live on the streets around Cape Town. As the election date approaches, Cape Metro focuses on a stark symptom of some of the city's greatest ills: child abuse, alcoholism, drug abuse, joblessness, poverty, neglect and homelessness. **JANET HEARD** challenges the people who want your vote to spell out what they would do about the problem

1999 ELECTION WATCH

100 sent back to their homes

MORE than 100 Cape Town streetchildren were reunited with their families during the first three months of this year in a joint effort co-ordinated by a welfare organisation.

In January, 38 children were reunited with their families, according to the provincial health and welfare department, which allocated R1-million towards Buyel Ekhaya, a pilot project co-ordinated by Streets, a Salt River-based non-governmental organisation.

Social workers came across 194 streetkids in one month. Of these, 24 were female, 20 of whom were under 18 and 154 were males under 18. Almost half — 96 — lived permanently on the streets with little or no family contact.

While Health and Welfare MEC Peter Marais was patting himself on the back for the project's success, community organisations and business-escorted caution.

Business Against Crime managing director Kohn Penberthy said it was a joint initiative between key players from local government, business and provincial government, which made up the Multi-Agency Delivery and Action Mechanism. "While we are grateful,

What they say
(298)
STC (M) 915 199

WHAT BUSINESS SAYS: "We want to see a plan. We want to see accountability. The problem is a universal one and needs to be addressed with a vengeance. The government must be accountable. It should be a public-sector initiative and business would be happy to collaborate. Social services, justice, the police and the Department of Education need to be involved."

"The problem always crops up on the agenda in Business Against Crime-related meetings. On Friday spent more than two hours talking about streetchildren in two meetings." — *Business Against Crime managing director John Penberthy*

WHAT COMMUNITY WORKERS SAY:

"The (provincial government) is not looking at the problem properly. How can you move children back to the place they ran away from? We need to look at the home situation, we need to look at the upliftment of the communities." — *Coleridge Daniels, co-ordinator of the 16 Plus Don Bosco development programme for street youth*

WHAT STREETCHILDREN SAY

"I want a house to live in and clothes to wear." — *Eddy, 13, who has been living on the street for five years*

"I don't even worry about a place to stay. I wish children on the street would be treated properly by the government and I wish police would do their job properly and not abuse us." — *Gavin, who has been on the street since he was seven*

"I would like to have a house." — *Reduxuan, 18, who has been on the street since he was 11*

"I would like to put on other clothes and to eat a good meal at night." — *Roger, 14, who has been living on the street for five months*

"I want to live in a house and to have things in the house like beds and cupboards." — *Charles, who can't remember how long he has lived on the street*

"I want a job or maybe to learn to be a doctor." — *Morne, 19, who has been on the street for nine years*

"I wish for anything to make my life better." — *Adile, 14, who has been on the streets since he was 11*



STREETWISE: Colin Msutu, 17, has lived on the streets in central Cape Town for eight years. Picture: KIM LUDBROOK



allocated R1-million towards Buyel Ekaya, a pilot project co-ordinated by Streets, a Salt River-based non-governmental organisation.

Social workers came across 194 streetkids in one month. Of these, 24 were female, 20 of whom were under 18 and 154 were males under 18.

Almost half — 96 — lived permanently on the streets with little or no family contact.

While Health and Welfare MEC Peter Marais was patting himself on the back for the project's success, community organisations and businesses urged caution.

Business Against Crime managing director Kohn Penberthy said it was a joint initiative between key players from local government, business and provincial government, which made up the Multi-Agency Delivery and Action Mechanism.

"While we are grateful, we are not satisfied. The problem has only stabilised in the city centre, but it is escalating in other metropolitan areas."

Coleridge Daniels, the co-ordinator of the 16 Plus Don Bosco development programme, criticised the policy of returning kids to their homes.

It is too early to claim success, he said. "How can you move them back to the place where they came from? ... They will simply run away from home again. They move to other areas to avoid being taken home and told to stay there."

Streets fieldworker Elias Luthuli said follow-ups were being conducted at children's homes and some were placed in to the homes of extended family members.

Elroy, 13, who has been living on the street for years

"I don't even worry about a place to stay. children on the street would be treated properly by government and I wish police would do their job properly and not abuse us." — Gavin, who has been on the street since he was seven

"I would like to have a house." — Reduan, 1, has been on the street since he was 11

"I would like to put on other clothes and to eat a meal at night." — Roger, 14, who has been living on the street for five months

"I want to live in a house and to have things like beds and cupboards." — Charles, who remembers how long he has lived on the street

"I want a job, or maybe to learn to be a doctor." — Mqinné, 19, who has been on the street for nine years

"I wish for anything to make my life better." — 14, who has been on the streets since he was 11

INTERNATIONAL

ILO convention set to ban child labour

BD 25/5/99 (298)
Global campaign to punish wrongdoers and heal their victims

GENEVA — The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is expected to adopt a global convention in June aimed at banning the worst forms of child labour, such as prostitution and slavery.

Some 50- to 60-million children between the ages of five and 11 are labouring in often inhumane and potentially life-threatening conditions, according to the ILO.

That is roughly 20% of the estimated 250-million children between five and 14 working in developing countries.

Asia has the biggest number of child labourers, with 61% of the total. However, Africa leads in percentage terms, with 41% of all youngsters between five and 14 at work, compared to 22% in Asia and 17% in Latin America, according to the organisation.

The proposed convention, which will be put to the organisation's annual conference to be held in Geneva from June 1 to 17, will apply to all children under the age of 18.

The draft calls for punishment against lawbreakers and measures to help children through rehabilitation and social reintegration.

After adoption, the convention would need to be ratified by individual member states. It would only come into force 12 months

after its ratification.

The existing global convention on child labour, ratified by 72 member countries, calls for the total abolition of work by youngsters under 18, a goal the ILO admits could take years.

The ILO has been fleshing out new standards for one year, targeting in particular forced labour, slavery, prostitution, trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom, pornography and various forms of dangerous work.

Brutal

Some of the most brutal kinds of work, such as the sex trade appear to be worsening, the ILO warned.

"Ending these exploitative practices is one of the most important issues our time," said ILO director general Juan Somavia.

"The capacity to eradicate the worst forms of child labour is a moral test facing all societies."

Globally, boys work more than girls, although taking into account domestic labour, the result could be the reverse, the ILO said.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children, one of the most "brutal" forms of child labour, appears to be worsening, the organisation said.

Child victims often suffer

extreme physical and emotion abuse, are exposed to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS and are often introduced to drugs, said the ILO.

"Younger and younger children are being sought for the sex trade in the belief that they are more likely to be 'AIDS-free', while sex tourism and pornography involving young girls and boys are flourishing, especially on the Internet," the organisation said.

The sale and trafficking of children across national borders by organised networks also appears to be growing.

Children are sold for prostitution and hazardous jobs in construction, small shops, factories and domestic service.

In many cases, youngsters in these situations are confined to the workplace and treated like slaves, the ILO said.

Because they are vulnerable physically, labouring children are more likely to suffer injuries and illnesses at work.

Some national surveys indicate that one in 10 children work 56 hours or more.

While mostly a poor country problem, child labour also crops up in developed nations such as the European Union and North America, the ILO said. — Sapa-AFP.

By Russel Molefe

THE Gauteng government has launched a multi-disciplinary child protection and treatment protocol to, among other things, minimise the trauma suffered by abused children.

The protocol is an interdepartmental initiative which includes the departments of education, welfare and population development and the South African Police Service.

It is a sequel to a mandate issued by the Gauteng Programme of Action for Children for the integration of the currently fragmented service into a coordinated and child-friendly system.

Gauteng launches child protection protocol

(298)

The case of seven-year-old Mamokgethi Malebane, who was killed by Dan Mabote, the man who raped her, before she was to testify against him in court - raised an outcry over the fragmented approach of the authorities in protecting abused children.

Mabote was subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment after this year. Hundreds of children are believed to be sexually or otherwise abused each year, with a minimal number of cases being reported to the police.

At a launch attended by First Lady Grace Machel on Monday, Gauteng MEC for welfare and population

child first and minimise the secondary abuse suffered once the victim enters the system.

- The aims of the protocol include:
- Identifying communities at risk, such as informal settlements, and implementing strategies to deal with factors that make the abuse of children more likely;
 - Ensuring that all reasonable efforts are made to safely maintain children in their own families once abuse or neglect has been identified;
 - Providing effective planning for children who have been removed from their families to attain family reunification; and
 - Minimising the risk of secondary abuse once the child has entered the child protection system.

Graça calls for preventative approach in child abuse battle

(298) Star 26/5/99

Teachers will be called on to report cases, says Metcalfe at Gauteng campaign launch

By Tefo Mothibeli

The way we treat our children will determine the health of our societies, first lady Graça Machel said at the launch of an anti-child abuse drive yesterday.

The new protocol document for the Management of Child Protection and Treatment Services, backed by the provincial government, aims to assist child protection and treatment service providers and reduce the trauma faced by the victims.

Among the programme's functions will be education and guidance on working relationships between victims and professional people dealing with abuse-related problems.



Graça Machel

Machel, who championed the cause of children's rights during her work with the UN, said a more preventative

approach was needed if the battle was to be won.

She said, while poverty and dispossession were generally cited as causes, communities needed to go much deeper and ask themselves why there was such a high level of abuse.

Machel said many women witnessed the abuse of their children by their husbands but did not act because they wanted to protect their families and marriages.

South Africans needed to develop interaction with international communities, as they would not only learn from them, but could share with them their own experiences.

Education MEC Mary Metcalfe said the programme would consolidate the work

already done in the fight against child abuse. She said the authorities would inform schools on their responsibilities in the protection of pupils.

"As an immediate step we are to tell teachers it is their responsibility to report suspected incidents of abuse to the child protection unit or the welfare department."

Gauteng premier Mathole Motshekga said the programme was a milestone in service to children.

"Through developing the protocol document, we will not only ensure the rendering of a more effective service to abused children and their families, but also prove that the Government and NGOs can work as a team."

Children come first

(298)

RECENTLY commentators have raised the issue of children's rights and the need to focus attention on the issues that affect children. This is a concern that is worthy of support, particularly due to the cases which have been reported on lately.

Next week, from May 31 to June 6, the Department of Welfare will be leading the observance of Child Protection Week, under the theme "Children's Rights are Human Rights".

It is opportune to point out a few concrete steps taken by the Government that have contributed to establishing a rights-based and developmental approach to the care and protection of children; our approach has been and will be that the interests of the child are paramount.

This "first call for children" approach is based on the international framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and on our own Constitution, which guarantees basic rights to all citizens — children included.

Earlier this year Parliament approved a new measure, which significantly tightens up the legal provisions against those people involved in the commercial sexual exploitation of children, commonly referred to as child prostitution.

This was done through an amendment to the Child Care Act. Before the adoption of this measure, those adults who lured children into prostitution and acted as pimps or allowed their premises to be used for this crime, could not be prosecuted. Now they can be charged and convicted.

In 1998 several other measures took effect. Legal representation for children in a children's court was made easier; shelters for street children have to be registered.

It became compulsory for incidents where a child has been injured or abused, or where there is a suspicion of abuse, to be reported.

Courts are being made more child-friendly with the introduction of practical arrangements to prevent the child from being seen by the accused in cases of sexual crimes against children. Training programmes for forensic social workers have also started.

The decision by Government that no child should be kept in prison was implemented. After the initial confusion, Government departments and the non-governmental sector have transformed the child and youth care system, including aspects of the juvenile justice system.

Latest figures show that:

- 2 600 children were diverted from the criminal justice system;
- 1 000 children were moved out of prison through developmental assessments;
- 250 children were diverted via family preservation;
- 50 children were prevented from moving

The rights of the very young and how to ensure their safety within society are central concerns of the Government, writes **Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi**



The major threat to the wellbeing of children and the biggest enemy of human rights is poverty, according to Welfare Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi.

PIC. PAUL VELASCO

deeper into the system;

- 1 600 children were returned to their families; and
- 500 children were moved out of places of safety.

To give further impetus to this process of transformation, a comprehensive review of all child care legislation is being undertaken so as to harmonise our legal framework with the Constitution and international documents such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The review will also harmonise all existing measures so that they are aligned with one another. The South African Law Commission is carrying out this review.

Major threat

Fundamentally, the major threat to the wellbeing of our children and the biggest enemy of human rights is poverty. One of the first steps of the democratically elected government was the introduction of concrete steps to ensure that the quality of life of children is improved.

This includes the primary schools nutrition programme, which is currently reaching 4,5 million children countrywide.

At the same time, this Government introduced free healthcare to pregnant mothers and children under the age of six. This is being complemented by concerted campaigns to eradicate diseases such as polio.

Government has also extended its social grant system by introducing a new grant for children under the age of seven in poor households. This child support grant is paid to the primary caregiver of the child.

To tackle the crime of child abuse, a number of initiatives are being implemented as part of the overall transformation of the child and youth care system.

These initiatives include the replication of various pilot projects to improve service delivery to young people, a developmental quality assurance programme to ensure that services are appropriate and effective, as well as the implementation of provincial protocols on child abuse and neglect.

These multidisciplinary protocols are guidelines for protecting children in communities.

Through each protocol, clarity is reached as to how the different service providers will work together, to ensure that abused children are given prompt and skilled help, effective protection and ongoing services to aid them in their recovery from abuse.

If we want to ensure a safe and secure future for our children — if indeed we are to put children first — then we must make child protection a part of everyday life.

Children's rights are human rights.

(The author is the Minister of Welfare and Population Development.)

24-hour care for abused children

(298)
KATHLEEN CHAPMAN
CT 28/5/99

SOUTH AFRICA's first one-step, 24-hour treatment centre for abused children opened yesterday at Somerset Hospital.

The Child Protection Centre, which serves the Cape Town magisterial district, will be staffed by social workers during the day and trained volunteers after hours. Children in need of immediate medical care will be referred to doctors; others will spend the night at the centre or the homes of volunteer families.

Organisers said a 24-hour centre was long overdue in the Western Cape.

"For once, we will be there whenever the child needs us," said Virginia Petersen, deputy director of Provincial Health and Social Services. "The fact that a child has been abused shows that we have already waited too long."

The centre will be one of the first to focus on co-operation between social workers, police, health workers and counsellors.

"The lack of co-operation between sectors had the effect that children were subjected to secondary abuse and trauma," said Alecia Brand, chairman of the committee that established the centre.

About 30 000 cases of child abuse are reported in South Africa each year. Outrage over this staggering statistic was translated into action when three years ago, when the committee began plans for the centre.

Although the government will fund the centre's daily operation, the committee began with no budget. The Union of Jewish Women furnished the centre with stuffed animals, couches, books, toys and a television, and Telkom provided the phone line.

The centre's opening ceremony included a dance performance by children of the Mbekweni Mosaic Youth Group, many of whom are victims of rape, incest, assault and neglect. Petersen said the centre would help to prevent such children from falling through the cracks. The centre's hotline number is (021) 425-5245.

'Sex with a child illegal'

By Ido Lekota

SEX with a child is crime and it won't cure Aids. This was one of the strong messages sent to the public during the launch of National Child Protection week at Gosforth Park Turf Club in Gauteng yesterday.

Speaking at the launch, Welfare Minister Geraldine Moleketi told 500 children and their guardians that "too many times parents did not listen and watch out for children who were crying out for help".

"The children crying out are those who are abused by their parents, aunts, neighbours, and uncles who come and live with their mothers," she told her attentive audience.

The National Child Protection Week was aimed at ensuring that the public listened to the voices of children who were crying out for help, said Moleketi.

She also revealed that as part of the

campaign, the Department of Welfare, together with Nedcor, would be using 75 taxis in Mpumalanga, Gauteng, and Northern Province to support the campaign against child abuse.

It will be on these taxis that the message — "Sex with a child is a crime and won't cure aids" — will be emblazoned.

Some of the children who attended the ceremony were either from shelter for abused children or from institutions for children with handicaps.

Be involved

To drive her point home Moleketi used the case of a two-year-old Pretoria child who was now paralysed after continuous abuse allegedly by his mother's lover.

She also called on members of the public to "stop sitting on the fence shouting about child abuse and get involved".

"It is obvious that when a two-year-old child was beaten he will scream. Why did the neighbours keep quiet when they

heard the screams?"

The children were also presented with a massive get-well card where they were encouraged to write messages to the two-year-old abuse victim.

Yesterday's launch was sponsored by Phumelela Gaming and Leisure Ltd, the company that operates horse racing in Gauteng.

It has committed itself to raising R1 million for the Department of Welfare.

Recent statistics show that child rape remains the most frequent incident of abuse against children in South Africa.

The statistics reveal that reported incidents of child rape have increased from 7 559 in 1994 to 15 753 in 1998.

Crimes against children, including rape, common and indecent assault, and abduction have increased by 63 percent from 1994 to 1998.

However, as Moleketi indicated yesterday, the recorded increase could be due to the fact that people are now coming

forward to report crimes of abuse after the new government put structures in place that gave people the confidence to report such incidents.

Moleketi revealed that various provinces would be launching today their national protection week programme throughout the country. Gauteng will have its major launch at Soshanguve, north of Pretoria.

Protocols

The national committee on child abuse and neglect will also launch the inter-sectoral child protection protocols in all provinces this week.

The protocols are aimed at ensuring that police officers, social workers, health care workers, educators, justice officials and representatives involved in anti-child abuse programmes "give prompt and skilled help, effective protection, and ongoing services to and the victims in their recovery from abuse".

Sowetan 31/5/99

(298)

CITY A TOP DESTINATION

Law proposed to curb child-sex tour agents

27/9/99
(298)

CAPE TOWN is seen as a top destination by child-sex tourists. Legislation proposed by the South African Law Commission yesterday is intended to change that. Political Correspondent **ANDRÉ KOOPMAN** reports.

TO clamp down on the growing scourge of child sex tourism and child prostitution a new sexual offences law should be directed at shutting down travel agents who arrange such tours.

The law should also provide for the prosecution of South Africans involved in arranging such tours to other countries.

A recent study by the group End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism, which was founded to combat child-sex tours to South-East Asia, found that Cape Town was becoming the sex capital of Africa.

The group found that children, particularly girls, from poor neighbouring countries are lured here to work as prostitutes or perform in pornographic films.

There have been numerous reports recently claiming that the city is one of the favoured destinations of people who prey on children.

In a discussion document released by the South African Law Commission at Parliament yester-

day, the commission recommended that Parliament enact legislation to combat "child sex tourism and others forms of commercial sexual exploitation".

The Law Commission proposed withdrawing the operating licences "of any travel agent or bureau found to have organised or planned organised sex tours within the borders of South Africa or abroad", and the deportation after having served his/her sentence of all foreigners who commit sexual offences in South Africa.

It also proposes withdrawing the passport of any South African citizen convicted of a sexual offence while abroad.

It is also intended to criminalise child brothels and the trafficking in or transporting of children, whether within the country or abroad, for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation.

It also envisages the total prohibition of child pornography.

In other far-reaching provisions it was proposed that a child molestation law be enacted to

prohibit sexual acts with people under 16.

Consent by a child under 16 would not be a defence to a charge under this provision.

To make it easier to prosecute child molesters, the Law Commission proposes the creation of a new and separate offence to deal with the "persistent sexual abuse of a child".

Since most cases of intra-familial sexual abuse take place repeatedly and over long periods of time, child victims often have difficulty recalling precise details of the time and place of the abuse.

"As a consequence state prosecutors sometimes accept a guilty plea to a single incident of sexual abuse well knowing that the incident was not an isolated one."

It was for this reason that the persistent sexual abuse of a child offence was proposed.

To provide better protection for children the Law Commission proposed that sex with children under 12 should be treated as rape.

The presumption that girls under the age of 12 are incapable of consenting to sexual intercourse should be extended to boys under 12.

Relief for 3 m needy children

By ELIAS MALULEKE

THE welfare department's child maintenance grant is geared to reach more than three million destitute children by the year 2003.

The Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS) said in a report released this week that the support grant had already been made available to 150 000 children.

The relaxation of the child support requirements, which were gazetted in June, has encouraged more people to seek relief.

The welfare department grant is R100 a month per child, which is paid to destitute parents or the child's care-giver.

The GCIS said, however, the money can be paid to a mother, father, grandparent or anyone else who looks after the child on a day-to-day basis.

To qualify for the child support

grant, applicants need:

- ☐ Barcoded IDs;
- ☐ The child's ID or a 13-digit birth certificate with the child's ID number.

No application will be considered if not accompanied by the child's ID or barcoded birth certificate with the 13-digit number.

People who are employed but give care to a child must also reveal this when submitting the child's claim, and also provide proof of income.

Married people seeking child relief must produce proof of their spouse's income.

Foster parents also have to show proof with their applications that they are the legal guardians of the child.

This also goes for orphaned children being looked after by relatives or other people.

Proof can either be an official document from the workplace, a certificate or a sworn statement.

CHILDREN, WOMEN 'HUMILIATED'

Zuma lashes out at sexist justice system

CT 29/9/99 (252)(298)
A CHILD is sexually molested every 25 minutes in SA, according to shocking statistics released yesterday, with the Western Cape having the third-highest incidence of sex crimes against children. **ERIC NTABAZALILA** and **ROBERT BRAND** report.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT Jacob Zuma launched a stinging attack on the criminal justice system yesterday, saying that women and children who became victims of crime were routinely "humiliated" by officials who showed little concern for their plight.

His attack came as the government released shocking new statistics in Parliament showing that sexual crimes against children have increased sharply this year.

A sexual crime is perpetrated against a child roughly every 25 minutes somewhere in South Africa, according to figures released by Safety and Security Minister Steve Tshwete, in a written answer to a question by DP MP Manuel da Camara.

Police investigated 22 917 sexual crimes against children in the 12 months up to July 31, Tshwete said.

This was 2 500 more cases than in the previous 12 months — or an increase of 12%.

By far the majority of these cases — 17 503 — involved rape, followed by 3 875 cases of indecent assault. The rest involved other sexual offences such as sodomy, incest or indecent assault.

Most sexual crimes against children were perpetrated in KwaZulu-Natal, where 4 302 cases were reported last year, Tshwete said in answer to a question by ACDP MP Rhoda Southgate.

Next on the list was Gauteng with 4 192 cases, followed by the Western Cape (2 666), Eastern Cape (2 638), North West (1 727), Northern Province (1 350), Free State (1 314), Mpumalanga (1 217) and Northern Cape (475).

Speaking at a conference on gender violence in Cape Town,



CRITICAL: Deputy President Jacob Zuma slammed officials.

Zuma called for stiffer minimum sentences for people accused of crimes against women or children. He also said these accused should be automatically denied bail.

The Deputy President called on men to become "part of the solution", saying: "It is now time that men rose in unison to isolate those within their communities who still regard women as objects."

He also lashed out at the justice system, saying women and children who became victims of crime were often humiliated by unsympathetic state officials.

"Women who have suffered at the hands of their husbands, male friends and, very often, total strangers, have to suffer further humiliation at the hands of members of our justice system."

"These are people who have little or no interest in understanding and ensuring that the humiliation already suffered is kept to an absolute minimum."

He said dealing with cases of abused women and children requires a fundamentally different approach to those of common criminals.

"We need to revisit the mini-



'MEN MUST JOIN FIGHT': Cape Town mayor Nomaindia Mfeketo.

imum sentences meted out to perpetrators of crimes against women and children to ensure that they are denied bail automatically, are given the toughest sentences possible and to create sentences for the more violent forms of abuse," he said.

Mandisa Monakali, executive director of Ilitha Labantu, an organisation aimed at fighting violence against women and children, said men have the power and ability to stop abuse against women and children and therefore should be part of the solution against abuse.

