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IDASA - Budget Information Service

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Budget 2005 and vulnerable children Children's Budget Unit, Idasa

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Who are South Africa's most vulnerable children?

- Children who are very poor (especially girls)
- Children affected by HIV / AIDS
- Children living on the streets
- Children with disabilities
- Child victims of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and trafficking
- Children of refugees
- Children committing crime

What are the government programmes?

- Child Support Grant - CSG (for children 0-14 years old)
- Primary School Feeding Scheme (one meal on each school day for children from Grade R to 7)
- Free basic health care for young children and pregnant mothers
- Home and community-based care programme for children made vulnerable by HIV / AIDS
- School fee exemptions for the poor (still being considered)

What are the gaps in services?

- Non governmental organizations delivering services to vulnerable children are not receiving enough government support
- Policy gaps are: Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy guide; method to cost services; government fulfilling its constitutional role to provide 100% of welfare services to children; increase the CSG to include children 15-18 years; CSG should also go to children in larger households
- Quality of education and health services is still poor

What are the indirect support measures?

- An extra R74 billion for programmes over the next 3 years – with 30% going directly to social grants
- Building the human and management skills as well as information systems in government
- Growing the economy (which could lead to more parents of vulnerable children getting jobs)

- Additional investment in child specific social services and grants
- Measures to encourage increased skills, small and medium business development; ways to develop industry

What are the direct support measures?

- More money for social grants (all grants were increased to keep up with inflation)
- Increasing the salaries of social workers, teachers and the police
- A new grant for short term relief to vulnerable groups (but only for those who are not already receiving social assistance)
- Money for small farmers and to return land to those who lost it during Apartheid
- Better buildings and equipment in colleges and universities as well as more student financial assistance
- Better housing, water and sanitation in poor communities – starting with the upgrading of informal settlements
- Improving birth and death registration (which is needed for accessing grants)
- More money for courts and to have more successful convictions
- Expanding the Primary School Feeding Scheme
- Start home and community-based care for children those affected by HIV / AIDS
- Policy guide for ECD (due to be released soon)

What are the remaining concerns?

- Not enough money for welfare services (especially in the non-governmental sector) to meet the need
- No extension of the CSG for children between 15-18 years
- No review of the means test for the CSG (especially how it affects children in large households)
- Government not fulfilling its constitutional role to fund social services to all children