



THE LAUNCH OF THE 2018 SOUTH AFRICAN CHILD GAUGE: CHILDREN, FAMILIES
AND THE STATE

20th NOVEMBER 2018

SPEAKING NOTES

- Good day ladies and gentlemen. Today we launch the 2018 South African Child Gauge which focuses on children, families and the state. My name is Angie Makwetla, one of the 8 Commissioners at the SAHRC. I am in charge of promoting the rights of children, migrants and refugees.
- I truly believe that if the family unit is empowered, our children will develop into well adjusted adults. I am thus elated to have empirical research to back this up as we – the SAHRC- continue to lobby government to develop programmes on parenting, particularly for young parents.
- The right to parental care is recognized in Article 19 of African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Article 8 and 9 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a fundamental human right. Recognising the importance of parental care, the South African Constitution states that:

'Every child has the right to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment'

- It can thus be concluded that a child's development is heavily reliant on parental/family care. However when the family is unable to provide the adequate care, it is the duty of the government to support.

- The Child Gauge stated various factors that hinder children from receiving adequate family care:
 - South African families are still suffering from the deliberate fragmentation caused by apartheid;
 - Government policies and programmes do not recognise the diverse family forms and changing household arrangements;
 - Children of all ages are vulnerable to multiple forms of physical injury and abuse, both within and beyond the home. Three out of four murders of young children (0-4) occur in the context of abuse in the home – this is indeed very scary;
 - Poverty hampers child development;
 - Birth registration is not equally accessible to all children – especially migrants and refugees. This is concerning as birth registration is a fundamental human rights as well as an enabling right. As it facilitates access to grants, education, health care and other services.

- The report went ahead to propose the following recommendations:

- Programmes need to be sufficiently flexible to respond to diverse and changing family forms
- Promote positive discipline
- Priorities an integrated response to violence against women and children
- Increase the value of the Child Support Grant. As the Grant does not even cover the minimum cost of food, and nearly 7 million children still live below the food poverty line, even when taking account that some of them receive grants.
- Enforce the maintenance Act and resource the maintenance system adequately to ensure that men who earn income contribute financially to support their children.
- Reduced unemployment, especially among women will directly benefit children. But given the persistently high unemployment rates, this is not an 'easy win' – hence the need to strengthen grants.
- Birth registration laws and systems should be adapted to be inclusive of all family forms.
- This report should not just seat on our shelves but be used to lobby for the realisation of children's rights.

Thank you