"We have been addressing women and gender equality and other issues. But now we have felt that there was a need for us to invite men to find out what the solution is to this scourge that has plagued our communities," Monakali said.

Cape Town mayor Nomaindia Mfeketo, who opened the conference, said that for many years victims of domestic violence have been left alone to find solutions.

"Now we are embarking on a new focus where we form alliances with men to fight the abuse of women and children together," she said.

Sharp rise in child abuse cases

Sowetan 29/9/99

By Waghied Misbach
Political Correspondent

ATTACKS on children are on the increase, with police receiving more reports of kids being assaulted and raped this year than in the past.

Figures released by Safety and Security Minister Steve Tshwete, in Parliament, show an increase in child molestation and sexual abuse cases reported from 36 313 to 40 522.

Child rape tops the list of reported cases - from 14 917 last year to 17 503 cases this year.

Reports of grievous bodily harm have increased by 500 from last year. There was also an increase in attempted murder reports to 364 cases from last year's 287 cases reported.

Tshwete said that he did not know why children were being targeted, but assumed that this was happening because children are considered "soft targets"; that they have a sense of trust, especially for adults; the lack of parental supervision and the fact that children not educated properly in personal safety.

Crime against women and children were one of the five policing priorities for 1999-2000.

Tshwete said child protection units, adopt-a-cop programmes and Captain Crime Stop initiatives were among those the Government had started to prevent crimes against children.

Crime Stop had also started a Missing Children's Centre where parents provide all the necessary information (photographs, family information and favourite places the child likes to visit etc) to assist the police in their investigations.

Tshwete also revealed that KwaZulu-Natal had the most reported cases of child molestation and rape. Last year, 4 302 cases were reported, 4 192 in Gauteng and 2 638 in the Eastern Cape.

Doing battle against child labour

(298) BD 30/9/99

Notwithstanding government's intentions, such toil may be widespread, writes Simphiwe Xako

MORE than 250-million children worldwide toil every day — and thousands of them are in SA. One citizen is doing something about child labour at home.

For Thabizile Msezane, the saying that when one door closes it opens an opportunity to another means something.

After quitting her job as a teacher due to health problems, she converted her Dawn Park home into a successful childcare centre.

This started when a six-year-old boy working for a local fruit and vegetable shop asked her to take him to school. Before she could make a decision she was surrounded by a large group of children who also wanted to go to school.

It was then that Msezane visited a local farm and discovered eight-year-olds and 10-year-olds carrying babies on their backs.

Her shock led her to visit the children's parents on the surrounding farms to get a better picture of what was happening. Some of them vowed to scratch around for money they could use to make their children's dreams a reality.

As a result, the Sithabile (we are happy) Child and Youth Care Centre came into being.

"My Lord, how could I say no?" says Msezane.

She did not initially plan to run the centre but had, rather, thought of an income-generating facility to assist her family.

There are now more than 45 children at the centre.

Msezane works closely with the Global March Against Child Labour, which has its international secretariat in New Delhi, India. She recently attended an International Labour Organisation (ILO) conference in Geneva at which the Convention on the Total Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour was adopted.

Msezane has also attended conferences and forums in Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia and the US.

Her centre has three dormitories, a storeroom, three computers, a fax machine, a television and telephone.



Thabizile Msezane, who runs the Sithabile Child and Youth Care Centre in Johannesburg's Dawn Park, shares a light moment with Precious and Portia, two of the children receiving care at the centre. Picture: TREVOR SAMSON

When it opened, the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund donated beds and blankets.

Sithabile operated initially as a daycare centre. However, after abuse of the children did not stop, they had to be taken in permanently.

Hye Jung Yoon is one of four South Korean volunteers who helps the children with maths, art, computer lessons and sport. She looked over Sithabile's website before deciding to visit the centre in Dawn Park. She says South Korea has a very low rate of child labour and attributes this to the country's free education system and government intervention.

Msezane says the centre is expecting another volunteer from the US. Sithabile is also involved in an exchange programme: one student in India is coming to SA while a local volunteer is packing her bags for the India, where she will be doing communications research.

Most of the children at the centre go to special and remedial schools as they have to undergo bridging courses. Two boys obtained outstanding results and have passed grade nine with flying colours.

Msezane appreciates the fact that child labour receives considerable attention abroad and feels that in SA more emphasis is placed on sexual harassment. "If child labour can get the same attention as sex abuse we can get somewhere in this country."

Msezane says child labour converts children into "foreigners or outcasts in their own country". She is grateful, though, that government ratified the Convention on the Total Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

The main problems facing SA and other countries include child prostitution, domestic labour, child slavery, the use of children in debt bondage and

sexual abuse. The centre is not without its own challenges and problems. There is not constant funding and Msezane has to dig deep into her own pockets to make sure the children get a hot meal and transport to school.

Another problem is that parents come to the centre and pretend to be taking the children home for a vacation. They force them back to their places of employment to get extra income. One 14-year-old girl says her father forced her into prostitution after her mother died.

Some local companies have provided sponsorship in the form of cooking gas, computers and meals.

Msezane hopes that one day more people will know about Sithabile and provide emotional, material and other forms of support.

A 1995 household survey revealed that there were more than 400 000 SA children toiling

in farms, township coal and scrapyards, houses, cafes and a variety of other sectors. Msezane feels that the number may have multiplied by five over the past four years.

Labour department spokesman Phenyio Nonqane says a clause in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act forbids the use of children under 15 as labour.

"We have to take care of children as they are the world's future leaders. The bill of rights and the constitution protect children and it is against the law to employ them," Nonqane says.

Government has ratified a number of ILO conventions to show that it is determined to uphold the rights of all South Africans — especially children.

"There are inspectors and other officials who are employed to ensure that the law is applied to its fullest and that everybody complies."

Cops take time out for kids

HEALTH WRITER

(298)

Today police will reaffirm their commitment to the protection of children in South Africa where, last year, 37 352 cases of rape, sodomy, assault and attempted murder of children were reported.

National police commissioner George Fivaz said the police had dedicated today to child protection, with the theme "We Will Listen", as part

of activities to mark Child Protection Week which ends on Sunday.

Child protection units and Captain Crime Stop will visit nursery schools and primary schools throughout the country "to educate our children without causing unnecessary fear or anguish".

South Africa's main centres have a combined 26 child protection units, 14 family violence, child protection and sexual offences units, and four indecent crime units.

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ARG 4/6/99

Punish child abusers - HRC

(298) Sowetan 4/6/99
By Charity Bhengu

GOVERNMENT needs to take bolder action to ensure that child abusers do not get away with their hideous acts, the South African Human Rights Commission said yesterday.

The call marks the Child Protection Week campaign against child abuse by the departments of Welfare, Health, Justice, the police and non-governmental organisations.

"The perpetrators get away because many children are fearful of exposing them," said HRC deputy chairwoman Ms Shirley Mabusela. "Those who dare to expose them need long-term counselling, which is not accessible to all children, and there is no assurance that justice will be done."

South Africa, however, has taken important steps to improve children's lives in the first five years of democracy, she added.

"The government's commitment to children has resulted in a number of gains but has also exposed the horrendous effect of past inequalities on children and their families," she said.

Welfare department spokesman Mr Kgati Sathekge said its nine provincial departments have begun implementing a "child-centred approach" to child abuse "in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and South Africa's Constitution."

Health Department spokeswoman Ms Lulu Sebake said the introduction of integrated illness management was one of the department's commitments to improving children's health.

"The strategy has been designed to empower primary health care practitioners in managing childhood illnesses and also addresses diseases such as acute chest infections, diarrhoea, fever, malnutrition and HIV-Aids," Sebake said.

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Finally, justice for abused children

Special courts have been set up to protect children in sexual abuse cases. The move is long overdue, especially since the system has failed women and children for a long time, writes **Paul Setsetse**

THE purpose of this year's Child Protection Week, which runs until Sunday, is to focus on the protection of children from all forms of exploitation. Various Government departments took responsibility for the promotion of specific sub-themes. The Department of Justice was allocated the sub-theme "Protect me".

To deal effectively with the extent and severity of child abuse and neglect in South Africa, a proper child protection system needs to be set up.

To this end, the department has indeed responded to the special legal needs of the most vulnerable group in society, our children and young people.

It has embarked on a number of programmes focusing in particular on crimes committed against children. This issue is also being addressed in our *Vision 2000* document - a strategic plan for the future.

Measures regarding family violence and violence against women and children have already been taken and implemented by the department.

To afford young victims of crime, and particularly of sexual offences, the opportunity to place their evidence before the court in a just and credible way the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1991) was enacted.

This provides for special treatment of witnesses under the age of 18.

Section 170(a), which was also inserted in the Criminal Procedure Act, provides that when criminal proceedings are pending before any court and it appears that a witness under 18 will be exposed to undue mental stress or suffering if he/she testifies at such proceedings, the court may appoint any competent person as an intermediary to enable such a witness to give his/her evidence through the intermediary.

Equipment to give evidence through an intermediary system has already been installed in 115 courts. Four "mobile units" are also available.

This allows children to give evidence via electronic equipment such as closed circuit television in a room

adjacent to the courtroom, without coming into direct contact with the accused, the legal representative or the public prosecutor.

As a result of the cost of such equipment, one-way mirrors are now being installed in new courtrooms to allow young witnesses to give evidence in criminal cases without interference.

In addition, the department took further initiatives to deal with the adjudication of sexual offences. A special court has, for example, been set up at the Wynberg Magistrate's Office.

The prime objectives are the sympathetic treatment of victims of sexual offences through coordinated intervention between the various services that deal with victims of sexual abuse, as well as the swift and effective adjudication of cases.

Due to the success of the multidisciplinary concept in the special sexual offences court in Wynberg, a special court for the prosecution of child abuse

The legal system can only be effective if such cases are exposed

cases was also established in Cape Town. The creation of additional special courts is presently being considered.

A specific group of women advocates has been attached to the office of the director of prosecutions in Kimberley to deal specifically with cases where children are victims of crime.

These cases are also being handled by skilled personnel in many offices of the directors of prosecutions, with specific instructions regarding the prosecution of cases of child abuse.

Specialised training of public prosecutors and magistrates is also presented at seminars or during courses related to dealing with children and women victims at the Justice College (the department's training institute).

This training includes specific attention to consulting with and preparing children as witnesses, attention to dealing with children during the trial and protecting these witnesses against unfair questioning or behaviour during the hearing; continuous contact between the specialist prosecutors and lecturers at the college to keep them up-to-date with developments; and lecturers focusing on crimes-offences where children or women are the victims.

The response of South Africa's legal system to family violence has increased dramatically over the past few years. Departmental initiatives to combat domestic violence include the Prevention of Family Violence Act (1993).

It provides for a speedy inexpensive procedure to obtain an interdict without legal representation.

Although several strategies have been developed to respond to family violence, it is clear that a multidisciplinary response is needed to counter family violence as a social problem. This includes changing the attitudes and values that lead to violence.

The legal system can only help provide a solution to this universal problem once it has been brought out in the open - only then can the legal system apply measures to prevent, punish and rectify abuses of this kind.

The South African Law Commission is also investigating several important aspects such as legislation pertaining to witness protection and victim protection measures, the simplification of the criminal procedure, and addressing aspects such as delays in the completion of criminal trials.

A witness protection programme is in place, under which witnesses in criminal cases can be protected under the Criminal Procedure Act (162) people are being protected in places of safety countrywide.

Sentencing is another area under review by the Law Commission. The project committee is looking at several aspects



Pupils from Nonto Primary School march to Moroka police station demanding an end to ongoing child abuse in South Africa.

PIC. CLEMENT LEKANYANE

of the Bill of Rights to criminal law, procedure and sentencing.

South African criminal law has over the years neglected the plight of victims of crime. Providing compensation is one important mechanism to assist victims.

The department is also part of a National Victim Empowerment Programme that will address the rights of child victims of crime.

The issue of child abuse and neglect is very serious and requires serious consideration by all stakeholders. It remains a priority for the department.

(The author is a spokesman for Minister of Justice Dullah Omar)

See Pages 17 to 19.

● An evaluation of existing forms of punishment and new possibilities.

● Alternative sentences and forms of punishment for young offenders

● The communities' participation and individual interests in sentencing.

● Pre-sentencing procedure with special reference to young offenders.

● Training of presiding officers.

● The present effectiveness and future desirability of shortening and extending detention by the executive.

● Preventative measures to combat crime and

● Decriminalisation of petty offences and new forms of sentencing

The Law Commission has also been asked to give urgent attention to problems arising from the application

The fund will still sk

We will boldly promote a culture of excellence

Chief executive officer of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund **ACHMAT DANGOR** discusses the future of the fund after President Mandela retires

"What happens to the children's fund after President Nelson Mandela retires?"

This is a question being repeatedly asked, not only by the media, but also by donors, beneficiaries and sister development organisations.

It seems as if the world has transferred its anxiety about the "post-Mandela" era from the country to the other entity inextricably identified with Mandela, the children's fund that he founded in 1994.

The question, however, reveals a deep misunderstanding of what the fund is and what it does, and also of Mr Mandela's motives in establishing it.

In some cases, it is perhaps a churlish death wish. To assume that the fund will fade away once its founder retires almost assumes that he created it as a transient adjunct to his political life.

Nelson Mandela conceived the children's fund as something that had to continue responding to the needs and aspirations of children well beyond his lifetime. To think otherwise is to accuse him of a profound vanity.

So, the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund intends being active into perpetuity, and is gearing itself up to do so.

Make no mistake; he will be sorely missed when he does "retire" completely from all his active pursuits, including his many and varied philanthropic efforts. The children's fund is but one of these.

For us, he has been an inspirational visionary, setting the tone from the very beginning by saying that our purpose for existing was to respond to the needs of children and youth, and not to indulge in the kind of navel gazing that often paralyses development organisations.

He was also an amazing fundraiser. This was not really done through any conscious solicitation



For the love of children: President Mandela and his wife Graça Machel at the launch of the Canadian Friends of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund.

of donations, but through example. His original generosity in committing one-third of his presidential salary for five years struck a chord within people from all walks of life, all over the world.

The greatest impact though, was on "high net worth" individuals, corporations, governments and

foundations. By the end of March 1999 the fund had 73 "President's Club" members, who matched his initial commitment for a five-year period.

This ranged from R150 000 annually in South Africa, to \$50 000 (R300 000) in the United States and £30 000 (R300 000) in Britain.

There have also been extraordinary donations of \$1-million from individuals such as Denzil Washington, Teddy Forstman, George Soros and Bill Gates.

The single biggest donation was \$4-million (R24-million) from a member of a Middle Eastern royal family, who wished to remain anonymous.

US ISSUES

Skip along merrily

(298)
 lence among children and the youth
 ARG 7/6/99



live Nelson Mandela Children's Fund in Toronto last September

REUTERS

been extraordinary \$1-million from Denzil Washington and George Soros

donation was from a member of the royal family, anonymous.

But the children's fund is not only about the amount of money it has raised.

At the end of the financial year March 31 1999, we had distributed R36-million to over 700 projects. It is estimated that we have touched the lives of over 500 000 children.

But these cold statistics do not

tell the whole story.

The children's fund has paid for the riskiest projects in a sector fraught both with political and social difficulties.

For example, its approach to "children on the street" has challenged the notion that institutional sheltering was a noble end in itself.

Our view was (and is) that the first priority was to reunite homeless kids with their families, before they became "street" kids.

This antagonised many classical shelter managers who often saw street children as a permanent phenomenon and unconsciously perhaps had turned a vocation into a business.

On the other hand, tourist-conscious traders in Cape Town saw "street kids" as a pestilence that had to be removed from sight.

Some even suggested that the children's fund pay to have them transported and "housed" on Robben Island.

What is do-able in development and moral terms lies in between. The children's fund has resolutely struck a midway course.

There are many other examples of the innovative things that we have done.

The problem perhaps lies in the fact that the Mandela aura obscured much of this. We became known more for who we were than for what we did.

As we go into the future, this will be reversed, we will emphasise the quality of our work and, as a direct consequence, will constantly update and improve our programmes, adjust their focus and methodology to the country's changing needs.

One of the key innovations will be to introduce a programme that boldly promotes a culture of excellence even among children and youth from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

Fostering an elite in the name of leadership development? So be it, if that is what it takes to wrench disadvantaged communities from their cycles of poverty and semi-poverty.

And we do subscribe to Thabo Mbeki's notion of an African Renaissance.

Opportunism? No, just the recognition that material and moral regeneration go hand in hand. Where better to begin than among children?

The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund will be around – as an independent civil society organisation – long after its founder has retired and, indeed, long after his lifetime. He would not want it otherwise.

411 KIDNAPPED IN W CAPE

'Protect us' cry the children

SHOCKING STATISTICS of child abuse marked Child Protection Week. Awareness campaigns, however, are succeeding. **FATIMA SCHROEDER** reports.

THE Homestead — a project for street children — will be holding a demonstration outside the Cape Town Magistrate's Court to protest against indecent sexual acts which have allegedly been taking place between a highly respected accountant and several street children.

The 61-year-old accountant, who cannot be named since he has not yet been asked to plead, was arrested a month ago and later released on R3 000 bail. He is appearing in court later today.

Last week marked Child Protection Week and statistics of crimes against children nationally, especially in the Western Cape, remain high.

National police statistics reveal that crimes against children for last year is 3,9% higher than the previous year.

According to Minister of Welfare and Population Development

Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, the change in the statistics should be seen as a success.

"I know that every case of child abuse is one too many, but the fact that these cases are being reported is alone a success. There may well be cases which are unreported, because in most cases the perpetrator is known to the child," Fraser-Moleketi said. She explained that Child Protection Week had five sub-seams. "Respect me", "protect me", "care for me", "educate me" and "listen to me".

Government departments planned activities for each day, Fraser-Moleketi said. "The week is not only an opportunity to create awareness for the protection and care of our children, but also a week to celebrate the rights of children."

Police statistics further revealed that 411 Western Cape children were kidnapped and 394 abducted

last year

Family members and friends of the 75 missing children in the city this year held an inter-faith prayer service at St George's Cathedral this weekend.

The service commenced on Saturday after the church bells were sounded and thousands of people around the city showed support by either observing a minute's silence, holding a candle or switching on their car lights. This was followed by a procession of family members of missing children carrying candles with the names of the children to the altar, where the candles remained throughout the service.

Green ribbons — emblems of child protection awareness — were handed out to promote vigilance and awareness.

Justice Minister Dullah Omar and Cape Town mayor, Nomaindia Mfeketo, were also present at the service.

In the Western Cape alone last year, there were 468 cases of cruelty towards and ill-treatment of children, compared to 309 in Gauteng, 291 in the Eastern Cape, 251 in the

Northern Province, 217 in KwaZulu-Natal, 172 in Mpumalanga, 162 in the Free State, 112 in the Northern Cape and 101 in North West province. But these amounts still excluded more serious crimes, such as sexual offenses, assault and murder.

Cases of intercourse with minors in the Western Cape last year stood at a shocking 114. KwaZulu-Natal had 103 cases compared to the Eastern Cape's 73, Gauteng's 58, the Free State's 40, Northern Province's 31, North West Province's 22, Northern Cape's 18 and Mpumalanga's 15.

Fraser-Moleketi agreed that the statistics were shocking, but stressed that they had a brighter side.

"Yes it is an outrage, but it also means that we are actually reaching children. People must also remember that there's no room for spectators, everyone has a responsibility to children in their communities."

"It's our responsibility as a nation to protect our children," she said.

CT 7/6/99

(298)

By Russel Molefe

MORE children may find themselves homeless because of deeply entrenched poverty and unemployment and the growing incidence of child abuse, Welfare and Population Development Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi warned at the weekend.

Fraser-Moleketi, who was speaking at the fundraising ball in aid of Johannesburg Child Welfare, also warned that the situation was likely "to get worse before it gets better".

"While many programmes have been initiated and major Government initiatives on poverty eradication and creating employment are taking place, the war on poverty will be long and hard and solutions will not be found overnight."

"In the meantime, our homeless

Poverty will drive more children on to streets

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girls are most vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation.

"We already have the fastest growing rate of HIV infection in the world at this stage and our young people on the streets are very vulnerable to this virus," Fraser-Moleketi said.

She emphasised the need for the public to be more aware of how the homeless youngsters' vulnerability to deadly diseases could affect the society.

She related how every night - in the street next to her offices in downtown

Johannesburg - she saw young girls of no more than 15 making themselves available for sex while their pumps watched from corners, safe from HIV.

"Because young people who are on the streets are so vulnerable and somehow have to survive in ways which we often find unacceptable and repulsive, we tend to view them as criminals or a nuisance, or deserving of what they get."

"I appeal to the public to perhaps look at homelessness from a slightly different angle. To look at the issue of

children from a different angle came hard on the heels of the launch of a multidisciplinary child protection and treatment protocol to minimise the trauma suffered by abused children.

The protocol involves several departments in Gauteng, including education, welfare and population development and safety and security.

It followed a mandate by the Gauteng Programme of Action for Children for the integration of the currently fragmented service into a coordinated and child-friendly system.

The protocol is aimed at, among other things, ensuring that all reasonable efforts are made to safely maintain children in their own families once abuse has been identified and providing effective planning for children who have been removed from their families to attain family reunification.

Churches help abused kids at Mitchell's Plain protection unit

LYNNE RIPPENAAR
STAFF REPORTER

(298)

Members of two city churches have lent their support to the Mitchell's Plain Child Protection Unit to alleviate the unit's workload and help them improve their service to victims of abuse.

The unit deals with between 100 to 120 new cases of child sexual abuse every month.

A disturbing development was that the number of juvenile suspects was increasing alarmingly, said the head of the unit, Captain Francois Matthee.

The Meadowridge Baptist Church and Pinelands Methodist Church have been supplying food, clothes and toys to the unit for the past five months.

Bruce Thwaits of the Meadowridge Baptist Church said the churches had become involved to provide community support.

"Children come into the unit at Alpha Avenue and often spend a lengthy day here," said Mr Thwaits.

He said they needed to be sup-

plied with food for the day and often clothing as well, as some of their clothes - particularly underwear - had to be retained as evidence in sexual abuse cases.

In some cases the children had just one piece of underwear.

"We try to create a child-friendly environment and hand each child a toy to give them some kind of comfort in their trauma," said Mr Thwaits.

Because many of the children get attached to the toys, they often get to keep them, so new donations are continually needed.

The support group is also going to start transporting victims and their families.

Mr Thwaits said the support group felt it was "silly" for police to spend their time driving victims and their families to and from court when the community could help out.

"We have a limited number of investigators and we need them to spend their time on investigations," said Mr Thwaits.

He said the Child Protection Support Unit was also looking at a volunteer counselling course to

help victims and their families, and police officers. The unit, like many other police stations, is understaffed and personnel have to deal with a lot of stress.

The rape of a 4-year-old girl by an adult male, the rape of a 2-year-old girl by two boys aged 7 and 8, and the continuous rape of a 12-year-old girl by her employer are just some of the abuse cases police have to deal with.

Captain Matthee said that in the past year the number of juvenile suspects involved in sexual abuse cases had been "increasing alarmingly".

He said help from the community was making a difference in daily operations at the unit - which services about 28 police stations in the Western Cape.

Captain Matthee said the unit had received much-needed equipment like a television set, dictaphones, a video camera and shelf brackets from the support group.

■ Anyone who would like to donate toys, food or clothing to the Mitchell's Plain Child Protection Unit may contact Cathy Cook at 083 680 5892.

ARG 11/6/99

Be aware of possible signs of depression in your child

Sweetan
(298) 11/6/99

By Dan Fuphe

UP to 20 percent of children suffer from depression during their school years, according to a study by the Gauteng-based Depression and Anxiety Support Group.

