No.215 - 2022: Fourth Session, Sixth Legislature

**GAUTENG PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE**

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS,**

**TABLINGS AND**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**========================**

Monday, 20 June 2022

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

none

**TABLINGS**

none

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**1. The Chairperson of the Social Development Portfolio Committee, Hon. R J Kekana, tabled the Committee’s Report on the 2021 Sector Parliament for Senior Citizens, as attached:**

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Committee Report on the 2021 Sector Parliament for Senior Citizens**

***Theme: “Listening to the voices of older persons amid the Corona virus Pandemic”***

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**Social Development Portfolio Committee**

**21 June 2022,**

The Hon. Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development, Ms. Refiloe Kekana, hereby tables the Portfolio Committee Report on the Senior Citizens Sector Parliament for 2021/2022 FY.

**1. BACKGROUND**

Older people play a critical role in our society. Most older people live in community settings, very often with younger kin. These intergenerational or skip-generational households rely heavily on grandparents to care for children or the sick and contribute significantly to household income through their pensions.

The lives of Gauteng’s elderly are almost certainly intertwined with those of younger residents in numerous other ways beyond those presented here. Along with the pandemic’s economic and social costs, the human and emotional impacts of disrupted relationships between generations will be substantial. Findings have shown that a very large proportion of people over the age of 60 identify themselves as head of the household. An equally high proportion identify themselves as the primary caregiver.

The Older Persons Act promises to protect and empower the elderly, but in reality, the contribution of older people to society is often overlooked and their needs neglected. This is particularly notable in our overburdened health system where younger populations are prioritised in terms of budget allocation, service provision is poorly suited to older people’s complex health needs, and there is a severe lack of expertise that are relevant to old people’s health needs.

With South Africa introducing lockdown from time to time, the social and economic implications of the pandemic, and efforts to contain it, are becoming increasingly clear. Evidence of growing levels of hunger and income insecurity raises concerns about spiralling poverty, social unrest and economic collapse as a result of long-term shutdowns.

The government’s introduction of expanded food assistance during the Lockdown involved temporary increases in social grant amounts, and temporary social distress grants for other unemployed individual, brought some relief in as far as the pressure that was faced by the elderly.

**2. INTRODUCTION**

The Legislature, through sector parliaments, involves various sectors of society in matters of governance in the province. Through the sector Parliament, the GPL engages targeted sectors of the society to ensure inclusive participation and translate the intention of the “People’s Parliament” into reality in keeping with the prescripts of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which mandates legislatures to conduct their business in an open and transparent manner. The Senior Citizens Sector Parliament is one of the sector parliaments initiated by the Legislature to give youth a platform to discuss and debate issues that affect them as a sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the global population in drastic ways. In many countries people are facing the most threats and challenges. Although all age groups are at risk of contracting COVID-19, older people face significant risk of developing severe illness if they contract the disease due to psychological changes that come with ageing and potential underlying health conditions.

But if the virus causes large numbers of hospitalisations and deaths, further support to the families of those affected will be needed. This may include continuing to pay out old age grants for six months after a beneficiary passes away, and psycho-social support to deal with illness and loss. Ongoing careful, data-driven, and localised analysis of challenges and potential solutions is very essential.

The importance of protecting and supporting Gauteng’s elderly is very crucial at this stage. The lives of Gauteng’s elderly are almost certainly intertwined with those of younger residents in numerous other ways beyond what commonly debated. Along with the pandemic’s economic and social costs, the human and emotional impacts of disrupted relationships between generations will be substantial.

It can never be over emphasized that support for elderly people and their families, and caregivers is an essential part of the country’s comprehensive response to the pandemic. More so, in cases whereby they are isolated or quarantine, provision of nutritious food and medical supply to support their physical health and social care. It is also crucial that accurate information is provided, while ensuring that older people have clear messages and resources on how to stay physically and mentally healthy during the pandemic.

