



## social development

Department:  
Social Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### KEY MESSAGES 2016 CHILD PROTECTION WEEK

The Department of Social Development will launch National Child Protection Week in Braakspruit Farm, Klerksdorp on 29 May 2016 under the theme: “*Let Us All Protect Children to Move South Africa Forward.*”

As part of the planned activities for this campaign, President Jacob Zuma will, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, visit Child and Youth Care Centres in Atteridgeville to highlight government interventions in the care and protection of vulnerable children. The 1<sup>st</sup> of June is commemorated globally as the International Children’s Day.

The closing ceremony of the Child Protection Week will be held on 5 June 2016 in Amersfoort, near Ermelo, Mpumalanga Province.

National Child Protection Week is marked annually to raise awareness for the rights of children. It aims to mobilise all sectors of society to care for and protect children. The campaign is led by the Minister of Social Development; however it is incumbent on all of South Africans to play a role in protecting children and creating a safe and secure environment for them.

The aim of child protection is to ensure the safety, well-being, care and protection of children through an integrated multi-disciplinary approach. South Africa has drafted legislation which is based on the United Convention of the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Constitution. The latter specifically states that every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation.

Despite the best efforts of government and civil society to protect children, many families face severe challenges in caring for and protecting their children. Recorded levels do not accurately reflect the full extent of the problem with many cases going unreported. This type of violence and abuse has long-lasting consequences for children with strong evidence of a link between childhood violence and adult mental health disorders and substance abuse.

This year, the focus of the Child Protection Week will be on child labour and exploitation as well as unaccompanied minors from the neighbouring countries. The two selected areas for the opening and the closing of the campaign are predominantly farming areas where incidences of child labour and exploitation are prevalent.

To address the scourge of child abuse, neglect and exploitation Cabinet established the Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat Violence against Women and Children. The Committee has developed a five-year plan of action in addressing this challenge with proposed measures. Key

amongst these interventions is the 24 Hour GBV Command Centre that provides counselling and support services to survivors of violence.

In addition to Victim Empowerment Programme interventions, government established White Door Centres to respond to violence in an integrated and coordinated manner by ensuring a comprehensive package of services to affected women and children. To date, 91 White Door Centres have been established in seven provinces. The department is in the process to establish these centres in the two remaining provinces; Limpopo and Western Cape.

As part of early interventions and protection of children, government has partnered with National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) to establish Isibindi Programme. More than 1.4 million orphaned and vulnerable children benefit from this programme.

Child Care Forums, capacitated and supervised by social service professionals, are also established as first line response mechanism in addressing the needs of vulnerable children. These forums also serve as the eyes and ears for service providers as well as the community thus providing a safety net for the children.

Early Childhood Development has been identified as a critical measure to fight the root causes of poverty, in particular intergenerational poverty as entrenched in the NDP Vision 2030.

The adoption of the first 1000 days campaign by the ruling party demonstrates government's commitment to protecting the wellbeing of children focusing on the most critical period of a child's life, beginning with the mother's pregnancy to the age of two years.

To address the effects of orphaned children, the Minister of Social Development appointed a 22-member Ministerial Committee for 18 months to undertake the status of the foster care system throughout the country. The aim is to ensure that no child is excluded as a result of administrative processes. By the end of March this year, the number of children receiving foster child grants was 470,682, in the care of 330, 247 foster parents.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
<p><b><i>Together United in the fight against Gender Based Violence</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To address the scourge of child abuse, neglect and exploitation Cabinet established the Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat Violence against Women and Children.</li> <li>• The Committee has developed a five-year plan of action in addressing this challenge with proposed measures. Key amongst these interventions is the 24 Hour GBV Command Centre that provides counselling and support services to survivors of violence.</li> <li>• Survivors of gender based violence can call 24 hour toll free number – <b>0800 428 428</b>.</li> <li>• Callers can also access the <b>free SMS line</b> by dialling <b>*120*7867#</b></li> <li>• Alternatively, survivors may call <b>ChildLine</b> toll free number on <b>0800 055 555</b></li> <li>• White Door Centres serve as immediate shelter for victims of gender based violence in communities</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Together we can safeguard children’s rights.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory protection to children is offered by the Constitution, legislation, policies, and international instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.</li> <li>• We should all be familiar with children’s rights so that we can uphold and protect them.</li> <li>• The Children’s Act creates an enabling environment for a comprehensive child care and protection system for South Africa.</li> <li>• This legislation protects children from cultural and religious practices that can be harmful to their well-being and health.</li> <li>• The Children’s Act ensures that a child living with a disability or chronic illness live in conditions that ensure dignity and facilitate active participation in the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>The protection of children is everybody’s responsibility.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We all have a duty to care for the most vulnerable in our society.</li> <li>• Together we can and must do more to prevent neglect, abuse, violence and exploitation of children.</li> <li>• Government alone cannot eradicate this scourge and calls on all South Africans and sectors to partner with us in creating safer communities.</li> <li>• It is our duty to create safer and healthier communities so that our children can thrive.</li> <li>• We call on everyone to show their support for Child Protection Week by wearing a green ribbon.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>The integrated criminal justice system protects our children.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government has a zero-tolerance approach towards child abuse.</li> <li>• We must work together with police, prosecutors and</li> </ul>

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
	<p>courts to ensure that those who hurt, exploit and abuse children are arrested and convicted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 43 sexual offences courts nationally ensure that child victims are able to access justice in a victim-friendly environment.</li> <li>• Thuthuzela Care Centres nationally serve as one-stop centres for rape victims in a quest to reduce secondary victimisation.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Law enforcement agencies are striving to make it easy for children to seek help.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our police are trained on sexual violence to improve investigations, prosecutions and victim support.</li> <li>• There are currently 919 Victim Friendly Facilities providing a private place where survivors can be interviewed and statements can be taken.</li> <li>• Family Violence Child Protection and Sexual Offences Units countrywide offer specialised services to victims of abuse.</li> <li>• These units have dedicated investigators and other resources that are assigned to cases where women and children are affected by violence.</li> <li>• These units assist in the preparation and support of child victims during court proceedings.</li> </ul>