The group states that "all children feel unhappy from time to time because sadness is a normal, natural response to many life events.

"But when the sadness runs too deep, lasts too long or occurs too often, it may be a sign of depression, even in very young children."

To help parents find out if their children suffer from depression the group has listed the following symptoms as a guide or barometer to children's mental behaviour.

By answering "True" or "False" to these statements, parents will be in a better position to appraise any changes in their children's behavioural patterns.

Does your child:

- Seem sad much of the time?
- Have trouble sleeping?
- Feel tired much of the time?
- Have very few friends?
- Cry a lot?
- Dislike playing with other children?
- Have a drastically reduced food intake?
- Feel lonely?
- Suffer from lots of head and stomach aches?
- Dislike school?
- Have bad dreams?
- Underachieve at school?
- Worry a lot?
- Often hurts himself or herself or talks about about hurting himself or herself?
- Seem to have trouble concentrating?
- Behave angrily? and
- Become involved in lots of fights?

Also, do you suspect that:

- Your child doesn't like himself or herself?
- Other children have more fun than your child?
- Other children don't like your child?

The Depression and Anxiety Support Group warns that "there is no single symptom that signals depression".

"Depression is best understood as a cluster



Depression can make children have emotional problems with long-lasting consequences.

of symptoms that, together, may indicate that your child is depressed."

They point out that if you answered "True" to three or more of the above statements and if the symptoms represent a noticeable change from the way your child used to behave, then he or she should be evaluated by a qualified mental health professional.

If the symptoms are present for an extended period of time – whether continuous or periodic – your child should be evaluated.

Any normal child may be tearful and withdrawn for a day or two, particularly if he or she is reacting or adjusting to a specific, upsetting event such as being turned down for the lead in a school play or not being included in the soccer team.

But if the tearfulness and isolation persists for several weeks or recurs frequently, your child may be clinically depressed.

If the symptoms interfere with your child's

everyday activities, he or she may have a problem.

If you answered "True" to the questions which reveals self-destructiveness or suicidal tendencies, then your child should be taken to a professional for evaluation immediately to ensure his or her physical safety.

The group further warns that untreated depression can create severe emotional and developmental setbacks in the long run.

"A depressed child is less likely to make friends, do well in school, join clubs, participate in sports or get involved in other activities that help develop a healthy sense of self-esteem and important life skills.

"Without a strong sense of self-image or good coping skills, a child is much more likely to suffer recurring emotional and social problems with long-lasting consequences.

"But even if you suspect depression, first make sure that any physical causes, like pending illness, are completely ruled out.

"If you have ruled out physical causes but still think there's a problem, consult a psychologist or other mental health professional who is well-trained in children's emotional issues and who can accurately diagnose clinical depression."

The group warns parents that "it is easy to become overly vigilant in looking for the signs and symptoms in your child. While you want to be alert to any detrimental changes in your child's behaviour you also don't want to jump to unnecessary conclusions.

"No single behavioural pattern necessarily signals depression except indications of suicide, which demand immediate attention.

"If you have any doubts it is always best to err on the side of safety and to have your child evaluated by a trained health clinician."

● The South African Depression and Anxiety Group is presently running programmes for teachers on how to deal with and identify potentially suicidal children.

For more information please contact Zane or René at (011) 783-1474/6 or (011) 884-1797 for free lectures, brochures or counselling.

Pigs to eat hungry kids' biscuits

MZILIKAZI WA AFRIKA

BISCUITS meant for poor schoolchildren are to be fed to prison pigs after the collapse of a feeding scheme which has left 340 000 pupils hungry.

More than R33-million was spent on the scheme, but in excess of 1 000 boxes of biscuits were left to rot in warehouses because contractors were not paid to take them to 1 563 schools.

North West Health Department spokesman Cornelius Monama said the scheme collapsed because of "cash flow problems".

"We had failed on several occasions to pay contractors who were supposed to supply food to our targeted schools," Monama admitted.

So more than 5 000 pigs at a piggery at Rooigrond near Mafikeng, which supplies pork to Rooigrond Prison and local butcheries, will eat the biscuits.

The boxes of biscuits had sat

rotting in storerooms for more than six months.

Monama was unable to say when the programme stopped, but some schools say they have not had food deliveries since the beginning of the year.

At Stadt Primary School near

Mafikeng, nine-year-old Cornelia

Novolo was astonished to hear

that the biscuits, which were

supposed to feed her and other

primary school pupils, would be

given to pigs. She said she and

her sister Thandiwe had had

only tea for breakfast.

Lebohlang Ntsie, the school

principal, said most of her pupils

had depended on food from the nutrition programme.

Oliteng Mokati, an environmental health inspector for the department, said he decided that the rotten biscuits should be given to the pigs after inspecting them on May 18.

Now the department is pointing the finger of blame at Pieter Joubert, a senior administration officer whose job it was to oversee the programme.

"Joubert was supposed to monitor and inspect the programme and report any problem to his seniors and it seems he has failed to do so," said Monama.

But Joubert said storeroom managers and the contractors were to blame.

Tokyo Tlaetse, the manager of the Tswelelope depot in Mafikeng, is adamant that he warned the department six months ago that disaster loomed unless it sorted out its payment with contractors transporting the food.

Contractors have accused Joubert and Adelaide Kaya, assistant director for nutrition, of failing to inform them about the cash flow problem.

This week the department said it hoped to resume its school nutrition programme next month.

(298) ST 13/6/99

Remembrance ... and then it's a joyous celebration

National Youth Day celebrations will start off on a sombre note tomorrow when President Mandela remembers the 23rd anniversary of the June 1976 uprising in Soweto.

The sadness of that day will be replaced by a joyous celebration afterwards with a bumper bash at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

Mr Mandela will join youth leaders in laying 23 wreaths at the Hector Petersen Memorial in Soweto, marking the death of Petersen who was the first victim of police shooting during the 1976 school uprising.

The rejoicing starts around noon when the National Youth Commission (NYC) hosts a programme targeted at the youth, including a bumper pop concert featuring some of the best of African and South African musicians at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

The NYC organised the concert to give youth something to cheer and also, more importantly, to celebrate the inauguration of Thabo Mbeki as president of South Africa.

Both Mr Mandela and Mr Mbeki are expected to bop and rap for the audience at the concert at about 12.45pm tomorrow.

The concert has the theme "Farani Towards the African Century". "Farani" is a Venda word meaning "join hands".

NYC chairperson Mahlagu Bhengu will deliver a farewell message to Mr Mandela on behalf of the youth and a special pledge to Mr Mbeki. A special youth

At the concert: Brenda Fassie



At the concert: Brenda Fassie

National Youth Commission programme

7am - 8.30am

Wreath-laying ceremony at the Hector Petersen Memorial. President Mandela and youth leaders will lay 23 wreaths to commemorate the death of Hector Petersen, the first victim of police shooting in the 1976 school uprisings.

12.30pm - 5pm

The People's Concert component of the inauguration event is the National Youth Commission's (NYC) flagship event. As the

primary national event on Youth Day this year, the NYC opted to combine its traditional event with the inauguration rather than to have a separate national event on the same day.

10am - 2.15pm

Joint INYOSAF programme at FNB Stadium. Preceding the soccer match between South Africa and Zimbabwe, SFA and the NYC have worked together to present a programme of cultural and sporting activities focusing on youth.

song, composed by Sello "Chico" Twala will be performed live at the concert.

Internationally renowned Cameroonian saxophone player Manu Dibango, the great Papa Wemba, the wonderful Youssou N'Dour and the marvelous Angelique Kidjo, will perform at the bash.

Locals on the bill include Brenda Fassie, Jimmy Dindlu, Jonas Gwangwa, Hugh Masekela, Rebecca Malope, Julia Ka, Lucky Dube, Rungo and several others.

Continuing the theme of the inauguration, an oral music and poetry event in the form of a symphonic poem Sibamane Sibemumba will be performed by the youth and a special pledge to Mr Mbeki. A special youth

At the concert: Brenda Fassie

Mahlagu Bhengu, the chairperson of the National Youth Commission (NYC), says the commission has a mandate to help in the development and promotion of the country's leaders of tomorrow.

She said the NYC was tasked by the National Youth Policy to help in bridging the information gap currently felt by the young men and women of South Africa.

The National Youth Commission is a government organisation established and inaugurated on June 16, 1996 by President Mandela as part of the South African government's plan to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the problems and challenges facing young women and men in South Africa.

The launch of the Youth Information Services (YIS) last June was an urgent response to this mandate.

The service currently has a call centre with a toll-free line (0800 000 001) and a website (www.yis.co.za) and will soon be expanded to include a Youth Information Guide (a pocket-sized booklet) and other information distribution options. All of these products are designed to facilitate access to information and essential services for youth.

Ms Bhengu said the NYC was committed to promoting growth in the youth sector and would provide web space and assistance to any national youth formation wishing to make use of the internet to sell, inform, and communicate programmes and opinions.

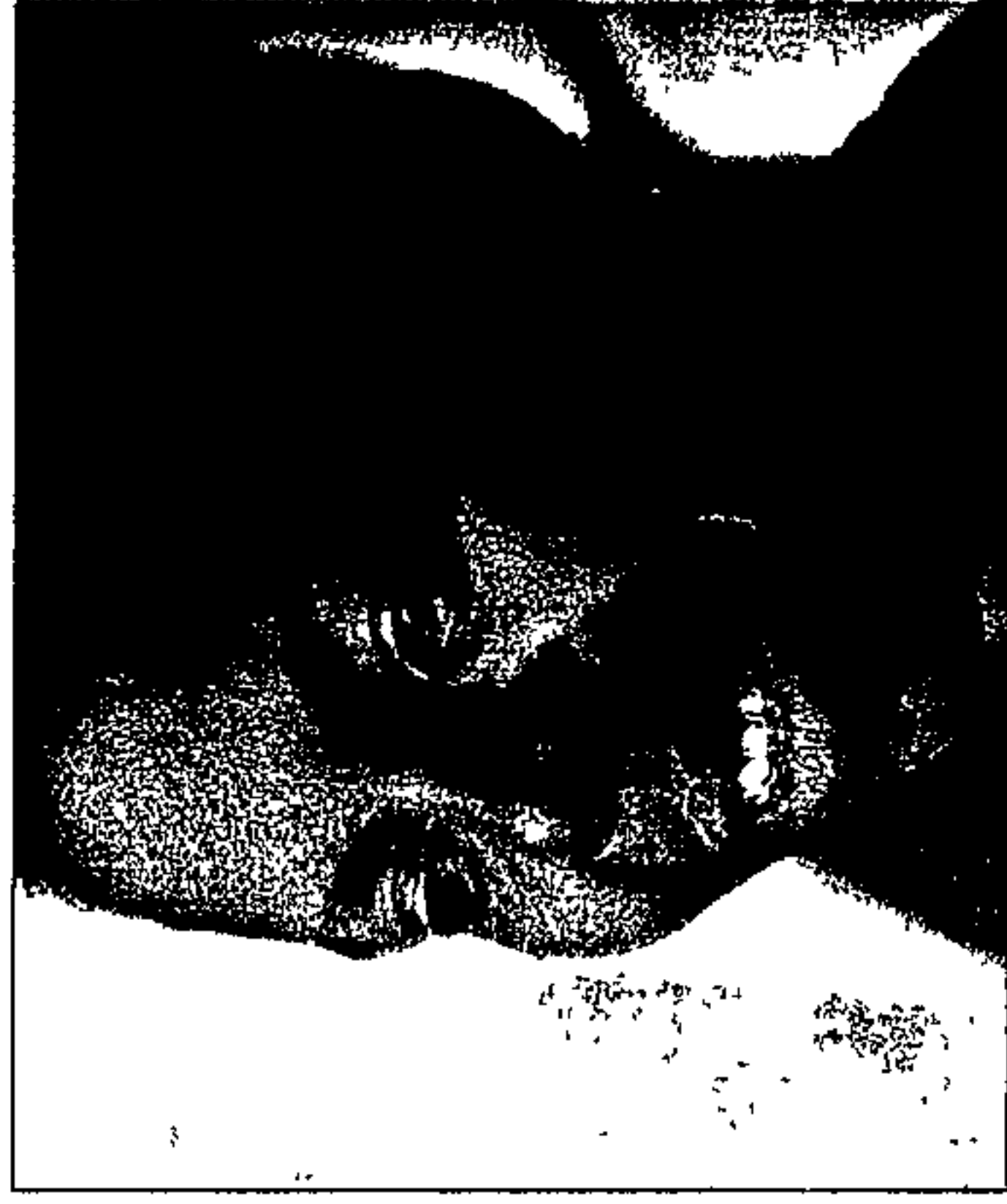
"I therefore invite you to surf the

All are welcome to attend the People's Concert on the lawns of the Union Buildings in Pretoria from 12.30pm to 9.30pm tomorrow.

But those who want to attend the concert may not use their own transport, so there are six assembly points from where people will be transported to the Union Buildings.

More than 100 buses will provide a shuttle service for people attending the concert. The first buses will leave the assembly points at 7am

Commission helps bridge information gap



For youth: Mahlagu Bhengu, chairperson of the National Youth Commission

NYC site for more cool info on youth and their organisations. The active participation of young people in this new democracy is crucial if we are to build a better country. I urge everyone to make use of all components of the service," she said.

Ms Bhengu said the spread of HIV/AIDS had reached uncontrollable proportions and the people most affected were young and economically active South Africans.

"The YIS offers a lot of information on this issue. Test your knowledge with the AIDS quiz or visit the

How to get your bus to Union Building bash

and will transport people to and from the Union Buildings until midnight tomorrow.

Please ensure that you arrive and depart on the same colour-coded bus. The drop-off and departure places will be clearly marked at the Union Buildings and the last trains will depart from Pretoria station and Belle-Ombre station at 10pm.

The six assembly points will be marked with colour codes for easy identification. The assembly points and their colour codes are: Belle-

advice centre for detailed information for youth and mothers to live positively and prevent the spread of the disease. It is not only the economy of our country that is threatened by the spread of HIV/AIDS, but the future of the entire nation," she said.

"There are visible signs that after the birth of our new democracy the damage done by the previous system of government to the youth is being reversed. Let us all strive for the realisation of such positive values. As President Mandela leaves the highest office in South Africa to go

Youth League takes action on AIDS

The African National Congress Youth League has echoed the words of the National Youth Commission in pledging public action to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and has declared June a month of action to raise its resources to fight the disease.

The organisation said it was concerned about the impact AIDS had made and said it would launch a campaign to deal with and educate the "insensitive, ignorant and reckless community".

The NYC said the spread of HIV/AIDS has reached uncontrollable proportions in South Africa and youths were among those most affected.

The objectives of the Youth League's campaign - which started yesterday and has "Youth Condoms" and "Care for Others. Fight AIDS" as its themes - will be to raise awareness of the disease and to encourage people to care for AIDS sufferers. It will also explore ways to form partnerships with stakeholders in the health sector.

The campaign will feature road shows, advertisements, mass gatherings and the distribution of condoms

the south, including Johannesburg, Soweto, the East and West Rand as well as the Vaal Triangle. People travelling by train from the southern parts will go directly to Pretoria station in Bosman Street.

Wonderboom bus depot will accommodate people from Hamanskraal, Warmbaths and other parts of the Northern Province, while people coming from Atteridgeville, Laudium and the western part of Pretoria will make use of the Pretoria Show Grounds.

Misery of Soweto's coalyard children ⁽²⁹⁸⁾

Sowetan 16/6/99

By Charity Bhengu

BLOOD seeps from tiny cracks in his hands because the coal digs into his palms. Thabo Mathebula (14) works as a labourer in Jabulani, Soweto, and starts filling bags with coal since 5am.

His soot-smearred face seems hardened, perhaps from the hardship he has to endure every day.

After filling the last bag, he throws the shovel aside. Then he stares morosely at the pile of bulging sacks on the ground. He starts lifting them up one by one.

With one awkwardly balanced between his small shoulders, he staggers drunkenly to a horse-drawn cart. Every time he heaves the sack on to his back, his neck seems to sink in between his shoulders.

Struggled to lift

When he gets to the cart, Mathebula struggles to lift the sack high enough. He bravely tries but leaves the much heavier bags to be loaded by the older boys on to two other carts.

When all the carts are loaded, the boys drive them slowly out of the yard.

When *Sowetan* arrived at the coalyard, the boys were doing a second shift (from 2pm to 7pm). They had just finished the earlier shift from 6am to

11am

The boys said they had been working tirelessly without a break - for a meagre wage of R17 a day. Occasionally they stop to sniff glue or drink liquor which they buy from a nearby house.

Some of the boys, whose ages range from 13 to 23, said they ran away from home because they hated school. Others came from poor families, and said they were forced to work at the coalyard to survive.

John Mtshali (23) said he started working at the coalyard when he was 13. His parents were poor and he dropped out of school to work.

"Life is tough here," he said. "But if you last a few days, the pain goes away."

Mtshali said they slept on coalboxes, while others occupied two old canopies. "We live and work in slave conditions and sleep in dirty bags, which we use as mattresses and blankets."

A recent survey estimated that 200 000 children between 10 and 14 years of age were employed in South Africa, and a further 200 000 between 15 and 18.

According to the Department of Labour many of the children are employed in conditions that are an insult to human rights and the dignity of the individual.



A young man takes a break while working in a coalyard in Soweto.

This is definitely the case with the children who work in Soweto's coalyards. They work long hours without a break and are given only small portions of food.

They sleep on old mattresses, salvaged from the garbage dump, and use dirty bags as blankets.

Department of Labour spokes-

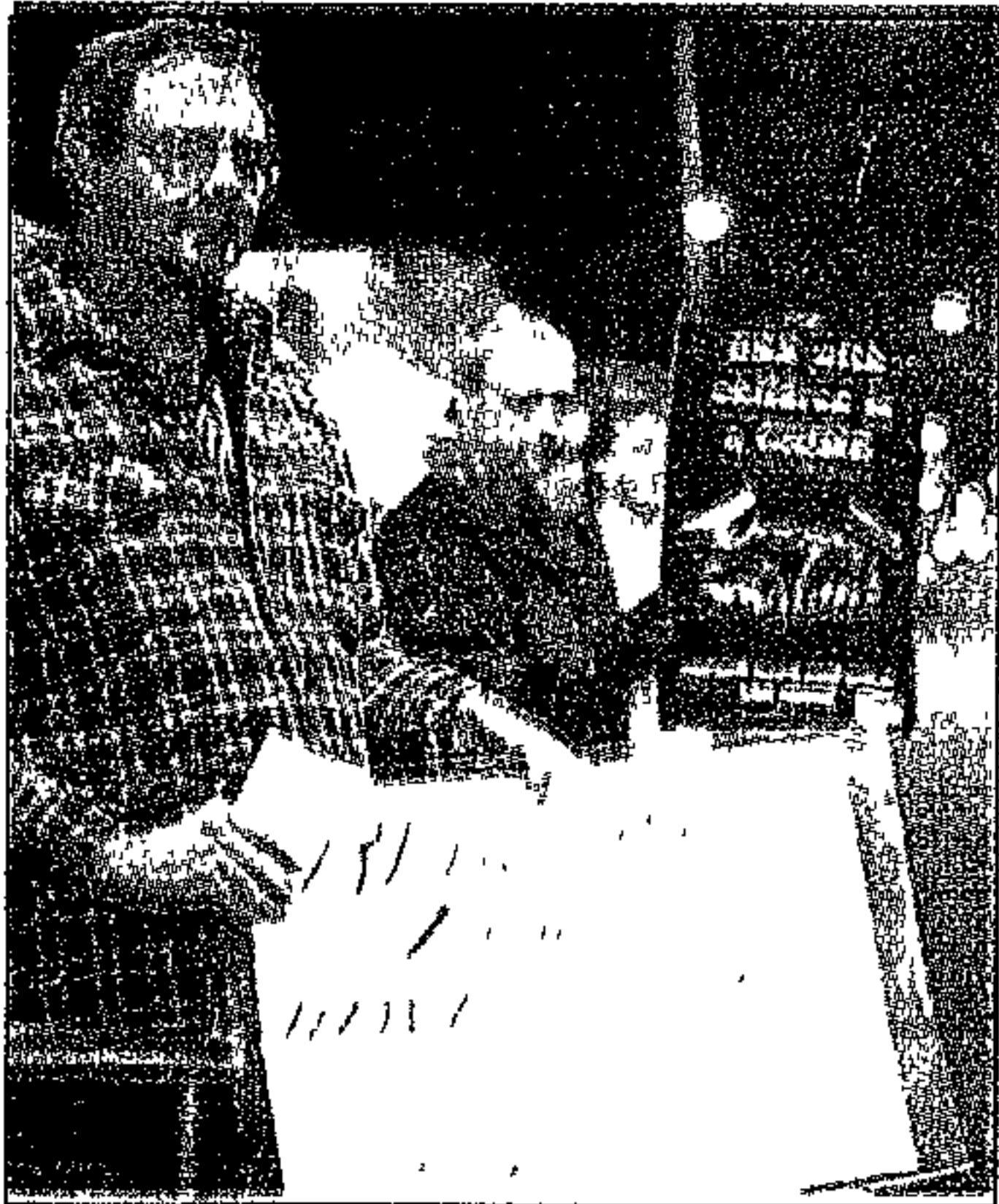
woman Annette Griesel said the department prohibited the employment of children under the age of 15 years.

However, she added, people can employ children between 15 and 18 years in a job that will not hurt the child in any way. This prevents them from working underground, in chemical factories or even in coalyards.

The department can also limit the number of hours children work a week. For instance, children are not supposed to work more than 30 hours a week.

Griesel said: "Protecting children against certain kinds of work, or under conditions unsuitable for their age, has always been basic principles of our department."

PIC: PICTURENET



IN FORCE: Demonstrators against child prostitution in Kenilworth last night. **PICTURE: DENZIL MAREGELE**

Child prostitution picket in city

JUDITH SOAL

"Real men don't have sex with children" "Children we love you". "Sex with children is a crime".

Drivers in Kenilworth Main Road last night were faced with groups of picketers, carrying placards protesting against child prostitution. Many slowed down to read the posters, others hooted in support.

"We know there are children as young as nine on the streets," said Cané Lark of the Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (Sweat). "In this stretch there are a lot of 14- and 15-year-olds. There is one pimp in particular who uses young girls."

"We hope this picket will show the girls that there are organisations that can help help them to get off the streets."

The picket was arranged by the Net-

work Against the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children. Pickets will be held in Green Point tonight and Goodwood tomorrow. "Police say about 28 000 child prostitutes pass through their hands each year," said the network's Anne Mayne. "We estimate there are about double that out there on the streets."

The picket was aimed at the customers and pimps, rather than the young girls themselves. "We aren't blaming them," said Lark. "We know there are many different reasons why they take to the streets. The fault lies with the men who have sex with them, knowing they are under age, and the pimps who take advantage of their vulnerability."

Protester Tony Jackman, carrying the poster about "real men", agreed. "It is important for men to stand up and make a statement that this isn't acceptable."

Life Line moves in to tackle township abuse

ARCT 17/6/99

Organisation in bid to help women, kids to fight back (298)

GCINIKHAYA MBESI
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Life Line's new link into the townships is expected to help address escalating abuse of women and children, who will now have easy access to counselling and assistance.

To empower a woman is to empower a nation, says Debora Veleko, head of the new Life line branch in Khayelitsha.

Ms Veleko says she wants to give women and children the resources to fight back and to learn to anticipate problems before they arise.

Among her strategies are counselling and open discussion with women and youngsters.