**3.** **OBJECTIVES**

* To provide an opportunity to the elderly citizens to have engagements with provincial leaders on issues that affect them
* To profile the constitutional mandates of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature,
* To have engagements on the socio-economic challenges faced by elderly people and put through recommendations that will assist in dealing with the persisting challenges,
* To strengthen interaction between the elderly and to develop policy regime with understanding of the province
* The event seeks to tackle the question of human rights within the senior citizen sector within the COVID-19 pandemic.
* Elicit views and challenges faced by older persons.
* Profile the plight and promote the rights of the elderly in society.
* Profile the GPL as a caring activist Constitutional institution.

**Targeted Stakeholders**

* PCO’s
* Human Rights Commission
* Gauteng Provincial Government
* Members of the Provincial Legislature
* Senior Citizens Organizations
* Elderly Recreation Clubs
* Religious Groups
* The South African Older Persons Forum (SAOPF)

**4. PROCESS FOLLOWED**

* The Office of the Chairperson of Committees identified the Portfolio Committee on Social Development as the lead Committee for 2021 Senior Citizens Sector Parliament
* On Tuesday, 09 November 2021, the Portfolio Committee received a presentation from the Office of the Deputy Chairperson of Committees
* On the 18 November 2021, GPL convened the Sector Parliament for People with Disabilities with Social Development Portfolio Committee as the lead Committee.
* On the 03 June 2022, Social Development Committee deliberated and adopted the Committee Report on the 2021 Senior Citizens Sector Parliament.

**5. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE THEMES**

**COMMISSION 1**

**Safety and Security for Older Persons: “An Assessment of the Safety Programs in Dealing with Risks Associated with the Collection of Social Grants”**

The South African government, with an aim of making sure that the welfare of the elderly citizen is well taken care of. The department has a constitutional obligation to provide income support to those who do not have sufficient social security provision for old age. The provision of social grant is guided by the constitution, national legislation, and regulations. The government, after conducting several studies concluded that grants, especially elderly grants are one of the best and effecting ways of fighting the battle with poverty. Often however the grant is used to meet the needs of the whole family. This is due to the high rate of unemployment. With this background, south Africa decided to extend the grant system to the elderly which has come with many benefits especially with the current set up in many families where you find that family members are depending on the grant that is received by the. Grants for the elderly are accessed on a monthly basis at different pay points in the Province. This initiative was introduced to make sure that there is easy access to the grant money. It is evident however that with good will there always will be an opportunity for abuse. Currently, the elderly are facing too many challenges when they go to access their grant. This is evident even in their own residents where one finds that the people he/she lives with pose lots of safety challenges not to mention what happens as they find their way to the different pay points: banks, post office and retail shops. The commission discussed a number of such barriers in detail. Firstly, one must appreciate that the government has made a big improvement in making sure that the elderly people are able to get their money we were happy that the government decided to divide the dates of receiving the grants for older persons and children, but what we found is the following:

• There seems to be a problem with allocation of days for getting grants for the Elderly because now even the youth have to get their grant at the same time, thus causing confusion which might lead to the elderly losing their money or maybe the ques being too long.

• Stores becomes full on pay day we do not enjoy shopping as the queues tend to be very long and old people spend almost the whole day trying to buy what they need

• Another challenge that they face when they get to the shops is the fact that the dedicated tills are not monitored such that tellers tend to be too slow and usually, they do not open all the available tills even if they see that there is a que.

