

Joint Budget Committee Hearings on
2006 MTBPS:
Social Services

02/11/2006

Introduction

- SALGA Notes with appreciation that
 - 2006 MTBPS is presented in the context of general acknowledgement that whilst economic growth is robust and creating jobs faster unemployment remains most pressing social and economic challenge.
 - Reduction of poverty and increase in disposable income of many households through social security expansion and real income tax relief for low and middle income earners

Spending Priorities to Assist the Poor

- Health and Social Welfare Services
- Education
- Building state capacity
- Housing, Municipal and Community Services

Health and Social Welfare Services

- SALGA notes and supports the following priority areas:
 - Continuation with upgrading hospitals and modernizing tertiary services.
 - Strengthened comprehensive HIV and Aids programme.
 - New remuneration dispensation for health professionals.
 - Expanding emergency services.
 - Expanding provision of children's homes and centres that address substance abuse.

Health and Social Welfare Services

- Except for the fact that departments project underspending and rollovers from year to year these programmes identified for funding from the additional budget allocation are crucial for social upliftment of the communities.
- SALGA expected that specific allocation to be made to address the shortage of social workers and parity of salaries for government and non-profit organizations.

Education

- An increase in provincial equitable shares to give provinces the financial strength to improve quality of education through evaluating performance and investing in physical infrastructure is applauded.
- Funds towards upgrading the competence and qualifications of teachers, FET bursary and student loan programme and subsidies for higher education institutions for infrastructure will go a long way to improve literacy level in the communities and thereby promote the much needed skills for the country's economic growth.

Education

- Funds towards expansion of adult literacy programmes to contribute to both human right awareness and social cohesion in a fragmented society will assist in strengthening the democratic governance principle of public participation.
- Allocation towards building and upgrading community libraries is also most welcome.
- SALGA expected the 2006 MTBPS to announce on the government's will to extend the child support grant and an extensive school nutrition programme to also cover children between age 14-18.

Building State Capacity

- Most of local government service delivery is provided through people, directly and indirectly. Funding a structured approach to building the capacity of the workforce in programmes such as Siyenza Manje will therefore positively impact and improve the services delivered to the community.

Building State Capacity

- Another structured approach to building capacity such as the National Skills Development Strategy which its first phase of implementation came to an end on 31 March 2005 should be encouraged through budget allocation. Although the strategy has struggled, movements are currently underway to improve implementation and effectiveness, and it was expected that MTBPS 2006 would pronounce on further allocation towards the second phase and how the strategy will become more effective,

Housing, Municipal and Community Services

- Allocation for neighborhood development partnership to fund improvements to settlements for sustainable communities should grow overtime in order to encourage those municipalities that have not as yet registered any project to do so.
- Funding for bulk systems of water supply and sanitation (new and extension) was long overdue and will go along way to increase the MIG (funding connectivity to households) spending.