Ms Veleko said the new Life Line

branch was set up in response to the need for methods to address child abuse, depression and trauma.

Life Line trains professionals such as teachers, doctors and police staff so they can render help in their workplaces.

Ms Veleko started the project after she had to deal with trauma after the breakdown of her own marriage, and dealt a lot with marriage counsellors in an effort to rescue her relationship.

That gave her first-hand experience of what people went through when they needed counselling, she said.

She has been involved in training people to become HIV and AIDS counsellors since 1996. She has also finished training 10 counsellors already working in different parts of Guguletu and Khayelitsha.

She said a support group for people with HIV and AIDS was also planned.

Ms Veleko said she enjoyed working in the community, helping others solve their problems.

"It is fulfilling to give hope to those who are hopeless," she said.

"I was happy when a woman came back to me saying she was managing well in her marriage. After attending our counselling meeting she felt strong and more empowered."

Ms Veleko called on all traumatised women and children to make use of Life Line.

She also encouraged others to become professional counsellors.

■ Life Line Khayelitsha 361 5855, AIDS line: 08000 123 22, Child Line 08000 55555.

Hope for abused children

MANDLA MNYAKAMA

TODAY'S launch of the Western Cape Child Abuse Protocol (WCCAP), at the Castle, will celebrate what the protocol has achieved since its establishment six months ago.

WCCAP believes that it could easily motivate members of the public — by showing them what it has already achieved — to stand up and fight against child abuse.

Over the past three years, 15 24-hour child abuse centres have been opened in community clinics and police stations all over the Cape Flats, as well in Atlantis, George, Grabouw, Malmesbury, Mosselbay, Paarl, Piketberg, Wellington and Worcester.

Another centre was opened at Somerset Hospital last month.

"We want to show the public how far we have come in changing the situation for abused children," said Debbie van Stade, a social worker and the provincial protocol coordinator.

Van Stade said all the communities in which the organisation worked had co-operated well.

About 180 cases of child abuse are reported to police every month. According to the WCCAP database for the end of 1997, there were 15 336 cases of child abuse reported in the Western Cape and 37 517 cases countrywide.

Van Stade said the number of cases reported represented just the tip of the iceberg.

She said her department was really determined to stamp out the problem and understood whatever measures were needed. The city's deputy mayor, parliamentarians, police and attorney-general are some of the guests expected to attend the event at the Castle at 3pm.

ET 18/6/99

(298)

person sharing

includes 2 min

ILO united on measure to ban worst forms of child labour

(298)

Reneé Grawitzky

GENEVA — The International Labour Organisation's (ILO's) 174 member states, in an unusual show of what its director-general Juan Somavia called "moral resolve" unanimously voted in support of the adoption of a new convention banning the worst forms of child labour.

Its adoption was almost overshadowed by the protracted and heated debate over whether the ILO conference should adopt a resolution, tabled by the employer and worker delegates, to take action against Myanmar (Burma) for continued use of forced labour.

Heated debate ensued after Cuba and Mexico objected to the proposals to censure Burma by halting all ILO assistance and not to allow its continued participation at the ILO.

This move was proposed in a bid to force the Burma government to stop the violation of human rights and, in particular, the continued use of forced labour.

On the child exploitation issue, it was the first time in the recent history of the ILO that no delegates opposed the adoption of the child labour convention.

Endorsement of this convention got an added boost by the support from US President Bill Clinton in his address to the ILO.

Clinton said: "By giving life to core labour standards, by acting effectively to lift the debt burden, by putting a more human face on the world trading system and global economy, by ending the worst forms of child labour, we will be giving our children the 21st century they deserve."

Bokkie Botha, employer negotiator in the child labour committee, said there was no one in the committee who did not eventually feel strongly about the convention. It defines what constitutes the worst forms of child labour, including use of children as soldiers in armed conflicts.

The convention will oblige member states to immediately effect measures to "secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour". The importance of providing education as a mechanism to eliminate child labour was stressed.

30/8/99

COLOURED STUDENTS	
Spare time spent in gym	10%
I'd like to work abroad	84%
Can't wait to move out of home	51%

BLACK STUDENTS	
Spare time spent in church	28%
Owning a cellphone is cool	82%
I'm positive about the future of SA	81%

ASIAN STUDENTS	
Parents are paying for studies	76%
Income spent on makeup/perfume	27%
Most people my age are sexually active	68%

WHITE STUDENTS	
Percentage of income spent on alcohol	31%
Favourite conversation topic: sex	31%
Males who have tried dagga	38%

■ Earlier this year the Sunday Times commissioned a comprehensive survey of South Africa's university students to explore the life issues, mind-sets and considerations of our country's future leaders.

■ The survey, conducted by Kaufman Levin Associates, interviewed a sample group of 1 500 students comprising South Africa's four major race groups — white, black, coloured and Asian — and attending 12 universities (excluding Unisa).

■ Over the next few weeks, the survey will reveal these students' attitudes to the issues they grapple with daily in their young lives, including topics such as sex and drugs.

■ And, given South Africa's history, it's perhaps unsurprising that the dominant feature of the survey is the distinct sense of race. PHYLICIA OPPELT offers a snapshot of each of the four race groups — how they view themselves, their future and their place within South Africa.

(298) ST 20/6/99



Graphic: SHAHN IRWIN

Asians value family ties

ASIAN students are well conversant with the problems facing South Africa, easily reflecting on religion, politics and other issues affecting society.

They are also the least optimistic of all race groups about South Africa being a good place to grow up in.

Most have parents capable of paying for their children's education and most appear to be extremely well-off financially.

Their spare time is spent listening to the radio or CDs and sitting outside on campus rather than reading or going to the library.

They are family-orientated — a quarter go away with their family and more than half prefer spending time talking to their families. They are also more reliant on family for financial support beyond tuition fees — more than half say that, whenever they need something, their parents give them money.

Their main topic of conversation is university life, but they also spend significant amounts of time chatting about sport, fashion and religion. They aspire to a society where gender and racial equality is practised but disagree that relationships between men and women are more equal if the woman works.

They are also fairly idealistic — more than 80 percent will choose a career which is enjoyable.

able, not because it pays well. They are also most inclined to be like their parents when they get older, becoming somewhat conservative when it comes to talking about sex.

Going black to the future

LACK students are career- and goal-orientated. They are at university for one reason — to achieve success in the new South Africa.

For this group, most of whom live in townships, university life revolves around studying and books. While just half have parents who can finance their studies, a significant number are at university on a student loan.

For them, completing their studies is the most important issue, followed by career achievements and employment prospects. Their family is of secondary importance.

Issues such as affirmative action and money are more important than active social lives and romantic relationships. They spend most of their free time studying, reading and going to the library. They are least inclined to have part-time work or go out to clubs and bars.

They want to achieve financial success. This group, more than any other, believes that the more money they have, the happier they'll be. But they are also cynical about the value of money — many feel that the more money they have, the more

friends they'll have too. They are also aware of the impact of social ills, such as HIV/AIDS. Finding a cure for the disease is one of their priorities in terms of future goals.

They are exceptionally optimistic about the future. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the overwhelming majority deem South Africa a good place to grow up in.

Colour us as outsiders

COLOURED students are adrift in the new South Africa — they feel neither a sense of belonging to society as a whole nor part of their particular community.

They seem, on the whole, to be a group in conflict — with themselves. Coloured students are less sure about a career in the field they are studying, but claim to be serious about their university studies.

Slightly more than half of these students' parents pay for their tuition, the rest finance their studies themselves or through student loans and full bursaries.

They feel under pressure to pass their exams and reach a stage where education truly improves their lives.

They spend a lot of time listening to the radio and chatting with friends.

For them, reading, studying and going to the library are far less regular pursuits than any of the other race groups. They al-

so spend time hanging out at shopping malls.

They are the least inclined to debate religion, politics or other issues affecting society. They would rather discuss serious personal issues, such as family and friends, sex and sport.

The majority believes in abstaining from sex before marriage and that it is becoming more and more difficult for them to find jobs after they leave university.

We're being bled white

WHITES surveyed de-vote themselves to exploring the stereotype of a university student having fun and hanging out with pals. They come from wealthy backgrounds — the overwhelming majority have parents who

can afford to pay their tuition. They appear protected from the harsh realities of the new South Africa — such as affirmative action policies and diminishing job prospects.

White students also display a herd mentality, tending to follow what their friends do, down to dressing the same way.

Hanging out with friends, spending time listening to music and going to clubs and parties are preferred spare-time ac-

tivities — above reading and going to the library. More than half have part-time jobs, but this is apparently to fund their lifestyles and leisure pursuits. They talk about university life during their conversations, but more important to them is the whirl of social activities a student's environment offers.

They love social gossip, discussing personal issues and relationships about family or roommates. More than half also talk

about sport, but fewer will chat about issues affecting society, such as drugs and HIV/AIDS. They enjoy their years of study but certainly don't believe affirmative action is a constructive and effective way of putting right past imbalances.

Their role models are their parents — predominantly their mothers — rather than politicians or friends. For many, growing older means thinking like their parents.

'AFTER WORK I SMOKE MYSELF DRUNK'

TUESDAY JUNE 22, 1999 11

The children of the night

CHILD PROSTITUTION is becoming harder to ignore as an estimated 25% of people working as prostitutes in the Western Cape — sometimes against their will — are under 18. **JUDY DAMON** reports.



THE night air was chilly but it wasn't too cold to work. Michelle, 16, wrapped her tiny body in a revealing pink dress in one hand she clutched a condom, in the other a cigarette.

On her head she wore a white school headband to keep her short hair back. Her make-up trailed off the corners of her eyes — eyes that never met mine.

Michelle wore no other make-up and stood with her hands behind her back while waiting for clients. She looked vulnerable and frightened.

Michelle kept her head bowed and only looked up when men in their luxury cars zipped past as we stood on a Wynberg street corner. It was a good night for business.

"I have only been 'jumping' for a month," she said. "It's okay. Sometimes I am scared. Other nights I close my eyes, do it, and get it over with."

"Before I start working I smoke dagga and Mandrax. It makes it easier. After work I smoke myself drunk. Then I'm lights out. In that way I don't have to think about what I am doing to myself."

Michelle can easily earn up to R500 per night. She charges R60 or more for sexual acts. Her clients are usually white men driving luxury cars — or in fact any man who looks decent enough.

"I prefer going with the whiteys. They don't talk much and want to get it over as quickly as possible — like I do."

"The coloured men scare me because they talk a lot and you never know what they are thinking or going to do next."

Her words were still lingering in the air when a metallic blue BMW circled us. She waved at the driver and cut our conversation short. In the hour that we spent talking, Michelle rejected three clients.

"If you don't mind, I am going to take this jump. I know him so I'll be okay."

shelter in Wynberg. Soon charges were laid against her for smoking dagga on private property, despite several warnings. The courts sent her to a reformatory school in Wellington, but she hated it and ran away.

"I was living on the streets and had nothing. I needed money and this was the only option."

She prefers to call her pimp her "protector". While she works, her woman protector waits across the street and intercepts her earnings. A watchman lurks in the shadows and observes her every move.

Like other pimps, Michelle's "protector" is extremely streetwise and looks after her girls.

When the *Cape Times* spoke to her she was very approachable, but did not give straight answers. She begged us not to reveal her identity.

A wife and mother herself, she went silent when put on the spot about why she is allowing children to work as prostitutes and making money off them.

"I would have felt bad if I had put these girls on the streets. But I didn't. They chose to be here, so I gave them a place to sleep, food, clothes and try to keep them off drugs. They are the ones who must decide to get off the streets. I cannot make that decision or they are going to disappoint me and themselves."

Michelle and another 17-year-old prostitute lives with her in her Wynberg home. Both said she treats them well and has proved to be mother figure to them.

She's been labelled the "extreme exception" by staff of non-government organisations working in the field.

"My mother always messed in my face. The minute we talked we argued, and I couldn't take that. She would never listen, let alone understand."

"Today my mother is born again and I know I can go home, but I can already see that screaming look on her face, even when she says nothing."

At 13 Michelle lost her virginity to her first boyfriend. Then she turned 14 and was raped.

"I had had a lot to drink that night. I don't remember much — only that I had been raped. First

CT 22/6/99 (298)

Social worker Bernadette van Vuuren said pimps normally use "the wife-batterer tactic" once they find "cash-register children".

"The main thing is to get them hooked on crack cocaine immediately. The children are beaten, raped and threatened. Then the pimps buy them presents and say things like 'I love you' before the next cycle of violence begins."

"After a while the children become numb by the drugs and the fear and just wait for the next thing to happen. Now they are ready to work."

This can range from working in escort agencies, becoming involved in pornography, working in massage parlours — especially boys — or doing street work like Michelle.

Staff of the Goodwood Child Protection Unit said it is investigating only one case of child prostitution. The only way officials can take action is if the child has made a statement against the pimp. Another option would be to catch the client having sex with the child. However, the chances of this happening are slim.

"The children cannot escape by the time they hit the streets they are so hooked on crack they will do anything to get their next fix," Van Vuuren said.

Although Michelle depends on dagga to help her cope, she is not yet hooked.

When I began telling her about Sweat, she grabbed my arm and said she would go with me, that minute, if they had a place for her to go to. But she could judge by my trailing voice that Sweat had no secure place of safety in which to put her.

Michelle said no one has

I didn't know what to say to her because there are no places for her to go.

At the moment non-government organisations are fighting to raise enough funds to build such a place, designed to help children like Michelle. In an ideal situation they are hoping to offer a place of safety, skills development, job creation, drug rehabilitation and therapy.

The other stumbling block is to persuade the children to come forward for help.

Van Vuuren said the money is mainly what keeps the children going out each night. After years of working the streets, the children often graduate into adult prostitution or become vagrants.

Michelle said no one has

forced her on to the streets, but that the money "widens your eyes and you can make lots of it."

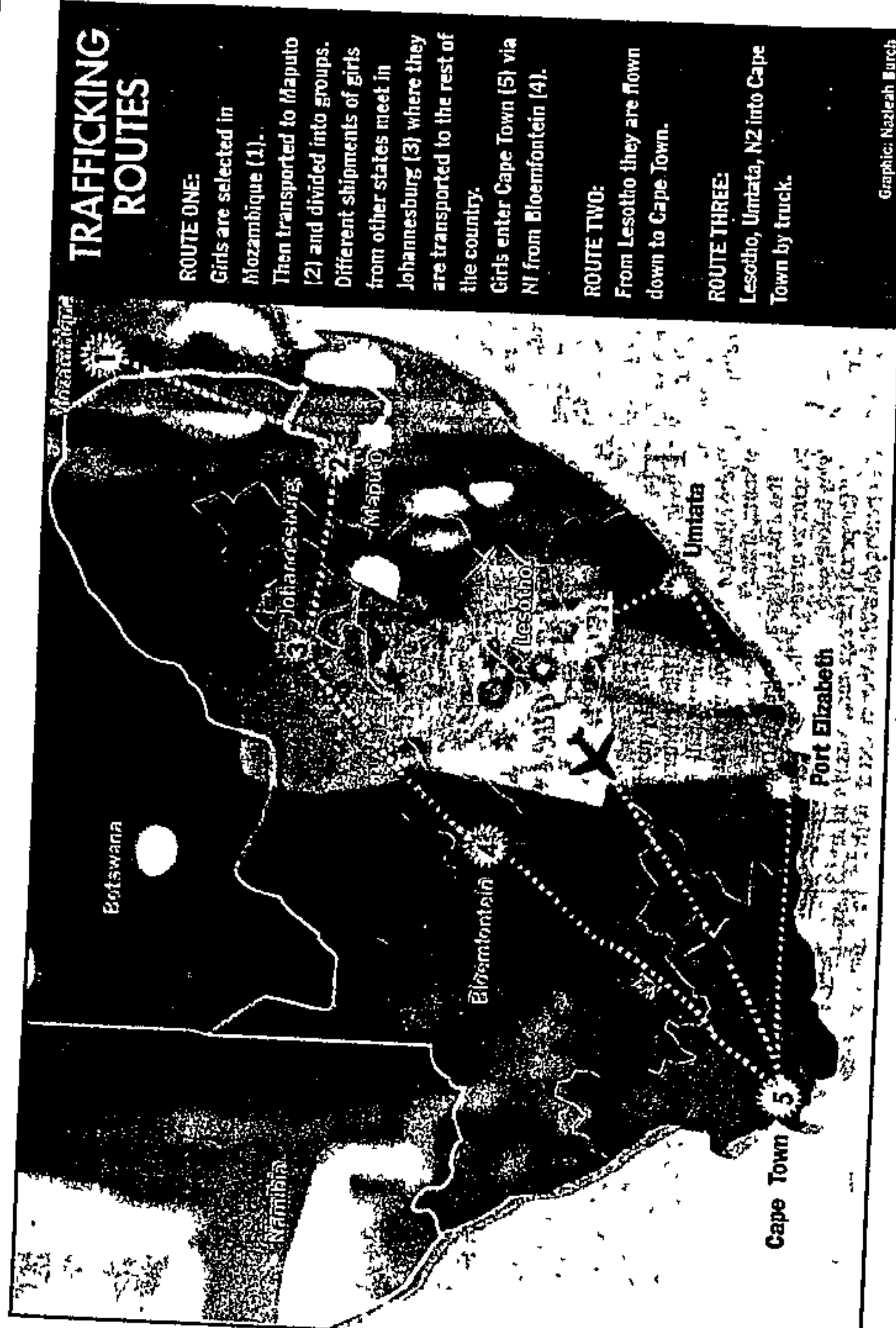
"I am not going to do this for ever."

"What I do want is a child of my own and never introduce her to men," she laughs. "Maybe I'll make enough money to escape to America and create a life for ourselves. Then I'll be away from this madness. That's my dream. But first someone must want me."

Michelle said no one has



PICTURES: MUJAHID SAFODIEN



TRAFFICKING ROUTES

ROUTE ONE:

Girls are selected in Mozambique (1).

Then transported to Maputo (2) and divided into groups.

Different shipments of girls from other states meet in Johannesburg (3) where they are transported to the rest of the country.

Girls enter Cape Town (5) via NI from Bloemfontein (4).

ROUTE TWO:

From Lesotho they are flown down to Cape Town.

ROUTE THREE:

Lesotho, Umtata, N2 into Cape Town by truck.

Graphic: Naziah Burch

Working their way back home

WOMEN AND children from war-torn countries who have been "rescued" and are living in our city are paying back their "rescuers" by working like slaves in prostitution syndicates. JUDY DAMON reports.

A LONG the Green Point and Sea Point main roads, they are seen smiling, drugged and eager to make money — like most city prostitutes.

But they need to work a lot harder than most if they want to see their families and their hometown again.

In most cases, the foreign women and children who come from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Botswana need to work for at least seven months before they can return home, from where they were kidnapped or lured.

"Prostitution is big business in

They are transported by minibus taxis or buses. "They only realise what is going on when they reach Cape Town," said Coetzee.

Once the girls enter the city, all documentation and personal belongings are removed.

The recruiter turns pimp and orders them to work for their "identities."

"They would do anything to go home, so they work. Once they think they have covered their debts, the pimps push up the price. They are really working until the season is over. It is like slavery," said Coetzee.

Her words were still lingering in the air when a metallic blue BMW circled us. She waved at the driver and cut our conversation short. In the hour that we spent talking, Michelle rejected three clients.

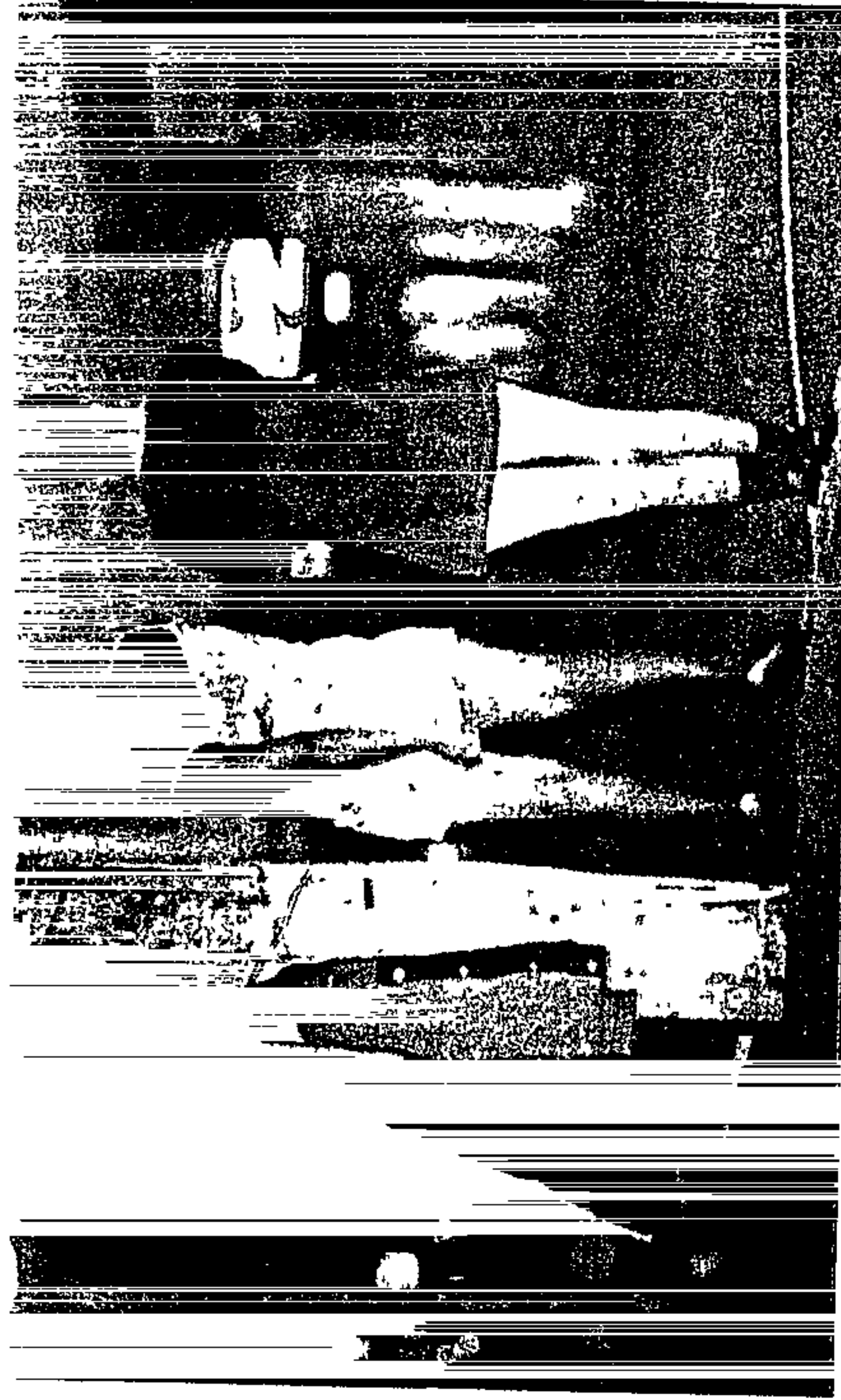
"If you don't mind, I am going to take this jump. I know him so I'll be okay."

Half-an-hour later Michelle came strolling out of the dark alley into which she and her client had disappeared. She walked past her pimp — a woman — and slipped a crumpled-up R100 note into her hand. While still adjusting her tight pink mini dress, she crossed Main Road in Wynberg and assumed her working position on a new corner.

"I gave him a blowjob and he gave me R100," she said.

Compared with other child prostitutes, Michelle is lucky. Scores of "working" children find themselves tangled up in prostitution rackets of the worst kind.