**COMMISSION 2**

**Sports Participation and positive development in older persons: an exploration of programs in place to encourage physical activity exercise among older persons.**

Research has proven that there is a serious decline in birth rate and of serious note is the fact that this will have huge implications for our future society, Not only will it change labour supply and social dynamics, it will also lead to much higher health care costs. But there is more than just the aging world population. At the same time the sport participation of the elderly is fuelled by the present and future trends. Ageing in a healthy way is now the new religion of the elderly and rightly so, there so much awareness that movement and sport leads to a healthy body in many ways. It is also of great importance to note that the average modern senior citizen no longer in retirement villages. They prefer to live their lives for as long as possible in the security of their own homes and they still long for social cohesion. The country is also experiencing the generational impact, where initially the elderly sector did not have much interest in sporting activities. Currently the group that is moving towards 60 years

now, have a lot of interest in sport. In South Africa, with the caring government: sport has become a very important topic and is discussed in almost all gatherings for the elderly, this is to promote a holistic approach to active ageing and wellbeing among the country’s senior citizen. The government has encouraged the forums(representatives) to come up with various forms of sporting codes. This has resulted in The Department of Social development hosting the Annual Senior Golden Games for the elderly aged between 60yrs to 100yrs. The government sees an opportunity of to support nation building, a sense of national pride, understanding, tolerance and respect. Another reason is to deal with discrimination, racism and human right abuses thus building relationships across cultures, religions, languages, age and income and this is achieved in different ways by the introduction of government programs. The commission also took some time to further look at the reasons why physical activity is important to older persons and we agreed that physical activity is essential to healthy aging. As an older person, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can prevent many of the health problems that seem to come with age.

Physical activity has many benefits. It not only helps you to feel better physically and emotionally, it:

• helps to control weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes and bone and joint problems like arthritis

• reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers

• helps to manage pain

• helps to maintain and increase joint movement There is strong evidence that seniors who partake in physical activity have lower rates of diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, colon cancer, breast cancer and hypertension. They are also likely to have a healthier body mass, enhanced bone mass, higher levels of functional health, better cognitive function and a decreased risk of falling.

Physical activity not only helps your physical health, but also your mental health. There is a well-documented link between physical activity and increased mood-enhancement. Long term, exercise has been found to help alleviate depression and reduce your risk of developing Dementia/Alzheimer’s. Importantly, it also helps your muscles grow stronger so you can keep doing your day-to-day activities without becoming dependent on others.

**What sporting programmes can the Elderly participate in, within the area?**

The following are some examples of physical activity for senior’s Great examples that one can participate in include walking, running, dancing, aerobics, sitting aerobics, swimming, yoga, pickleball (ball tossing) or cycling. Activities such as gardening, dog walking, household chores, singing and cultural activities also count! One of the most common blockers seniors report to starting physical activities is knowing exactly how to get started.

• Gardening For an elderly who enjoys the outdoors, gardening is an ideal option. Even if they don’t have the physical strength and agility to do more advanced gardening activities, there’s always basic tasks like raking, seed placement and watering. You can tend to anything from flowers and shrubs to herbs, fruits, and vegetables. This activity arouses the senses and gives the elderly person a chance to soak in some critical Vitamin D. For more physically able persons, there’s the added benefit of exercise inherent in tasks such as digging, weeding, and potting. Eventually, the fruits of their labour will be in full bloom for additional enjoyment.

* Walking & exercising to help the elderly get those endorphins (feel good hormones) flowing with some form of physical activity, take walks with your grandchildren around the community.
* Encourage the elderly to join or set up an exercise group or sign up for swimming. Consider opportunities for organized exercise classes like yoga, senior aerobics or other heart-pumping and strength-building options. If it’s difficult for them to leave their home, consider setting up exercise videos for them to engage in via television or computer.
* Music & Dancing Even elderly persons with advanced dementia or cognitive impairments can benefit greatly from music-centered activities. Research shows profound positive impacts from music therapy and various forms of musical stimulation. Certain types of music can help trigger memories and support feelings of happiness. Perhaps the senior citizens would be interested in attending a live concert, orchestra or ballet. They might even like to play a well-loved instrument or learn to engage a new one. For elderly persons who likes to dance, consider signing up for ballroom classes or other forms of group dance lessons and gatherings.
* Volunteering There’s no shortage of ways to engage senior citizens for a good cause. The elderly can participate in a food drive, fundraising activity or other service-minded event. Volunteering is a wonderful avenue for helping to prevent or overcome feelings of uselessness during this stage of life. Encourage the elderly to use their natural abilities to help someone else in need. Maybe this means cooking, knitting or sewing for the needy, visiting the sick or planning a fundraiser. It might be as simple as wrapping gifts. The specific task is not nearly as important as the feelings of purpose and satisfaction they derive from this kind of activity.