Research done by the National Consultative Conference Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children, also known as "the network", which held a conference in Parliament recently, and Sweat (the Sex Workers' Education and



GIRLS' NIGHT OUT: These teenage prostitutes say they have been working the Plumstead streets for years. They say that in two weeks they can earn more than many middle-income people do in a month.

Grade 5 girls bunked school to learn facts of life

JUDY DAMON

AS the principal of Westville Primary School in Mitchells Plain, Edwina Smith's main objective is to protect and educate the 800 children in the school's care.

But she is saddened by the reputation of three Grade 5 girls.

Smith's staff detected something was wrong when the girls, aged 11 and 12, regularly "ditched" school.

Child prostitution didn't enter their minds until a pupil told Smith that minibuss taxi drivers sneaked the girls off the premises during school hours.

After high drama and many tears, the girls eventually confessed and Smith's life has been upside down ever since.

On many late nights, the 51-year-old principal has found herself driving through the dark streets of Mitchells Plain and risking her own life as she searches for "her three girls". Once she even arranged for the police to escort the girls, kicking and screaming, to a clinic for contraception and HIV testing.

"I didn't want to ask them why they did it. It was so obvious. They were doing it for the money and maybe even love since they came from broken homes."

Eventually the police, the girls and their parents went to the Rocklands house to which the pupils had been lured, with other young girls, for countless sex sessions with several taxi drivers.

Afraid of how she would react, Smith refused to accompany them.

The girls said they were told to "get naked" and then to have sex on a mattress in an empty room. Other drivers drank as they awaited their turns.

As the men weren't caught and statements weren't made against them, all the police could do was issue a stern warning.

That was two years ago.

In response to mounting pressure from social workers and NGOs countrywide, the Department of Social Welfare has tackled the problem head-on by introducing tough legislation, in the Child Care Act, against men who engage in this behaviour: pimps and brothel owners.

The legislation, passed earlier this year, says that anyone known to be sexually exploiting children will be prosecuted. The penalty could be a fine or jail term.

Lesley du Toit, adviser to the department, said the legislation was an interim measure to give the police "something to work with" while the rest of the Child Care Act was strengthened.

But for the legislation to be effective, the police must catch culprits and unravel the syndicates.

The only case of child prostitution that has made it to court was the 1997 case of an Oren View landlord. He is to be tried in November for indecent assault and rape. The charges were laid after two girls told a social worker that they had been paid regularly to have sex with him.

The national head of the Child Protection Unit, Anneke Pienaar, said it was "almost impossible" to prove child prostitution.

The girls said they were told to "get naked" and then to have sex on a mattress in an empty room. Other drivers drank as they awaited their turns.

tution. In dealing with such cases, police have four options — three of which Pienaar deems "unethical".

- Using a child as a decoy to trap suspects;
- Using an undercover policeman disguised as a pimp to try to sell a child;
- Observation and catching clients in the act;
- Taking the children off the streets and putting them in a place of safety.

"The first three are unethical," says Pienaar. "It is our duty to protect these children at all costs and it is unacceptable for us to expose a child, even those involved, to danger. The fourth option could work, but we cannot remove children from the streets against their will — it's unconstitutional."

As for the three Grade 5 girls, their predicament was discovered too late for intervention, they had been in the game too long.

A 24-hour crisis centre, equipped to deal with sexually exploited and abused children, was opened at Somerset Hospital on May 28.

The centre and the new legislation may be battles won in gaining muscle to tackle child prostitution, but the onus remains on communities — which often turn a blind eye.

"Sadly it usually starts at home where the problems are so intense that they sometimes don't have a choice," said Smith. "If we win one child, then we have won them all."



TIME OUT: Michelle, 16, lights a cigarette as she talks about the constant danger she faces at the hands of her clients.

Minister says she'll fight abuse

Sowetan 24/6/99 (298)

By Siphiwe Mpye

NEWLY appointed Minister of Health Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang has made a commitment to improve the strategies of fighting violence against women and children.

Speaking at the launch of the SABC drama *Soul City 4*, Tshabalala-Msimang said: "One of the things that has struck me as lacking in our strategy is the issue of an integrated approach, because violence against women or any other group is a multi-

faceted problem."

There were a number of factors to which she attributed the increasing rate of this type of abuse.

Among these were "unequal power relations" between men and women, a society that condones force as a means of conflict resolution and an "ineffectual justice system".

She said one of the milestones was the SADC conference held in Durban, which resulted in a resolution on violence against women and children.

These commitments are,

according to her, accompanied by the challenge to turn them into an effective response to social ills.

"We will know we are getting there when the incidence of violence against women becomes reduced drastically and victims cease to complain about the lack of responsiveness of our delivery systems," she said.

● *Soul City 4* was launched at the SABC TV centre on Tuesday and marked the fourth season in the series of dramas.

The drama, which was started

eight years ago with the help of various partners including Old Mutual and BP, focuses on crucial health and social issues, equipping ordinary people with the knowledge to make informed health and life decisions.

Previous series dealt extensively with subjects such as primary health-care, community development, child abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and Aids.

The new series has zoned in on violence against women and children. It aims to raise the awareness of

this problem and provide the average person with avenues to follow when faced with a predicament of this nature.

The series is supported strongly by a multimedia approach to pub-

licity. Ten newspapers, including *Sowetan*, *Ilanga* and *Evening Post* will publish informative booklets based on the series and a complementary radio drama series which is broadcast on nine SABC radio stations, in nine official languages, and on community radio stations.

Putting byte into blackboard jungle

PRISCILLA SINGH
EDUCATION WRITER

A COMPUTERISED code of conduct is set to help repel a wave of unruly school behaviour and give teachers and principals greater control over the discipline of children in their care

The programme is the brainchild of Barry Maytham, principal of Capricorn High School in Pietersburg for the past 15 years. He says the decline in discipline at many schools, exacerbated by bigger classes and overburdened staff, has aroused increasing concern.

Maytham was in Cape Town this week to consult with teachers at the Diocesan Preparatory School about the code of conduct. Several schools are already using the programme, while others have expressed interest in trying it.

He says the programme's millennium-compliant software can

be used to record all positive and negative incidents, distinguish between minor misdemeanours and punishable offences, and reflect all interviews and counselling sessions with pupils. Adjudication takes place on a points system of merits and demerits.

"A few years ago I took stock of what was happening at my school and what I had observed at other schools and I didn't like what I saw. It was becoming increasingly difficult to get children to do the little things that I had grown up with and believed to be important — such as standing up to greet a visitor or member of staff.

"The loss of these little things were symptomatic of a serious decline in general school discipline. The legal necessity for a code of conduct led me to think long and hard about it. After much deliberation and development, a computer-based points system

with full reporting capabilities was produced," Maytham said.

The programme, based on a "zero-tolerance approach", accommodates recognition of achievements and accords wrongdoers the chance to redeem themselves.

"The detailed individual conduct reports that the programme provides are really appreciated by the parents, who come to give them almost as much attention as they do the academic reports.

"As headmaster, I find that having immediate access to a complete, up-to-date report on a pupil's conduct is absolutely invaluable," Maytham said.

"Upon implementation of the programme, patterns soon emerge and habitual offenders come to light a great deal earlier than was my experience beforehand," he said. The programme is flexible in its application, and individual schools can set their own norms,

rules and methods by which pupils are administered with the help of the programme.

"Because measurable recognition is given to positive behaviour and involvement, children are motivated to behave better and to participate more," Maytham said.

While some schools have questioned the need for positive points for participation and achievement, Maytham said experience has shown that both boys and girls have been motivated to earn such points. Many have also done their best to ensure that they earned no negative points.

"The increased size of classes has, and will continue to have, a profound impact upon the effectiveness of teachers," he added. "This programme will go a long way towards ensuring that the excellent discipline enjoyed by our schools in the past is maintained in the future."

(298)

ET 24/6/99

To some this man is a saint — to others just a vigilante

20 25/6/99 (298)
Tutu Mgulwa is conducting a one-man fight against sexual abuse of children in Gauteng, writes Nomavenda Mathiane

IN A world that is experiencing an unprecedented wave of child abuse it is unusual to find a man fighting this scourge.

Tutu Mgulwa grew up in central western Jabavu, Soweto, in a family of four boys.

Most of his friends were girls and in 1983 one of them was raped by a policeman.

Anger drove him to assist his friend and the policeman was convicted.

That incident set him on the road to helping young people who have fallen victim to rape and abuse. He formed the SA Stop Child Abuse organisation, a nongovernmental organisation pledged to assist the fight against child abuse.

Some people think he is a villain and that his actions border on vigilantism.

Others, however, regard him as a saint for taking up cudgels on behalf of the weak.

Prof Ben Smit of the University of SA policing science department says the criminal justice system is not functioning properly so ordinary people are taking the law into their own hands.

He says it is common for people who feel uncertain about their rights to resort to vigilantism and warns that the situation might get worse. There are indications that Smit is correct.

Last week in Verulam, KwaZulu-Natal, a group of farmers clubbed together to fight criminals in their area. In the Northern Province a group calling itself Mapogo-A-Mathamaga has formed a vigilante unit that enforces the law.

Mgulwa is small in build and prefers to dress in Nigerian outfits. He can be seen almost daily at the Chris Hani Baragwanath hospital or Protea police station escorting girls, some as young as two, who have been sexually assaulted.

Although Mgulwa is not a policeman, he gets on average more than 200 phone calls a day. These come from distraught girls who may have been raped, often by their fathers, uncles or brothers. They come also from scared boys sexually abused or burnt with cigarette ends.

"I have made more enemies than friends in my job," says Mgulwa. "In the case of my friend who was raped by a policeman, I was lucky to get the policeman convicted. I thought justice had been done and that would be the end of the story. I was wrong."

A few months after this incident, says Mgulwa, he was framed. A woman laid a charge of rape against him and he was arrested. While in jail he saw the policeman he had arrested for raping his friend and was at the receiving end of taunts by the policeman and fellow officers.

Mgulwa's case was later dropped for lack of evidence.

Mgulwa is often tipped off when there is a suspicion that a rape has been committed. Because he is so well-known his mere presence in the vicinity indicates to onlookers that a crime may have been committed. As word spreads people rush to the scene.

"Most of the time my job is slowed down because of the crowds that usually gather at the



Tutu Mgulwa is fighting criminals who sexually abuse children

scene and assault the alleged offender," he says.

"And it does not end there. When the matter gets to court I am often accused of assault by the offender because of the actions of the crowd who take the law into their own hands."

He says only 20% of cases that get to court result in convictions.

The rest get away with the crime because of the way the SA legal process works.

"Young children have to face clever lawyers who scare and confuse them," he says.

"I am looking forward to a time when the court will deem it fit not to call children to testify in court, but to allow the statements of district surgeons and social workers as sufficient evidence."

Mgulwa, who commutes between Soweto and his Pretoria office, says he is working to buy a minibus to transport children who have to appear in court.

He says he urgently needs a computer or computer access to place on the internet pictures of missing children suspected of being victims of abuse.

Nthabiseng Mogale, director of People Opposing Women Abuse, says there is a place for people like Mgulwa to assist those who cannot get proper access to the criminal justice system.

She says it is important that there is someone who makes victims feel that someone cares and is on their side.

That is where someone like Mgulwa comes in.

"To make his interventions more effective, though, he must work in such a way that he follows up cases to see that there is a prosecution, assists families with information about the process of prosecution, does court preparation and, most importantly, provides professional emotional support," says Mogale.

Child-abuse horrors pile up to crisis point

Volunteers being trained to help social workers

(298)
ASHLEY SMITH
STAFF REPORTER

ARG 14/7/99

Adults, caught in a cycle of abuse, unemployment and poverty, are increasingly venting their frustration and anger on young children.

This is the horrifying reality revealed in statistics on child abuse disclosed to the Cape Argus by social workers who are swamped with a growing case-load of crimes against society's most innocent.

In some cases, infants as young as 10-months-old are being abused, traumatised and often disfigured.

The statistics supplied by the Wynberg branch of the Child Welfare Society show that in Site C in Khayelitsha eight or nine new cases are reported a week. Athlone and Guguletu are not lagging far behind.

And the Wynberg child welfare office handles between 50 and 60 new cases every month.

Unable to deal with the epidemic on their own, social workers are increasingly turning to community volunteers who have had a 10-week training course in identifying and helping child-abuse victims.

Trix Marais, a social worker who heads the community development department at the Wynberg Child Welfare Office, said it was the dramatic increase in abuse that led social workers to involve the community in helping them.

Often these volunteers were called on to work late into the night to find and save children, and move them to houses of safety in the area.

"The project is about empowering communities who have felt powerless to stop the abuse of children in their neighbourhoods," she said.



Full: one 'Skrwe Flatse' unit, built to house four people, is home to up to 18 residents

But one of the major stumbling blocks in waging the war against child abuse was funding, said Mrs Marais.

In spite of this, the community volunteer project, called "Isolobantwana" (or "eye on the children"), has made giant strides in helping social workers. In June this year, the volunteers there won a mayoral award for excellence, she said.

Social worker Shamiela Ryklief, who trained the volunteers, said Ottery had been particularly prone to abuse because of shebeens, gangsterism and poverty.

One area known as the "Skrwe Flatse", built to house four people, was now home to between 15 and 18.

One of the Ottery/Lotus River volunteers, Leslie Samuels, whose home was used as a safe house for abused children, said incidents of child abuse were becoming more terrifying each day.

"Around Christmas this year my family and I took in a 10-month-old baby who was abused by its mother. The poor infant had been beaten, and came to us after midnight. She was smelling of urine. This is the

type of abuse that happens in our communities," he said.

Social worker Noeline de Goede said volunteers like Mr Samuels had become the eyes of the welfare society in the neighbourhood, and that they were trained to identify and help victims of abuse.

She said social workers blamed unemployment, a gang culture driven by violence and the extreme abuse of alcohol for the new cases being referred to the Wynberg office each month.

The documented cases of abuse range from verbal to extreme physical and sexual abuse. Horror stories include a case in which a drunken father sent his seven-year-old daughter on to the streets for money to buy dagga, and beat her when she returned empty-handed.

Another spine-chilling case involved a 17-year-old abusing his eight-year-old sister. The terrified girl told one of her friends, but was too afraid to tell her parents.

The cases often came to light after school holidays, when teachers saw signs of abuse in their pupils, said social worker Rashueda Ebrahim.

Youths fill up prisons

By Jimmy Seepe
Political Reporter

GOVERNMENT programmes and the National Youth Commission appear to be losing the battle against convincing juveniles to stay away from crime, new statistics supplied by the Correctional Services Department show.

The department has recorded an alarming increase of 6 000 juveniles in jail in three years. The figures also show the youth are involved in serious crimes such as murder, hijacking and rape.

Figures show that there are currently 25 197 juveniles in the country's jails - an increase of almost 6 000 from the 1996 figure of 19 447.

A total of 9 596 youths are serving terms for murder, attempted murder or vehicle hijacking. Another 3 101 have been jailed for sexual offences.

Gauteng, as expected, is in the lead with 6 133 youths in jail followed by KwaZulu-Natal with 5 329 and Western Cape with 3 796.

The provinces with lowest figures are Northern Cape (1 003) and Northern Province (1 076).

There are currently 175 youths serving sentences ranging from 20 to 100 years. A total of 673 are serving sentences of between 10 and 20 years while 2 434 are serving between five and 10 years.

The new figures come at a time when youths have again accounted for the most brutal crimes in the past two weeks in Soweto, Tembisa on the East Rand and Western Cape.

In Soweto, four people including a youth are being tried for the murder of Tshepo Molemohi (11) of White City who was allegedly killed for muti purposes last month.

In Western Cape two youths were arrested along with four adults for the brutal rape and murder of Valencia Farmer who was stabbed 42 times before her throat was slit.

In Tembisa and Bruma Lake, Johannesburg, police arrested six youths between the ages of 17 and 19 over the rape and robbery of a Brazilian journalist in the Bruma Lake area a week ago.

The youths were described as "destitute children" who lived in a derelict flat near the lake. They claimed they were wrongfully accused.

Youth Commission director for policy development Mr Tembinkosi Ngeobo said it appeared that programmes that were currently in place could not deal with the causes of juvenile crime.

"The rate of increase in unemployment and high fatality rates among breadwinners as a result of Aids in some parts of KwaZulu-Natal have led to more youths starting to fend for themselves," Ngeobo said.

He said the commission and Government were starting to shift the focus on some of the programmes that could make a positive contribution in dealing with the situation.

Gauteng safety and liaison MEC Nomvula Mokonyane said her department was concerned about the alarming number of crimes that were committed by the youths.

Her department was working closely with the department of welfare and education to implement life skills and other programmes in schools.

"We are establishing Youth Against Crime structures to ensure that youths take part in crime prevention initiatives in their own communities," she said.

"We are winning the war against petty crime, especially by first time offenders," Nicro project director Mrs Delia Nation said.

BD 16/7/99
**Prison data on
young offenders
'misleading'**

(253) (298)
Pearl Sebolao

PROJECT Go, the interministerial committee on young offenders, yesterday disputed figures released by the correctional services department on the number of people under 18 in SA prisons.

Gauteng Project Go co-ordinator Myrtle Morris said the correctional services figures were misleading because they included convicted offenders over the age of 18 and up to the age of 21.

She was addressing a press briefing in Johannesburg during a Project Go meeting aimed at finding solutions to blockages in the criminal justice system to ensure the best service to youth in conflict with the law. The project would focus also on preventative and rehabilitation programmes.

The disputed figures, released last week, show a 6 000 increase in the number of youth prisoners in three years since 1996. Gauteng's total juvenile prison population is put at 6 133 by the department.

Morris said the department did not distinguish between young people under the age of 18 and those older than 18. It referred also only to convicted offenders and not those awaiting trial.

A look at the number of awaiting trial juveniles in Gauteng in May, 275, showed the situation was not as bleak as suggested.

The department's figures suggested also that most of the convictions were for serious crimes such as hijacking and murder.

Thifhelimbilu Mudau, a senior magistrate in the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court, said although young people did commit serious crimes, their most common offences were economic ones such as theft, housebreaking and possession of stolen goods.

Morris said that during the month of May, 93 children had been successfully diverted from the criminal justice system and 144 children were reunited with their families. Mudau said there was nothing inherently wrong with the criminal justice system.

Mother's stand by as their kids are abused

Cases on the rise, say worried welfare workers

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg - Reported child abuse is rising - and experts warn that mothers exposed to violence and domestic abuse are sometimes reluctant to intervene when their children are mistreated.

While the upward trend in child abuse could be attributed to improved reporting, say the experts, this crime remains a nightmare for social workers who handle the cases.

One such case is that of a nine-year-old girl who was sexually abused by what has been dubbed

"South Africa's worst family".

The child's mother, 48, was arrested along with her father, 52, brother, 17, and 16-year-old cousin in November. The men have been charged with rape and indecent assault, and the mother is accused of conspiracy in connection with these charges.

Dalene van der Walt, chief social worker at Kempton Park, said her department was handling the case, which she described as a "long-term abuse situation" born from a history of family violence, poverty, unemployment and neglect.

Although this case is shocking,

Ms Van der Walt says it is not the worst seen by Child Welfare.

"What is hard to understand is a mother's involvement in abuse. Although reasons are different in every case, in many families you find the woman is not able to protect herself and the child.

"It is very difficult for social workers to understand why mothers sometimes don't believe their children and fail to protect them. It is hard to stay level-headed and balanced when abuse is an epidemic," she said.

The four accused will appear in the Kempton Park Magistrate's Court on August 17.

Concern over child prisoners

(298) (293)

By Charity Bhengu

ABOUT 275 child prisoners awaiting trial are detained in various prison cells in Gauteng because of the continuing crisis in residential care facilities.

This is despite the fact that Project Go has transferred 93 children to secure care facilities and returned 144 to the custody of their families.

This was highlighted at a summit attended by members of various government departments in Johannesburg on Thursday and Friday last week.

Project Go was initiated within the context of the Transformation of Child and Youth Care System.

Project Go coordinator Ms Myrtle Morris identified a number of reasons for the increasing number of children in Germiston, Pretoria Central, Johannesburg, Vereeniging and Modderbee prisons.

She said the movement of the youths was still a problem because secure centres and places of safety were full.

As a result, children were subjected to poor conditions in prisons.

These conditions included that in most prisons under-18s were not separated from older prisoners. Some cells were overcrowded and children slept either three to a bunk or four to a mattress on the floor.

Windows were often broken and only one toilet was in a working condition in some jails. Children also complained about bed bugs. The electrical plugs needed repair and there was no hot water in some showers.

Morris said some children stayed longer in prisons because they had to wait more than six months for the finalisation of criminal court cases.

Children were still remanded for longer than 14 days. There was also a delay in finalising regional court cases, especially where there were adult co-accused.

The parties recommended that residential care and probation services be upgraded in order to accommodate more children.

Resolutions included the following:

- Development of co-education programmes for girls in the existing facilities where the children are referred to schools by the courts;

- Education programmes must include vocational and preventive programmes such as counselling;

- Agreements must be developed between the departments of Social Services, Justice and Education in the utilisation of facilities in other provinces; and

- Development of professional foster care as well as subsidised adoption options within all welfare agencies.

Joining forces against horror of abuse

Social work unit 'offers best chance possible' ARLT 27 7/99 (298)

Image follows shocking image during the slide presentation, resulting in gut-wrenching anticipation of what awful case of child abuse will be revealed next.

These horrors are part of the daily workload for social workers at Tygerberg Hospital's new unit for traumatised children who are at the rockface of society's greatest shame. For them, each slide tells the story of the destruction of a child's life, they remember the circumstances, who was involved, details of the crime, where the child is now - even in cases that happened many years ago.

Social worker Nocawe Frans remembers the "so young and innocent" one-year-old baby who was raped and so seriously injured that doctors were forced to perform a colostomy.

Chief social worker Sayeeda Dhansay points to a case in which a 15-month-old baby's grandfather repeatedly burnt her vaginal area with his cigarette. "She pulled out her hair in big tufts and she was always crouched down on her knees and elbows."

Another chief social worker, Marie Kriek, tells of a case in which a small girl was hung upside down with ropes around her ankles, another who screamed hysterically when a man in a hospital passage lit up a cigarette and they found her buttocks covered in cigarette burns, another who was bitten and choked by her father - when her mother took him to court for maintenance - and is now brain-damaged.

But Ms Kriek is philosophical about their daily exposure to some of



DI CAIERS

HEALTHWRITER

the worst society has to offer: "If this hospital wasn't here and we weren't here to help these children, they would just go back home, to be abused again. We can be of help and value to them - that's what helps me cope."

The Tygerberg Social Work Unit for Traumatized Children, believed to be the first of its kind in the country, draws together social workers who would otherwise be spread out across Tygerberg hospital, allowing them to join forces to provide an excellent service to children.

Not yet complete, the unit boasts an impressive play therapy room and social workers' offices which have still to be fully equipped.

The unit is the result of the hard work and dedication of the social workers who have raised funds, begged donations, roped in volunteers and even got busy themselves with paintbrushes and scrubbing brushes to transform the previously dilapidated section of the hospital.

While the unit itself may be new, the Department of Social Work at Tygerberg has been involved in support and treatment services for traumatised children and their families since 1976. In the 1997/98 financial year, they documented 10 366 visits by children and parents.

Since 1987 they have kept a register of abused children and run a

What child abuse is

- To hit a child in an unacceptable manner, or to hit him or her out of frustration.
- To break down a child's self-esteem.
- To leave a child without supervision.
- To ignore a child's emotional needs.
- To blatantly expose a child to pornography.
- To ridicule, belittle or humiliate a child.
- To swear and shirk at a child.
- To force a child to touch your genitals.
- To have inappropriate touch.
- To blackmail a child not to reveal something by buying them or threatening them.
- To neglect medical needs.
- To neglect physical needs - food, warmth and cleanliness.
- To refuse to listen to a child who asks for help.
- To keep a child out of school without good reason.

24-hour helpline

Ms Dhansay says the children they see include those who have been sexually, physically and/or emotionally abused, and those suffering from malnutrition and with serious illnesses - like AIDS and cancer.

She stresses that everyone has to be on the lookout for evidence of child abuse, particularly medical staff in the private sector who may not see cases regularly and so miss some of the less obvious signs.

"Many professionals are sensitised to the problem but there are also many who are not. They're not exposed to it every day like we are - so ongoing education, training and awareness is very important."

The social workers also run workshops, seminars, exhibitions and child safety programmes, and issue information pamphlets and activity books for children.

They offer a consultation and support staff service to their hospital colleagues and train social work students, as well as nurses, doctors and medical students.

"There is a very committed staff of social workers at Tygerberg and we try to accommodate as many requests for training and other help as possible. We believe that if we get the child abuse message across to just one person, that is enough reward," says Ms Dhansay.

Her colleague Ms Kriek agrees, saying that medical staff need to be properly trained to never assume that what they see is all that is wrong with the child. Children always need to be thoroughly examined and a call made on whether the explanation fits the injuries.

Often total skeletal X-rays show old injuries, some still not healed, that provide a more complete picture of the trauma endured.



Play therapy: social workers Sayeeda Dhansay, left, and Nocawe Frans work with a child in the new play therapy room

Ms Dhansay says that healing the abused children's minds is as vital as healing their physical injuries. "They have lost faith in adults and one of the ways we try to regain their trust and start building them up again is by means of play therapy. Many of these children don't even know how to play anymore - they go into the play therapy room and just sit there, staring blankly around them."

The blank stares often associated with abused children are an important indicator of the trauma they have suffered. In medical terms they are known as "frozen watchfulness". In reality it is quite unnerving to see the children's large eyes stare ahead blankly.

The play therapy at Tygerberg starts with every child who enters the unit getting a brand new teddy bear to keep. The project to produce enough teddy bears has sparked the interest of schools and other community organisations.

Ms Dhansay clearly recalls the first time the child with the vaginal cigarette burns smiled - two weeks after she was admitted and when she was handed her own teddy bear.

Ms Kriek considers whether these children have even a tiny chance of a future not completely scarred by their experience.

"There's no doubt it may mess them up for life. But with a lot of love and good care we offer them the best chance possible," she says.

■ Tygerberg's 24-hour helpline for traumatised children number is (021) 938 4911 (ask for the social worker on call). Donate teddy bears to the unit by dialling (021) 938 4164.

See page 20 for more on child abuse

ON THIS PAGE TOMORROW: Building the native yards of Guguletu on the tourism map

Child crime dockets

destroyed Police suspect arson in CPU fire

By Matshebe Mfolo

ABOUT 600 dockets dealing with serious cases of child rape, abuse and abduction were destroyed when a fire gutted the South African Police Services' child protection unit in Mabopane, near Pretoria, yesterday morning.

Other valuable information and equipment were also destroyed.

The building, which is in Block E, was badly damaged.

It also houses the offices of Home Affairs Department.

Police said the burnt dockets dealt with cases of child abuse including rape, abduction, kidnapping and assault.

They said that some of the suspects implicated in the cases had already appeared in court and were out on bail while others were still to appear.

Police were on the verge of "cracking" most of the remaining cases.

The Mabopane CPU is made up of a team of 13 hand-picked officers who investigate cases

reported from 11 police stations in the Odi Region of North West.

CPU commander Captain Hilda Mofajane said police had opened a case of arson.

A team of forensic experts from Pretoria were yesterday combing the area for clues but smouldering debris and intense heat were hampering investigations.

They are expected to start investigating the cause of the fire today.

Mofajane said police were alerted of the fire at about 5pm.

She said when the fire brigade arrived, the offices were already gutted, but they managed to contain the fire from spreading to the adjacent offices.

Mofajane said the incident had halted whatever investigation they had on record since last year.

"It is painful. We have to start all over again, taking statements, while the criminals rejoice," she said.

Mofajane said in another major setback, the CPU offices were burgled three times this year

and all the computers were stolen.

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Callan

SA's traumatised kids

Southern 3/8/99

A collection of children's drawings gives a frightening look into the psyche of youngsters living in a crime-ridden and violent society, writes **Allan Secombe**



Two men stand on either side of a crying, semi-naked woman tied to a tree. One has his trousers around his knees and is demanding a kiss, while the other is pointing a gun at her head and telling her to shut up.

This is a particularly graphic picture drawn by a teenager in an art competition run by Childline to raise cash for its crusade against child abuse in South Africa.

There are many others like it which reveal how South African children see their world and future. They may not be as graphic but they are certainly as disturbing.

The drawings in crayons, pencil and ink give a frightening look into the psyche of youngsters living in a crime-ridden and violent society, particularly in poverty-stricken black communities.

Hundreds of children at schools in the industrial heartland of Gauteng - seen as South Africa's crime capital - were asked for art with the theme of Rainbow Kids 2000.

More than 70 percent of the 2 000 entries showed killings, guns, abuse, beatings, drugs, drunkenness, poverty and despondency.

"These children are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. They are fraught with a fear of violence," said Childline director Lynne Cawood.

"The pictures show that these children have been exposed to some form of violence - witnessed some form of sexual, criminal or political violence."

Figures from the police child protection unit show 15 732 cases of child rape were reported last year compared to 7 559 in 1994. Reported assault cases shot to 4 022 from 1 905 in the same period.

The unit's superintendent, Anneke Pienaar, said that with 1 000 police dealing with crimes against children, coupled with awareness campaigns, the number of cases reported to the unit were increasing.

Only a few of the 75 pictures in one file at Childline's office in central Johannesburg did not reflect some form of violence.

They included pleas for jobs for parents and for an end to crime, abuse and the use of drugs. Others depicted homes barricaded behind tall, barbed-wire fences.

"There are just so many entries depicting some form of violence. We have to take cognisance of this and recognise there is a serious national problem with our children," Cawood said.

But there is not enough funding to counsel children to deal with their experiences in the hope of breaking the cycle of violence, said Mary Robertson, who works at a trauma clinic for children.

"It is very, very difficult to raise funding

Despite the representation of criminals as badly dressed, they are sometimes seen as role models, Eagle said.

"Part of the problem is that gangsterism or participation in violence is seen as glamorous in some way. A lot of people who are known criminals are seen driving flashy cars and wearing smart clothing," she said.

Crimes against children have grabbed media attention recently with the rape and murder of young girls in Cape Town, the slaying of children for body parts for traditional medicine and parents killing their children in a spate of family disputes.

A 15-year-old boy is one of four people accused of the gang rape of a 14-year-old Cape Town girl who was stabbed 42 times and her throat slit before she died.

The chances of a South African witnessing or being a victim of crime are high.

The country is seen as the most violent outside a war zone with murders up 1.2 percent to 24 875 last year, or 58.5 per 100 000 of the population, and a rape every 12 minutes. The United States has a murder rate of about seven per 100 000.

However, the perpetrators of crimes in South Africa are not seen as being effectively prosecuted in courts that face an enormous backlog of cases, but sit for only two hours a day.

"Children are not seeing much retribution for wrongdoers so their sense of morality is being distorted. People who are bad are seen as being rewarded," Eagle said.

At the back of the folder holding the gloomy impressions of the turn of the century is one colourful, happy, busy drawing.

It shows a section of Johannesburg with streams of cars on a freeway flanking a green park with swings and lots of playing children. In the blue sky a cheerful sun shines on a clean city where mothers push babies in prams.

"People have a good life in 2000. People have stop crime. People have stop killing another people. People have stop steal a thing like money. People have stop smoking," reads the poignantly naive message scrawled below the drawing. - Reuters

Man-made epidemic that is killing our kids

ARCT 18/8/99
 Campaign against childhood injury launched
 IN CAIERS (298)
 HEALTH WRITER



Y meals: the South African Emergency Workers Institute donated 60 meals to The Bridge, a project for street children, at the f its bi-annual meeting. Emergency Services Africa is holding a conference and exhibition today, tomorrow and Friday at the Hope Centre. Entrance for children is free but adults' R5 entry fee will go to the Red Cross Children's Hospital

accidents, or drown, are poisoned, burnt, suffer in violent situations or some other physical hazard offered by an environment created by adults."

Yet this "disease in all but name" had not provoked action in terms of prevention strategies at either community or government level.

"Each day of inactivity in this sphere guarantees that young lives are lost, or thrown into chaos by severe disability."

"Whatever the outcome in each individual tragedy, the burden of childhood injury has a significant long-term effect on the child, the family and society as a whole," Ms Du Toit said.

In just one year, Red Cross Children's Hospital treated 10 000 children for various injuries, including poisoning and drowning.

Figures from the hospital, which are the only reliable childhood injuries statistics in the country, show that falls and car accidents rank as the main causes. Between

April 1997 and March last year, the hospital treated 1 171 children involved in car accidents and 2 512 as a result of falls.

Other causes high up the list include burns (481 children were treated during that period) and children being hit with or against objects (602).

During that period, 218 children were treated for assault and 274 were injured by a sharp instrument. Another 42 were treated for gunshot wounds and 98 for dog bites.

In 1997, 66 children were treated for poisoning.

Ms Du Toit said injury imposed a financial burden on the health system that was far greater than that arising from many other diseases people knew much more about.

National Child Injury Prevention Week will raise awareness nationally around the issue, offering opportunities for cost-effective intervention based on primary health-care principles.

Child abusers 'getting away with murder'

STAFF REPORTER

Johannesburg – Child abusers are literally getting away with murder as South Africa's courts system fails young victims, and it is time people are told the system is flawed, says Women Against Child Abuse.

Waca assistant director Miranda

Friedmann said yesterday: "We feel the time has come to inform the public that promises made by the judiciary, Government and the courts are failing."

She said her colleagues felt that "the odd life sentences handed out here and there" were only "crumbs from the table" and that judges and

magistrates were disregarding the new minimum sentences laid down.

"We have been monitoring sentences handed down by judges and magistrates (in child abuse cases) and although there have been some cases where minimum sentences have been applied, there is no consistency and no strong message from

our courts," Ms Friedmann said.

The minimum sentences, which came into effect over a year ago, are life in prison for gang rape, rape with aggravating circumstances or the rape of a girl under 16, 10 years for the indecent assault of a minor, 15 years for a second offence and 20 years for a third.

19/8/99 (298)

Youth spending 'irregular'

20 19/8/99

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

(298)

The National Youth Commission did not stick to state tender board regulations and did not comply with procurement procedures, running up unauthorised spending of more than R400 000.

This was disclosed by Auditor-General Henri Kluever in his report to Parliament on the financial statements for the deputy president's office for the 1997/98 year, when Thabo Mbeki was the incumbent.

Mr Kluever said the transactions of Mr Mbeki's office complied with financial laws and regulations, although there had been a lack of a proper provisioning system in his office until 1997, and there had been unauthorised spending by the youth commission.

Its unauthorised expenditure included

R139 118 through non-compliance with normal procurement procedures, and R270 480 because of spending done without necessary Treasury approval.

"Furthermore, the National Youth Commission did not adhere to state tender board regulations at all."

At the time the auditor-general's report was compiled in January, the actual amount of unauthorised spending because of this failure had not been calculated.

Mr Kluever said that during the audit of Mr Mbeki's former office, various shortcomings had been noticed in the system of internal checking and control.

"These matters were brought to the attention of the accounting officer, who indicated they were receiving the necessary attention."

JANET HEARD

DOZENS of streetkids have made a dramatic U-turn and trekked home, thanks to the intervention of a team of "super-sleuth" community workers who believe that family life is the best option.

Twelve-year-old Benzake Reed is one of 258 street children who have been reunited with their families this year in a six-month pilot project which has just been completed.

While Benzake's is a success story so far, it is a tricky process and social workers found that within months 46 others had returned to the streets and seven were in Pollsmoor Prison.

Benzake was on the road to nowhere when he hit the streets of the Mother City in January to make money to pay his R45 annual school fees.

A month later he had pocketed the amount of the school fees many times over but he got a kick out of hanging out on the streets with his pals and did not return to school.

Instead, he played truant and became a "day stroller", bringing home between R14 and R20 a day.

"I joined my friends and hung around St George's Mall," he said this week. "We used to catch a train at 8am, then return at 6pm."

Then Benzake was spotted by a reintroduction worker from Buyel Ekaya ("Come back home"), an innovative project co-ordinated by Streets Community Development and the provincial government.

Benzake's parents and three siblings were traced to a two-roomed house near the railway line in Kalkseentfontein near Manenberg.

With the help of social worker Hanlie Carstens, he was reintegrated into his community and for the past four months has opted for school instead of living precariously on the street.

Benzake's mother, Virginia, said that while she hated the fact that her son was roaming the streets "there was nothing I could do about it".

She earns "bits and pieces" by selling groceries door-to-door and faces a daily struggle to put food on the table for her unemployed husband and four children.

"Many of my friends are still on the streets, but I don't want to join them. I enjoy being at home and being at school," said

THE COMEBACK KIDS

Social workers' dedication unites hundreds of street children with families

(298) ST(CM) 29/8/99



TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL: Benzake Reed, 12, is reunited with his mother, Virginia, in Kalkseentfontein

Benzake, who is in a Grade 6 class of 55 pupils at Valpark Primary School.

Benzake's mother has volunteered to make soup twice a week for a feeding scheme initiated by Buyel Ekaya to alleviate hunger in the poverty-stricken neighbourhood.

Many children from Benzake's neighbourhood turn to street life, said Carstens. "We have cases of children going with a relative to town — as child labour. We also have cases where mothers get paid to lend their babies to women beggars for the day."

"Our aim, where possible and if there is no sign of abuse, is to return a child home. If we find that the situation at home is not conducive, then we look at the extended family or other alter-

Picture: TERRY SHEAN

natives," said Carstens.

The intervention does not stop at reuniting children with their families, but includes regular follow-up home visits and attempts to improve family life and living conditions and to develop community activities — such as co-ordinating soccer matches, mobile libraries and soup kitchens.

Altogether, project workers traced the families of 500 of the 700 children they encountered on the streets of Cape Town.

Tracking down families often requires detective work.

"Sometimes we have to go to many sources — from a child, to friends, to a school, etc, before we track down the family," said Carstens.

While it is still early days for Benzake and there are no guarantees that he will never return to life on the streets, the chances have been reduced, said Carstens.

"Benzake was lucky; he had only been on the streets a few months. A lot of our intervention is about prevention.

The longer a child stays on the street, the more chance there is that he will end up not returning home, but will become a hardened street child and turn to serious crime," said Carstens.

A more accurate picture of success will be available in about a year, said social worker and author Heather Parker Lewis, who has just completed an evaluation report for the provincial department of social services. The report reveals that only one in four children sleep permanently on the streets; the others spend part of their day or night on the street — sometimes with an adult family member.

Lewis concluded that by July, almost 90 percent of the reintegrated day-time street children were still resettled as opposed to only 50 percent of the full-time children.

Hardened full-time street kids failed to engage in community activities, tended to return to the streets and also to drugs and criminal behaviour, she said.

Ministry of social services and poverty alleviation spokesman Johan Smit confirmed that the department was very encouraged by the inroads the project had made for day-time street children.

However, he added: "We will have to go back to the drawing board to adopt a model for hardened street children."

Globalisers' young debris

The west must help find 'realistic' limits for child labour, writes Jeremy Seabrook

20 31/8/99

THE debate about the work of children has changed in recent years. The most recent International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention takes a more realistic view of child labour than to advocate outright abolition. The work of millions of children remains essential to the survival of too many families in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

To speak of a ban on the work of children is intransigent and unrealistic. The ILO now advocates the elimination of only the worst forms of child labour — slavery, debt bondage, trafficking and prostitution — which is itself no small undertaking. It does, however, mark a shift from the early 1990s, when western countries were principally concerned about the import of goods made with child labour, notably footballs, carpets and garments.

Indeed, the very threat of US sanctions in 1993 was enough to empty the garment factories of Bangladesh — at least in Dhaka — of children below the age of 16. Schools were set up, and an allowance of about \$6 a month was to have been paid to all those who went from factory work into education to ease the transition for their families. Only a small minority of child factory workers ever received compensation or education. The majority were dismissed by factory owners terrified of the loss of so lucrative a market.

At that time, Bangladesh was the seventh-largest exporter of garments to the US. Many children went into other kinds of work. No research was ever conducted into the fate of the former factory workers, but anecdotal evidence suggests that many fell into even worse conditions than they had known in the garment factories. The majority of child workers in the developing world are not employed by transnational companies or subcontractors to them. These undoubtedly exist especially in garment, sportswear, plastics

and toy factories. It is to the credit of groups such as the Clean Clothes Campaign, based in the Netherlands, that codes of conduct have been drawn up whereby importers undertake not to accept goods made with child labour.

This should not, however, mean that all other forms of child labour are of no concern. There are an estimated 7-million children working in Bangladesh — 12% of the economically active population. About two-thirds work between nine and 14 hours a day. Most give their wages to their parents. Most children still work in the rural sector, often employed by their families without pay. But migration to the towns has brought new forms of child labour.

The partial integration of Bangladesh into the global economy has been spearheaded by the garment industry, which earns 70% of the country's hard currency and employs 1.5-million people, mostly young women. Despite its economic importance, the industry does not supply all workers with sufficient income to feed a family. The average income in garment factories is about \$30 a month, leaving many families dependent upon child labour. This model of economic development did not originate in Bangladesh.

Indeed, since 1987 it has been under a structural adjustment programme. Liberalisation has brought few benefits to the poor, while cuts in government expenditure (except for the military) have damaged health, education and nutrition of the poorest.

Since all this has occurred under the superintendence of western financial institutions, there is a sense in which we have a responsibility for the world's working children. Child labour remains a reproach to globalisation — a denial that this has anything to do with justice, prosperity or equality. This is, perhaps, why there have been so many attempts to blame those who depend upon child labour — the poor families — for its persistence. They put their



Three-year-old Daniel da Silva helps his mother gather wood at a charcoal burning furnace in Acailandia, Brazil. Although conditions at these furnaces have improved, exploitation of workers and illegal child labour are still commonly found. *Picture AP*

children to work, they do not believe in education, they are ignorant and backward," goes the refrain. Those who crusade for "education" as emancipation from child labour show little familiarity with the pressure upon the lives of the poor. The abolition of child labour would in effect abolish the children, for their income may mean the difference between hunger and a barely adequate diet. Of 150 child workers in Bangladesh surveyed in 1996 a third of them contributed more than 30% of the family income. It is in response to the children's con-

tribution to family incomes that the idea of children's work rather than child labour has evolved. This work is of limited duration, integrated into a timetable that includes play and learning time.

Yet even this distinction is deceptive and much harder to define than the words imply. A 10-year-old boy working a lathe in a workshop would be classified as child labourer; his sister, rolling cigarettes at home, would be a working child. Exposure for 14 hours a day to molten glass in a factory would be considered unacceptable child labour; a girl of 11, virtually captive

as a housemaid in a middle-class household and on call for 16 hours a day, would be a working child. If adults cannot earn enough to feed their children in a world of abundance, this is a reproach to an "integrated" global economy. Those who guide and direct that integration have a responsibility towards those who are damaged and degraded by the asperities that attend it.

□ Seabrook is a freelance journalist and author of books on the developing world. This article first appeared in the *Financial Times*.

HRC to look into plight of SA kids (298)

By Charity Bhengu

THE Human Rights Commission (HRC) has started an investigation into the current child protection system and why it is failing.

Spokesman for HRC Mr Siseko Njobeni said yesterday: "It is common knowledge that of a number of cases that get reported very few make it to courts and even fewer end with convictions."

This follows reports that police investigated about 65 000 cases of child abuse in 1998, but less than 50 percent of these cases made it to court.

The HRC's first stage of the investigation, which was already under way, would reveal why the current child protection system had failed, said Njobeni.

The primary focus of the investigation would be on sexually abused and exploited children in three provinces which recorded the highest number of crimes against children. The provinces are KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Western Cape.

Said Njobeni: "The investigations will examine the gaps between the laws, regulations and guidelines. Our goal is to improve the system by holding individuals and agencies accountable for multiple cases that fall through the cracks."

The commission will hold public hearings once the probe is finished, hopefully by the end of this month.

Non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and families will be given an opportunity to testify in cases involving the sexual exploitation of children.

In addition, the relevant Government departments and individuals will be given an opportunity to respond to any allegations made against them. The HRC will then publish its findings, said Njobeni.

Welfare societies

The SA National Council for Child and Family Welfare Societies cares for about 800 000 children, most of whom have been physically and sexually abused.

Last year Child Welfare dealt with 1 193 cases of abandoned children, 1 311 orphaned children, 2 910 physically abused children, 4 786 sexually abused children and 11 726 neglected children.

These children were referred to about 170 child welfare societies where social workers and psychologists provided them with shelter and protection.

The commission is inviting similar submissions which can be faxed to Njobeni on (011) 484 8300.

Source: 5/10/99

Sex crimes against children on the increase - despite 'harsher' legislation

HAZEL FRIEDMAN

Fathers who rape their daughters are likely to rape again, say social workers, child welfare organisations and police. This assessment was sparked by the controversial seven-year sentence handed down by Mr Justice John Foxcroft this week to a 54-year-old man who raped his own teenage daughter.

Judge Foxcroft's justification for his lightness was that the man's sexual deviance was limited to his own home.

The sentence and Judge Foxcroft's explanation have provoked wide-

spread anger. Organisations involve in the counselling of rape survivors and rehabilitation programmes for child rapists have described it as "misinformed", "naive" and "offensive towards women and children".

"The family unit is a microcosm of society," said Raymond Ulrich, a child psychologist from Canada who is researching child abuse in developed and developing societies. "There is a vicious social cycle emanating from child abuse in the family."

Mr Ulrich told of a case of a three-year-old who was raped by her

father. Her mother, who had suppressed her own sexual abuse all her life, committed suicide because she could not deal with the helplessness she had felt as a child and was expecting for her daughter. Even after intensive counselling the rape survivor battled to come to terms with the anger she felt towards both parents.

Mr Ulrich pointed out that secondary abuse recurred repeatedly, particularly in social systems that could neither accommodate nor understand the needs of children.

Sergeant Paul Moss of the Mitchell's Plain branch of the Child

Protection unit said child rape cases within the family showed a pattern of repetitive rapes. He warned that men who raped in such instances could sometimes also target potential victims outside the family.

Judge Foxcroft's sentence was handed down against the backdrop of alarming statistics on crimes against children in South Africa. Police figures show that sex crimes against children are on the rise in spite of the introduction of legislation aimed at meting out harsher punishments to child molesters.

From August 1998 to July 1999, 17 503 children were raped. This is

compared to 14 917 for the previous year. Human Sciences Research Council figures put the countrywide figure at 19 264.

Ministry spokesman Andre Martin said that in addition to legislation, plans were underway to launch a project in schools that would "empower young women with self defence skills to protect themselves against attacks."

Bernadette van Vuuren of the Network Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children said Judge Foxcroft's sentence needed to be examined within the broader context. "Inappropriate sentences tend

to normalise sexual abuse, sending signals to rapists and their victims that it is part of everyday life." She added that there had been a clear indication that where fathers raped their daughters, these attacks would recur again within or even outside the family circle.

Marcelle Londt, who runs Child Abuse Therapeutic and Training Services (Catts) says that at least six of the 12 rapists on a skills and rehabilitation programme at her clinic had raped before.

"Many adult survivors of child rape have discovered that their fathers also molested their friends.

They don't need to prowl the streets in search of new victims because their children bring friends home."

Ms Londt said rapists often set up social situations at home, such as sleep-overs, for this purpose and they also tended to get involved in community activities and organisations, posing as aid workers.

Another problem in dealing with child rapists was that they did not have a recognisable profile, she said. They existed across the socio-economic spectrum.

"Unfortunately, for every one victim who is helped there are another three out there," said Ms Londt.

Children still have no lawyers in court

CHILDREN still have no legal representation in children's courts, despite legislation adopted in 1996, MPs heard yesterday.

This was due to disputes as to who should pay the legal bills, Julia Sloth-Nielsen, a member of the Law Commission's committee for the review of the Child Care Act, told the welfare portfolio committee.

Children's courts handle all matters pertaining to the legal protection of children.

According to the amended Child Care Act, children are entitled to legal representation in these courts.

Welfare director Eddie Harvey said the justice and welfare departments were still thrashing out where the responsibility lay.

Project committee chairman Noel Zaal said in the reviewed act, the emphasis would move from adults' rights to children's.

BD 14/10/99 (298)

Commission calls for child court reforms

(298) *Sowetan 14/10/99*

By **Waghied Misbach**
Political Correspondent

THE South African Law Commission (SALC) has recommended an integrated court system for dealing with cases involving children.

At present children are being adversely affected by often vastly differing decisions taken in several courts, including the divorce, children's, maintenance and juvenile courts.

If the SALC's recommendations are accepted, it will mean that the courts will appoint interdisciplinary officers who would ensure an all-encompassing approach to children's cases.

For instance, an interdisciplinary officer would ensure that a decision taken in one court involving a specific child would conform with a ruling taken in a different court concerning the same child.

In its recommendation to the welfare and population development portfolio committee in

Parliament yesterday, the SALC also proposed that the Government should investigate setting up a separate parliamentary committee, or children's ombudsman to deal specifically with childcare issues in this country.

Law Commission head Mr Willie Henegan said the organisation had given the reform of the Child Care Act its highest priority, an A-plus rating. The only other SALC project with this rating was the investigation into sexual abuse of children.

Henegan said the commission had already earmarked R600 000, received from foreign donors, for research that would be used to reform the Child Care Act. He said the commission wanted to "fast-track" the legislation through Parliament.

The SALC had already completed most of the groundwork in preparation for drawing up a Bill that could be considered by Parliament.

However, there were three areas that the commission needed to work on before the drafting of the Bill started in earnest.

These areas included an investigation into provisions for foster care and an effective complaints system that could be used by children.

The mean test to determine who is allowed to foster children will undergo radical reform to allow the poor to adopt children.

Another crucial investigation would be to determine if there would be enough money from the state to implement the legislation.

This comes in the wake of other legislation concerning the free legal advice for all children that was passed last year, but has not been implemented due to lack of funds.

The committee also heard that the childcare legislation would conform to international standards, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children and the African Charter on the Health and Welfare of Children.

The SALC will hold a consultative workshop in early January to pull together all its investigations before a Bill is presented to the Population and Welfare Ministry.

Children left shivering in the wind of change

Kids as young as four suffer from depression as their feelings are thrust aside in grab for freedom

Cape Argus 18/10/94

South Africa's children have borne the brunt of change, according to data which show that as many as 90% of children seen by the University of Stellenbosch's educational psychology unit have emotional problems.

A decade ago this figure was just 20%, and, by comparison, most of the children's problems were "harmless". Now bed-wetting and reading difficulties have been overshadowed by aggression and depression in children as young as four.

And information from the police child protection unit shows the rise in

sexual and physical abuse cases coincides with the increase in children's emotional problems found at the unit.

The unit mainly serves deprived communities surrounding Stellenbosch, although children from all over the Western Cape attend the clinic.

Interns from the unit go out to schools in the area looking for children with problems.

Patrick Normand, head of the unit, said an explanation for the increase in abuse and emotional problems was that the society was struggling to come to terms with the fundamental changes of the past decade.

Emotionally needy children are the norm in South Africa as parents and teachers are distracted by societal change. Cape Argus reporter **Carol Campbell** spoke to Stellenbosch University education psychologist Dr Patrick Normand



"Even though the change has been positive, there have also been disastrous consequences."

One manifestation was the attitude that a new and free society meant individuals could do what they liked, and disregard the law and other people.

So widespread were emotional

problems among children, said Dr Normand, that if the Education Department were to run separate classes for children with special needs it would have two education systems.

"And the special needs system may well be bigger."

He said emotional problems emerged when parents did not have the emotional or material resources to properly nourish their children.

"We are seeing desperately lost children, who are not being contained at home."

These children either "externalised" their frustration by becoming disruptive

tive, criminal or violent, or "internalised" feelings by being withdrawn and depressed.

"The hard ones to find are children who are sad, play alone and say nothing."

The problem usually manifested itself in the classroom where, under normal circumstances, a teacher would intervene and help the child.

"But here again this is not happening as it should. Many teachers are too demotivated to respond effectively to a child who needs help."

He said classes were too big.

Dr Normand said educational psy-

chology interns at the unit frequently reported seeing children who were desperate for emotional contact.

"One intern was sent to assist a teacher with an uncontrollable class at a primary school on the Cape Flats."

"Those kids needed someone to look them in the eye and listen when they talked, put a hand on their shoulder when they cried and laugh a little."

"You don't need a degree to do that - just a heart."

Teachers and parents had to make an effort to show respect and care towards children without being submissive or afraid to discipline them.

Fighting child poverty

(299)

Journal 18/10/99

POVERTY is the biggest threat to our young democracy. During the first five years of democracy, the Government has put in place a progressive and enabling policy framework to complement our Constitution.

The challenge to alleviate poverty will require stronger delivery of social services. Providing access to basic healthcare, education and welfare services is the key to addressing child poverty in South Africa.

However, the implementation of policies and programmes are hampered by financial and institutional constraints. Children bear the brunt of poverty in South Africa.

And the first few years in a child's life is critical. Children who are born in poor households and who do not have adequate nutrition and mental stimulation are disadvantaged for the rest of their lives.

There are 17 million children younger than 18 years in South Africa – 44,24 percent of the population. The level of child poverty is alarming. Six out of every 10 South African children live in poverty.

Children living in rural areas are more likely to be poor than those in urban areas as seven out of every 10 poor people in South Africa live in rural areas.

Of the nine provinces, only Gauteng (20 percent) and Western Cape (35 percent) have relatively low levels of child poverty. The highest level of child poverty is in Eastern Cape (78 percent), Free State (73 percent) and North West (68 percent).

These provinces are largely rural and this has implications for access to services. Interprovincial inequity is a legacy of apartheid, where provinces such as Western Cape and Gauteng were well resourced at the expense of the poorer regions.

Delivery of basic social services to children is central to the alleviation of poverty. Access to health care services and a healthy environment improves the life chances and the quality of life for poor children.

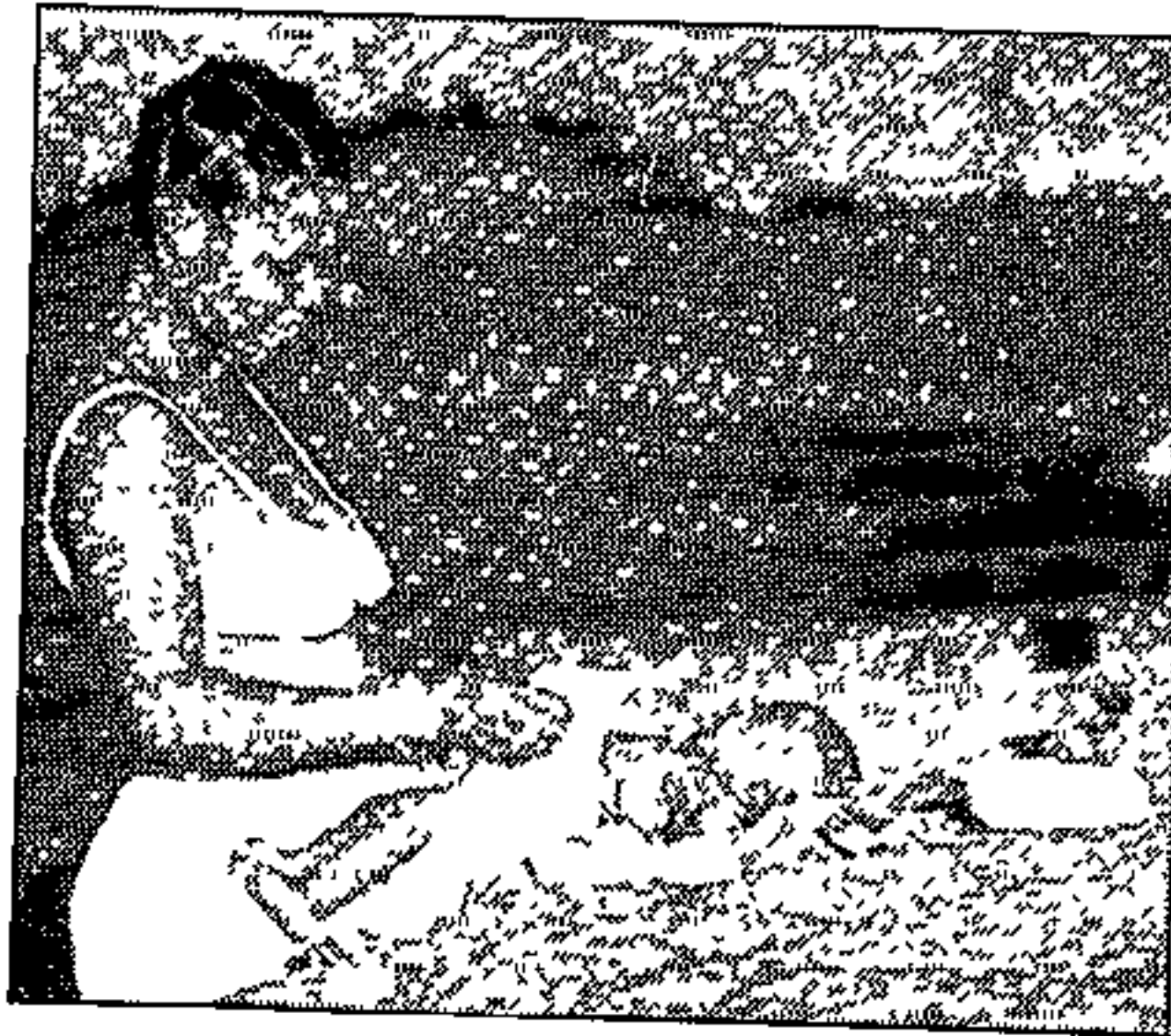
Access to basic education provides them with the opportunity to change their situation in future. Welfare services provide a safety net for the most disadvantaged children and their families.

At a political level the Government is clearly committed to the rights of children. This commitment to social delivery to children takes place at a time of fiscal restraint under the Government's macroeconomic policy.

Difficult choices must be made as the Government faces a dilemma between meeting policy commitments and maintaining tight financial constraints.

These choices are reflected in the Government budget. The budget is the Government's

As the world celebrated Global Poverty Day yesterday, **Mastoera Sadan** argues that public spending on children must be reprioritised to fight child poverty.



A mother tends to her baby on the banks of the Komati River. Six out of every 10 South African children live in poverty.

most important economic tool and translates political policies and priorities into programmes that are implemented.

Given limited resources, children's vulnerability to poverty calls for prioritising government's spending on social services that target children.

Government must also maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery to ensure we receive the best possible results for every rand spent.

South Africa spends a significant proportion of the budget (excluding interest payments on debt) on social services (55 percent), mainly education, health and welfare.

This compares favourably with other middle-income developing countries, such as those in Latin America that spend 14,85 percent on education compared to South Africa's 21,3 percent.

Yet our social indicators that measure the results of social spending are far poorer. This means we do not spend our resources in the most targeted, equal and cost-effective way.

Despite education receiving 22,1 percent of the consolidated budget for 1999-2000 (in national and provincial budgets), our outcomes are poor (such as the matric pass rate) and highly unequal, given the level of resource allocation to education.

The Constitution provides greater responsibility to the provinces for the delivery of social services. Provinces are prioritising health, welfare and education in their budgets.

However, the lack of sufficient management capacity within certain provinces, such as

Eastern Cape, Northern Province and North West, constrains the effective delivery of services to children.

In the poorer provinces, where child poverty and malnutrition are more prevalent, logistical and administrative problems have hampered the effective implementation of the primary school nutrition programme.

Allegations of mismanagement and corruption in administering the programme have meant that coverage has been poor and unreliable.

The challenge to reduce child poverty depends largely on our being able to improve the effective and efficient spending of scarce resources and improved or additional capacity in the poorer provinces, rather than simply an increase in social spending.

Reducing child poverty and improving social outcomes for children depends largely on reprioritising social expenditure programmes that improve equity and access to basic social services for children.

Children's needs are not sector specific and cannot be dealt with in an isolated manner. We need to be careful not to provide services in a fragmented manner.

Improving the quality of service delivery to children and maximising resource utilisation requires improved collaboration between government departments, and between the Government and non-governmental service providers.

A number of programmes targeted at children have been implemented that reflect progress. The district health system has decentralised health service delivery and ensured wider provision of primary health care services at district level within the provinces.

But crimes against children are on the increase. In 1996, the Child Protection Unit dealt with 35 838 cases of child abuse, an increase of 24 percent in the number of cases reported the previous year.

The Child Abuse Protocol has been implemented in Western Cape and has shown through practical implementation that intersectoral collaboration between departments can work.

Clearly some progress is being made in the implementation of programmes targeted at children. Global Poverty Day reminds us that to ensure that progress is sustained, we need to continue prioritising children in public.

(The writer is project manager of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa's Children's Budget Project. This article is based on a longer version co-written with Shirley Robinson.)

Asmal explores school discipline

PRISCILLA SINGH
EDUCATION WRITER

GUIDELINES in applying disciplinary alternatives to corporal punishment will be introduced in schools next year and may include community service, detention and special projects.

The guidelines are expected to be ready in time for next month's meeting of Education Minister Kader Asmal and the nine education MECs, it emerged after yesterday's monthly gathering of the Council of Education Ministers in Cape Town.

Asmal said yesterday he had been particularly outraged after teachers at a Cape Flats high school recently punished several pupils by making them kneel on the floor and then whipping them. Police are investigating.

He stressed that corporal



HEADS MAY ROLL: Kader Asmal

punishment had rightly been outlawed and physical violence was "not a very intelligent way to get pupils to behave or study".

"There must also be alternatives to making children write 2 000 lines as a mean of punishment — this could only lead to

giving pupils a life-long hatred of writing. Alternatives to corporal punishment may include community service, the traditional detention after school, alternative work and special projects.

"We must protect the learner from arbitrary and capricious punishment and give teachers genuine and real alternatives," Asmal said.

The code of conduct for learners, which was gazetted in May last year, will be used as the basis and "converted into something more useable in the classroom". The Human Rights Commission, as well as a new publication called *Discipline in Schools*, will also be drawn on for the new guidelines to be implemented in January next year.

● See Page 3

● What do you think about alternatives to traditional punishments at schools? Call Teleletters between 10am and noon on (021) 488-4722

Asmal: School rape a national crisis

Charlene Smith
M+G 15-21/10/99 (298)

Charlene Smith

Minister of Education Kader Asmal says that Childline's estimate that one in four school-going children under the age of 16 have been sexually violated is a national crisis.

'Sexual violence in schools must be rooted out and I will take a personal interest in this happening,' Asmal says.

His vow comes as police refuse to lay a charge against a Johannesburg teacher despite complaints from at least six

schoolgirls, aged between 14 and 16, at Queens High School in Jeppe that he either raped them or made lewd suggestions to them.

The medical examination of one 14-year-old who claimed she was raped after the teacher gave her something to drink that made her "feel strange" showed that the child had been sexually violated.

The parents of the child have laid a complaint with the police.

Another 14-year-old girl told police she had an "affair" with the teacher. Sex with a child under the age of 16 is illegal and is considered statutory rape. She is refusing to cooperate with investigations for "fear that her father will beat her if he finds out", says a police officer.

Yet another child claims the teacher had asked her if she "had ever been fingered".

A representative of the Johannesburg child protection unit says when children refuse to make a statement or submit to a medical examination, "there is nothing we can do if

they do not comply."

The teacher, who holds a British passport, resigned from Queens High last week.

Police know of two previous schools where he taught and where there were claims of a similar nature made about him.

However, the representative of the child protection unit says police will not investigate similar complaints at the two other schools "until we know if [the 14-year-old from Queens High who claims she was raped] is telling the truth".

The child is undergoing psychological testing every three weeks at the TMI Child Abuse Clinic in Braamfontein, where she is asked the details of the incident repeatedly while a psychologist assesses if "she is lying". She has attended the clinic twice.

In an interview with the *Mail & Guardian* the child, who sat with her arms tightly clasped across her chest, her lips firmly set and her eyes brimming with tears, said "I'm sick of people acting as though I am lying. I hate being at school with him there. Some of the other children say to me, 'you shagged the teacher', but I didn't, he raped me."

The child's mother said her daughter's school marks have plummeted since the alleged incident and she has become moody and angry. "We can't understand why the police haven't charged him."

Captain Edward Hutchings, who heads the Johannesburg child protection unit, says while he personally would have charged the teacher, the investigating officer first consulted a prosecutor, who withheld the charges because the

accused had brought a lawyer who said he had an alibi.

Hutchings said the senior public prosecutor at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court, Hans Wolfaardt, had further instructed use of the cautionary rule with the children. The rule, which has been discarded for adult rape victims, assumes that women and children who report rape are often unreliable.

It is under fire in South Africa and has been removed from practice in Namibia. Wolfaardt denied that he had instructed the use of the cautionary rule.

Gauteng MEC for Education Ignatius Jacobs has expressed concern about the case and Bheki Khumalo, Asmal's representative, says, "The minister has expressed concern about violence in schools."

"The minister takes a personal interest in this. There is no way rape or sexual violence can take place in schools and he is determined to root it out. This is a critical element of a new collective agreement to be signed with the South African Council of Educators soon."

"The problem of sexual violence is not confined to schools. It takes place in the broader community where people live and work. In the recent incident where five teachers in Mpumalanga forced children to perform sexual acts in class, the minister was very angry and called on the Mpumalanga education MEC to take the strongest action possible."

"When the teachers received five-year sentences [each], he phoned the director of public prosecutions for the state to appeal against the five-year sentences given by the judge."

Khumalo says sexual misconduct had to be thoroughly investigated by schools together with the police and district councils and that if necessary teachers should be sus-



Suffering children: One in four scholars are sexually abused. PHOTO: NAZINE HUTTON

pended or dismissed — "but those against whom accusations are levelled must have the right of reply."

He says schools are confused about guidelines from the department on how to deal with the issue of rape, sexual molestation or child abuse in schools whether among learners, educators or from the home.

"We must stop sexual misconduct but we need the support of school principals, by exposing those teachers, and if there is *prima facie* evidence to suspend wrongdoers."

Concern over SA childbirth deaths

Sowetan 21/10/99 (298)

By Bhungani Mzolo
Health Reporter

A TOTAL of 676 women died while giving birth in South Africa during the period from January to December 1998, a report by the National Health Department says.

The confidential inquiry into maternal deaths, released by Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang in Cape Town last Friday, is based on information about 676 women who died during pregnancy, labour or within six weeks of giving birth in 1998.

At present 150 women die while giving birth for every 100 000 babes born alive annually.

According to Dr Eddie Mhlanga, chief director of child and maternal health, this is 22 times higher than maternal death rates in developing countries, but nearly four times less than in countries such as Kenya, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

"What we do know is that preg-

nancy is the single greatest health risk to a woman," Mhlanga said. "What we also know is that pregnancy is one of the single greatest experiences for a woman."

"Many women who die as a result of complications arising from a pregnancy should not have died."

The report found five major causes of maternal death in this country: high blood pressure (23,2 percent); HIV-Aids (14,5 percent); bleeding during delivery (13 percent) and heart problems (10,4 percent).

In total, the report said, these causes of death account for 73,3 percent of all deaths reported.

It also found that women of 30 and older are more likely to die than younger ones. Moreover, women experiencing their first pregnancy and women who have had five or more pregnancies are at significant risk.

Mhlanga said the main purpose of the confidential report was to identify weaknesses in the healthcare system and to get a better understanding of

underlying causes, so that appropriate intervention can be made.

He said in almost half of the deaths reported there had been an opportunity to prevent the death but the opportunity had been missed.

"These are the opportunities that health workers, communities and women themselves could have used very effectively if we were paying sufficient attention to the plight of women."

Mhlanga said some women did not attending prenatal care or delayed seeking help, which resulted in tragedy.

"Women must start attending prenatal care as soon as they become aware of being pregnant."

The report also revealed that 30 percent of women who had attempted to abort had done so without going to a hospital, clinic or doctor.

A commission has been set up to investigate why women continue with back street abortions when the law now allows them to do so safely.

South Africa is frequently rocked by reports of sexual abuse of children, and as soon as the horror of one case subsides another comes to light. **Adele Baleta** investigates the possible reasons for the rising number of crimes against children

Suffer little children

ARG 23/10/99

(28)

The healthy functioning of a society is often judged by the way its women and children are treated, social scientists believe.

If South African society, with its ever-increasing crimes against children, was in the dock, it would probably be judged dysfunctional.

Some have argued that Judge John Foxcroft's recent soft sentencing of an Elites River father to seven years jail for raping his daughter showed how commonplace and normalised child rape had become.

Earlier this year the case emerged of a respected city accountant, aged 61, who had kept a register for a decade of the details of his alleged sexual encounters with more than 60 homeless boys. Today another case of alleged paedophilia is reported, this time, in connection with another so-called role model in society, the port captain at Port Nolloth.

Figures from the police child protection unit show 15 732 cases of child rape were reported last year compared with 7 559 in 1994.

The total crimes against children, including indecent assault, shot up from 23 664 to 37 352 in the same period. The real statistics are believed to be much higher.

Perpetrators can be as young as six, or well into old age. It's also a fact that child sexual abuse happens across social classes, in the homes and neighbourhoods of the richest of the rich and the poorest of the poor.

It is unacceptable, but why is it happening and what can be done? Shifra Jacobson, of the Institute for Child and Family Development,

said South Africa's history of oppression and racism resulting in poverty, overcrowding and stressful living conditions, unemployment and poor education, were contributing factors. But she stressed that child sexual abuse and paedophilia were not limited to the poor.

The recent alleged rape of a girl by the grandson of a famous former ANC leader was a case in point. "The boy was at a good school and comes from a home with status," she said.

Describing child sexual abuse as "a crime of opportunity", Ms Jacobson said that in poor areas children were easy pickings for perpetrators who violated children to relieve their stress and to feel powerful. Mothers often worked and lacked child care.

"Children are everywhere. They play in the streets, run errands and go to the shops. The rape of a child can be as easy as going to buy a loaf of bread."

Ms Jacobson said one notion explaining child sexual abuse was uncontrollable male sexuality. Boys and men were socialised to use their sexuality as a symbol of power and prowess and "in our society many men feel stripped of their power."

"Many are unemployed and frustrated. Raping children is a way to violently assert their power. The difference in age and experience gives them added power and control."

"Sex is the last bastion for many men and the only way they can show they are still men," Ms Jacobson said.

Some perpetrators felt it was their

right to violate children.

Children who watched television without supervision were at risk of becoming perpetrators. Ms Jacobson said a six-year-old boy said he learned how to penetrate a three-year-old girl by watching soaps. His father admitted that his son watched television all the time.

"Boys are socialised - via television and other media - that they must be physically on top of a girl or woman," she said.

Ubashany Nardoo, deputy director of Childline in Durban, said paedophilia was an international problem but violent sexual crime was higher in South Africa than most other countries.

She said paedophiles were different from gang rapists and other perpetrators in that they spent time grooming children for sex and were highly manipulative. They built up friendships and calculated times when no one was around to catch them, literally, with their pants down.

They were emotionally immature and unable to handle healthy relationships with adults. They felt safer with children, over whom they could assert their power and control.

Paedophiles often gained the trust of family circles, getting family members to accept them. When this was achieved it became much harder for the victim to blow the whistle.

Social worker Marcel Londt, who runs programmes for abusers, said paedophiles in upper classes did not identify with rank and file paedophiles. They firmly believed they

would never be caught and if they were, would be handled differently by the police and the courts.

She said there were few arrests and convictions.

"There are still strong traces of South Africa being a society that promotes rape in general."

She said cricket chief Ali Bacher's public support for convicted rapist Makhaya Ntini, whose appeal was heard this week - judgment was reserved - sent out negative signals.

Banning the Charlize Theron anti-rape advertisement had the same effect. She said she believed men's active participation in anti-rape and child sex crime campaigns would go a long way in sending out the right messages.

What other positive steps can be taken? Thoko Mayokweni has been appointed as the head of the Department of Justice's directorate of violence against women and children and is setting up a database to identify rape hotspots.

"We want to know where it is happening, who is targeted and what protective measures we can take."

Information will be gleaned from non-government organisations, police, government departments and intelligence. Ways to begin addressing the problem would be to create safe environments, increase police surveillance, pour financial resources into early childhood development and child care facilities, educate children about child abuse, get neighbours to report known abuse, secure more convictions and jail terms and institute rehabilitation programmes in jail.



CHILD'S PLAY: South Africa has a terrible record when it comes to the abuse of children

Call to tackle problem of street children

MYOLISI GOPHE
STAFF REPORTER

Groups working with street children have appealed to Cape social services minister Piet Meyer to include issues relating to their plight on the government's agenda.

With the festive season approaching, the number of children choosing street life is increasing, causing problems for tourists and communities at large.

At a conference organised by Molo Songololo in Cape Town last week, delegates said there was a need to per-

suade the government to focus more on street children.

Molo Songololo is a child rights organisation based in Cape Town, which emerged in 1979 as an initiative during the UN designated "International Year of the Child".

The aim of the conference was to explore the re-integration of street children with families and get stakeholders involved and find solutions.

It was attended by social workers and representatives of local and provincial government, non-governmental organisations and community-

based organisations.

A task team was formed to ensure that resolutions reached were implemented.

Molo Songololo co-ordinator Khaya Yaphi said the government should be transparent and accountable for projects, and be consultative in any changes it made.

The debate on the best way to deal with the plight of street children had often been a central issue for people working with them, but the aspect of re-integrating them with their families was often ignored.

(298) ART 25/10/99

Some of the resolutions adopted at the conference were that welfare groups should form networks with their communities and speak to leaders and councillors to get them more involved in the re-integration of street children.

In this regard, women working with street children in Kalksefontein near Bonteheuwel had formed a "child watch" organisation to monitor hungry children and those that did not go to school.

The women had also initiated a soup kitchen to feed the hungry.

Special probe into child abuse

Government departments, prosecutors could also be summoned

CLIVE SAWYER

Political Correspondent

The Human Rights Commission is to summon to public hearings those implicated in its special probe into sexual offences against children, and those to be targeted could include government departments and prosecutors failing to do their jobs.

The commission has launched an investigation into the incidence of sexual violence against children including abuse, rape and prostitution, as well as cases where offences were not properly reported to the authorities or were not properly investigated.

Prime focus of the investigation are the three provinces which have recorded the highest number of crimes against children: Gauteng, KwaZulu-

Natal and the Western Cape.

Among aims of the investigation is to establish whether the criminal justice system, welfare departments, schools, the family system and any other agency dealing with children provide appropriate relief for children who become victims of sexual crime.

Investigators also want to find out whether the prosecutorial system is adequate and efficient in dealing with complaints about sexual offences against children.

The commission said it would probe whether the rights in the constitution, legislation and international human rights agreements ratified by South Africa were observed in regard to children who were victims of sex crimes.

These rights include protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation, and the right not to be

punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way.

Protections in law include the Child Care Act and the Sexual Offences Act.

The commission also wanted to find out the underlying causes for shortcomings in the system and whether enough was being done to overcome them.

"Our goal is to improve the system by holding individuals accountable for multiple cases that fall through the cracks," said commission representative Sisako Nyobeni.

Submissions from interested parties, including organisations and individuals, should be made to the commission by Friday.

These submissions have to be in writing and anonymous submissions will not be accepted.

Where people making submissions

did not want their identities disclosed, the commission would respect this, but their submissions would not be able to form part of the basis of the findings of the probe.

Anyone "implicated or likely to be implicated" by submissions would be given a copy, along with a written notice to submit a written response within 14 days and to appear before a commission panel.

The panel will hold hearings from December 6 to 9 in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. Evidence will be given under oath.

Findings of the hearings would be made public, Mr Nyobeni said.

The Human Rights Commission probe coincides with increasing indignation being expressed from various platforms about the seemingly untrammelled rate of violence against

children and women, and the state's inadequate response.

The National Assembly will today hold a special "Speaker's Debate" on the causes of and solutions to the incidence of rape and violence against women.

This is the second debate on a closely related theme in the Assembly within days.

Sapa reports from Johannesburg that Women Against Child Abuse (Waca) yesterday said many judges were not upholding the rights of children as enshrined in the constitution and should read this document again.

Waca director Nicole Barlow said some of the judges in the country were passing sentences without considering the seriousness of the crime and what impact the crime had on the victim.

AKU 26/10/99 (298)

Farmer told not to use child labour

Louise Cook

AGRI-SA, formerly the SA Agricultural Union, supported moves to stop child labour including such labour on farms, the organisation said over the weekend.

This follows the labour department's recent ordering of a farmer near Laingsberg in the Karoo to stop children from working on his farm.

Agri-SA chief director of general and social affairs Kobus Kleynhans said that children should be allowed to enjoy their youth and prepare for a career through education and the development of skills. "This organisation has for many years told farmers that children

(298) under the age of 15 should not be employed," he said. (4)

In the case of the Laingsberg farmer, four children between the ages of 12 and 15 years watched over sheep and worked in fields on the farm.

A labour department inspector gave the farmer two weeks to stop the practice or face prosecution. Kleynhans said he appreciated the fact that the inspector did not hesitate to act, but at the same time showed reasonableness in that the farmer was given a warning.

In terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, children under 15 may not be employed. Transgressors face sentences of up to three years.

BD 8/11/99

S Africa to ratify child charter

JUDITH SOAL

298
ext 8/11/99
THE government will ratify a new charter on the rights of children in Africa today, providing the 15th signature needed for the charter to come into effect.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child was drawn up by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1990, but until now has only been ratified by 14 member states. Once a 15th state is added, the charter will be enforceable — but only in these 15 countries.

"We will need to give regular reports to the OAU to show we are working towards meeting the requirements of the charter," the Welfare Department's Ashley Theron told the welfare portfolio committee yesterday. He said the charter could be used to pressurise other member states who were not signatories to the agreement.

"One of the reasons other African countries haven't signed is that many of them... use children as soldiers," he said

"One of the provisions of the charter is that children should not be sent to war."

He said South Africa was in a position to ratify the charter since many of the requirements were already being met.

Yet even in South Africa, many of the provisions read more like a wish list than actual practice. These include:

- The use of children in all forms of begging should be prevented.
- Handicapped children should have the right to special protection measures.
- Every child should have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical, mental and spiritual health
- Children should be protected from all forms of torture, inhumane or degrading treatment — especially physical or mental injury or abuse — neglect or maltreatment, including sexual abuse.

The adoption of the charter was accepted by all parties in the portfolio committee yesterday and is expected to receive similar support in the National Assembly today

Battle for beatings rages on

M+G 19-25/11/99 (298)

Gavin Foster

The fight by Christian Education South Africa (Cesa), a fundamentalist Christian schooling group, to reverse the ban on beating schoolchildren suffered a setback on Monday when a Durban school worker was convicted of common assault.

After convicting Valerie Ryan (40), magistrate SJ Mayeza discharged her with a caution, saying Ryan believed her actions were legal, and she probably wouldn't do it again.

But the trial was not really about Ryan. It was about Cesa and what its members feel is an infringement of their constitutional right to freedom of religious belief. Cesa maintains that its members' right to administer corporal punishment, which it calls "biblical correction", is clearly spelt out in the Bible. Proverbs 23 verses 13 to 14 instructs believers to "withhold not correction from the child, for if thou shalt beat him with the rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with

the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."

When corporal punishment was outlawed in schools on January 1 1997, Cesa, which represents 209 schools, applied to the Constitutional Court. Judge Pius Langa rejected the application. "If they [teachers] choose to take the risk of beating children knowing full well that the provision's constitutionality is under challenge then there should be no complaint if appropriate consequences follow their deliberate conduct," he said.

Ryan's conviction arose from an incident at Pinetown's Highway Christian Academy in March when a 13-year-old grade eight girl was given two strokes on the buttocks.

After corporal punishment was outlawed, Cesa schools asked parents to sign a document authorising staff to administer corporal punishment whenever it was deemed necessary. The parents of the girl beaten by Ryan claimed that although they had signed the document, they had told the

school principal, Chris Barnard, that if their daughter was to be beaten they should be advised in advance.

Barnard was away when the pupil was caned. Although Ryan has a standard seven education and is employed as a monitor (unqualified teaching assistant) it was felt her experience as a mother and grandmother qualified her to carry out the punishment.

The "corporal correction report" that the child took home afterwards recorded that her response to correction had been "screaming, shouting, trying to run from the room". When the parents read the report and saw their child's heavily bruised buttocks, they laid a charge of assault against Ryan.

The prosecution, after reviewing the circumstances surrounding the charges, declined to prosecute, believing that the indemnity signed by the parents made the beating legal. It was only when the Human Rights Commission intervened a few months later and pointed out that no person may sign away the rights of a child that the docket was reopened and justice took its course.

Cesa and Highway Christian Academy declined to comment on Ryan's conviction. Ryan's lawyer has been instructed to appeal.

Project Go means kids have to

mter 26/11 - 2/12/99

(298)

Paul Kirk

Three years and you are out. That is the aim of Project Go, an exercise at trying to get children out of orphanages and into communities as fast as possible - preferably within three years.

The problem is that if a child does not find a home in a community it may find itself worse off than before - especially in KwaZulu-Natal where children's shelters shut for Christmas.

The Department of Social Welfare has decided that South Africa's overcrowded orphanages are no place for children to grow up in.

The decision is to be acted upon under the codename of Project Go, the aim of which is to ensure that institutions prepare children for the real world.

As part of Project Go, institutions were required to submit development programmes for every child. These were to be reviewed by the department when granting funds.

The development plan was aimed at moving the child out the door as soon as possible and if the institution did not toe the line then its funding would be cut.

Said John Harrison of Ziphakhamise shelter in Port Shepstone: "Institutions are not ideal places for children to grow up in. Quite rightly, the aim of Project Go is to have children placed back into communities."

"We are placed under real pressure to do that - for example we would have to have a real reason for keeping a child for, say, four or five years."

KwaZulu-Natal director of social welfare Eric Mhlongo claims the project is going well and admitted that while Project Go did save money it was not launched for that purpose.

"Institutions are not proper places for children to grow up in. In order for a child to grow we need to get them back into communities. Back into families and so on."

The problem is that, according to unofficial figures from Durban Child Welfare, up to as many as 30% of children placed in communities wind up back on the streets.

And if they find themselves on the streets of KwaZulu-Natal over Christmas there is only one struggling shelter for them.

Sheila Masson helps run the Street Children's Shelter in Durban.



Away from home: Orphans released from institutions into communities often do not find homes
PHOTOGRAPH: NIC BOTHMA

She is also chair of the Street Children's Forum, which helps coordinate the activities of the various welfare groups that deal with street children and runaways.

The Street Children's Shelter is the only refuge for homeless children that remains open over Christmas. And this season Masson is expecting to be inundated with children, some of whom will not have fitted into the communities they were placed into with great haste.

Said Masson: "Not many people know this, but all the other shelters close their doors over Christmas and keep a skeleton staff. We are the

only ones who keep going. And the signs are there that we will be very, very busy this year, I don't know how we will cope this year, I really do not."

"We never used to see girl orphans. Illegal prostitution used to take them off the streets. Now we see girl prostitutes."

"We are starting to see Aids orphans now, not a lot, but it is beginning. Whole communities in this province are being destroyed by Aids and we are seeing the first wave of orphans from this."

"When everyone else closes their doors they send these kids to us. And we can only barely cope at the

best of times. We are seeing more kids every year and every year we get less money."

The shelter gets R12 500 a month, but we need R20 000 to R25 000 just to have the bare necessities. This year we had our budget cut by R10 000 - and before that, on a daily basis I would wake up and think how on earth we are going to make it through the day."

Masson said the children in her shelter would have very little to look forward to on Christmas day.

"We cannot do anything special unless we get some funding or donations. And so far we have had no offers of anything at all."

SA children 'not safe', says Unicef

Pearl Sebolao

ONE in four girls and one in eight boys in SA will have their sexual debut through force, coercion and abuse before they reach the age of 14, Jesper Morch, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) representative in SA said yesterday.

Addressing the launch of Unicef's State of the World's Children report in Johannesburg, Morch said SA children were still far from enjoying a safe and secure environment.

The Unicef report aims to raise awareness and sustain interventions on children's rights issues.

It says 59% of households in Gauteng, which is home to about 1-million children under the age of six, are poor, while six out of 10 mothers of school-age children are unemployed.

Morch said the effect of HIV/AIDS in SA would have a detrimental effect on children, resulting in more than 1-million orphans within three to four years.

The report says that although primary school enrolment rates have increased globally since the 1980s, more than 130-million children in the developing world do not have access to basic education.

Welfare Minister Zola Skweyiya said SA children still found themselves in a "precarious situation" and this demanded leadership and urgent action.

Poverty alleviation and support for children affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS were some priorities government had set itself.

Skweyiya said government had recently established a national plan of action for children, to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(298) PD 14/12/99

By Charity Bhengu

A S the 21st century approaches, the overwhelming majority of South Africa's children still live in extreme poverty.

This calls for renewed commitment from the Government, civil society, non-governmental organisations and the private sector to intervene and end this tragedy.

In an interview with *Sowetan*, Welfare, Population and Development Minister Zola Skweyiya said a major concern of the Government during the past five years has been to make democracy work for children.

As a result it created the constitutional, legislative and policy frameworks that would entrench children's human rights and improve their access to basic social services.

Said Skweyiya: "We ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on June 16 1995, and made sure that the principles of the convention were incorporated in our new Constitution."

The Government also established a unique political structure, the National Plan of Action for Children, to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

And last month Parliament ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

"The challenge has always been how to translate these policies from paper into reality," said Skweyiya.

"There is much work that still needs to be done, but I am confident that a solid foundation has been created to keep our promises to children."

The Department of Welfare, Population and Development has to be turned around to face the challenges that have been set by the Government, especially the demand from President Thabo Mbeki to turn South Africa into a caring society.

Hence the department called for a meeting in September to consult with NGOs and other components of civil society "so that we can all work together in fighting poverty."

"The level of poverty in rural areas and its impact on women and children is shocking," said Skweyiya. "I understand when most of us do not want to go to such areas."

"It is simply because we want to forget that such situations exist. If we are embarrassed by the expensive Mercedes Benzes we drive."

The reality is that such places do exist and that a large number of rural people who flock to the cities do so to get jobs. At least 40 000 people migrate to Gauteng every month (including from neighbouring countries).

If the Government does not resolve the problems of the poor, and specifically

Children bear the brunt of poverty

Sowetan 15/12/99 (293)

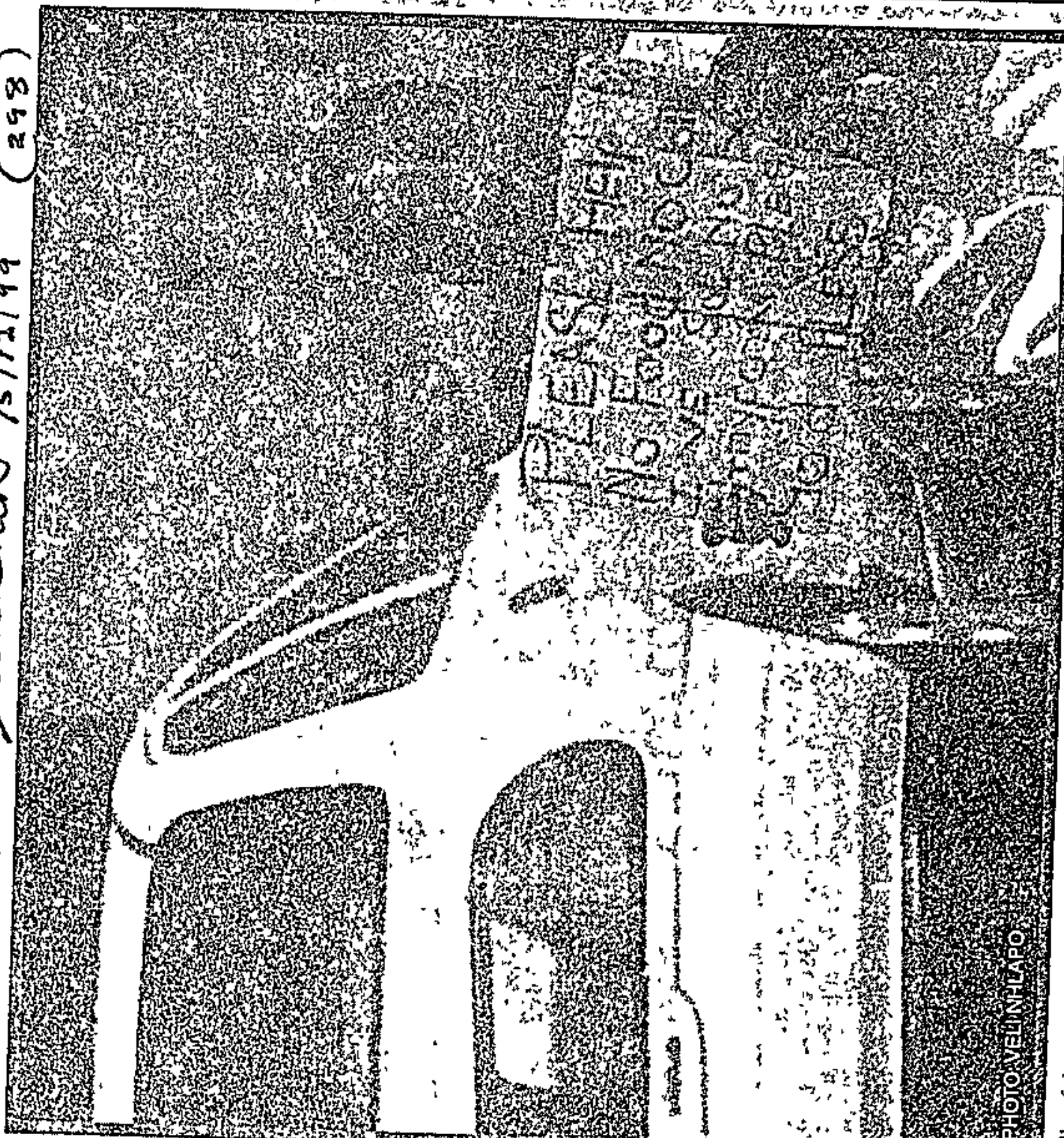


PHOTO: VELINHLAPO

ment in the rural areas the situation is particularly bad.

The only livelihood of many families in the rural areas is a monthly pension grant of R520, which must be stretched to feed about seven family members.

Said Skweyiya: "We always talk about black empowerment, but who are these people that are being empowered? There are very few of them and once they get top positions, they forget completely about where they came from."

from "They do not want to be reminded that there are still people who go to bed without a meal and refuse to acknowledge the fact that the violence and diseases that exist in the country emanate from poverty."

Skweyiya stressed that the Government cannot fight poverty alone - it needs the participation of everybody.

He added that the entire welfare system must be reorganised to ensure that it reaches the poorest of the poor.

More babies die in SA

THE following statistics from the *Southern African Journal of Public Health* illustrate the devastating effects of poverty on children in South Africa.

- South Africa's infant mortality rate is four times higher than that of countries with comparable economies. Of the 1.2 million children born each year, 85 000 die before their fifth birthday.

- Poverty, lack of resources and unhealthy living conditions are major factors.

- About 36 percent of all child deaths are due to diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory diseases. This is mainly due to a lack of clean water, which causes intestinal infections and accounts for 19.5 percent of all deaths in the ages between infancy to five years.

- About 23 percent of children under the age of six suffer from chronic malnutrition or stunting. Malnourished children have lifetime disabilities and weakened immune systems.

- Poverty also increases the risk of HIV infection because of weakened immune systems. One in three children suffer from iron deficiency in South Africa.

- Poverty has also given rise to an environment in which child abuse and rape are rife. About 15 336 children were raped in 1998, 2 560 children abandoned and 5 800 children neglected.

- Two thirds of people in the poorest households have primary education only. There are currently 15 million illiterate black South Africans trapped in poverty.

Judge orders state to explain policy

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — A Cape high court judge has ordered the government to explain within three months how it intends to give substance to the constitutionally entrenched rights of homeless children.

In what is likely to become a landmark judgment with far-reaching consequences for government, Judge Dennis Davis, with Judge RG Comrie concurring, found that homeless children were entitled to shelter.

Davis ordered the Cape metropolitan council, the Western Cape premier and the national government to present, under oath, a report on how they would do this.

Davis's judgment stems from an application by Irene Grootboom and about 390 other squatters, who moved from

private land before their eviction earlier this year, for the state to give them shelter. They say section 26 of the constitution forces the state to provide them with housing.

The Grootboom group, with their 510 children, lived in the Wallacedene camp, but left because of wet and unhealthy conditions. They settled on New Rust, a private property set aside for housing development. Forced to leave New Rust, they returned to Wallacedene to find their old places had been taken.

The court ruled that the squatters' application for housing in terms of section 26 of the constitution failed because the government's duty to provide "access to adequate housing" depended on the availability of resources, and that there was evidence that the state was trying to fulfil its duty.

"In my view, the respondents produced clear evidence that a rational housing programme has been initiated and that such a programme has been designed to solve a pressing problem in the context of scarce financial resources."

Section 28 of the constitution, however, "provides that every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, health care and social services".

The squatters argued that children had an "unqualified right to shelter", obliging government to provide shelter. They also argued that as it was in the best interests of children to remain with their parents, the children's right to shelter had to be extended to parents.

The judges noted concerns about the possibility of a flood of demands from squatters for shelter for their children.

The court said the case concerned homeless children only, and that the fact that the squatters' building materials were destroyed during their eviction made a difference.

If parents fail to provide shelter for their children, the constitution obliges the state to do so, but "this is a significantly more rudimentary form of protection than a house".

Davis said more information was needed and that the three tiers of government should propose a practical solution.

He said "provisionally, tents, portable latrines and a regular supply of water would constitute the bare minimum" government would have to provide to discharge its constitutional duty.

Western Cape premier Gerald Morkel's spokesman said the province would take steps to comply with the ruling.

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