**What are the barriers to participation in physical activity among the elderly?**

People experience a variety of personal and environmental barriers to engaging in regular physical activity. The most common reasons elderly persons don't adopt more physically active lifestyles are cited as:

* lack of self-motivation
* non-enjoyment of exercise
* lack of confidence in their ability to be physically active (low self-efficacy)
* fear of being injured or having been injured recently
* lack of self-management skills, such as the ability to set personal goals, monitor
* lack of encouragement, support, or companionship from family and friends • non-availability of parks, sidewalks, bicycle trails, or safe and pleasant walking paths close to home or the workplace
* cost of sporting membership
* lack of facilities
* Transportation
* skill • safety considerations • child-care • uneasiness with change • unsuitable programs.

The environment (communities) in which we live has a great influence on our level of physical activity. Many factors in our environment affect us. Obvious factors include the accessibility of walking paths, cycling trails, and recreation facilities. Factors such as traffic, availability of public transportation, crime, and pollution may also have an effect. Other environmental factors include our social environment, such as support from family and friends, and community spirit. It is possible to make changes in our environment through campaigns to support active transportation, legislation for safer communities, and the creation of new recreation facilities.

**COMMISSION 3**

**Assessing State of Service Centres and Luncheons During Covid-19:- “The Importance of Older Persons Accessing Service Centres And Or Luncheon Clubs”.**

During the pandemic, Luncheons clubs and service centres have become more important now than ever before due to the following reasons: - They get to meet with their peers instead of staying home where they become lonely.

* They get information on issues relating to older persons.
* They get easy access to stakeholders e.g. Social Workers, City of Joburg officials, Dept. of Health, Legislature etc.
* They transfer skills to each other like Knitting, sewing, beading etc.
* They get to socialize which minimizes isolated lifestyle
* It makes them feel that their lives are purposeful because when you wake up in the morning you have somewhere to go.

**6. PROPOSED COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The 2021 Senior Citizens Sector Parliament made the following resolutions, to be responded to by 30 September 2022.**

**COMMISSIONS 1:**

**Safety and Security for Older Persons:- An Assessment of the Safety Programs in Dealing with Risks Associated with the Collection of Social Grants.**

**Gauteng Provincial Government should:**

1. Ensure that security officers monitor the pay points and remove the youth that is loitering in the pay points as the day is specifically for older persons

2. Intervene with shops that expect the elderly have to buy something first before they gain access to their grant money. This is because in many instances you find that you are not even interested in getting anything from the shop.

3. Make sure that the tills shops that are servicing older persons are well managed

And security should also be beefed up.

4. Establish strong working relationship with the taxi associations to ensure that they safeguard older persons especially on pay days.

5. Make sure that there is visibility of police and where possible, Community Policing Forum members in different areas should be requested to assist elderly people.

6. Make sure that staff personnel from banks are always available at the ATMs to assist older persons and to safeguard them from thugs.

7. Where the is a need, elderly people should be trained on how to operate ATM and the importance of not sharing their pins.

8. Consider making sure that dates for payment of grants are advertised on media e.g TVs, radios, and local newspapers.

10. Where possible and in areas where there is high crime rate, older persons should provide with equipment such as whistles so that they can blow them as and when they are in danger and alert others.

**COMMISSION 2:**

**Sports Participation and positive development in older persons: an exploration of programs in place to encourage physical activity exercise among older persons.**

**Gauteng Provincial Government should:**

1. Ensure that suitable equipment and appropriate clothing is made available for every training that is provided to older persons.
2. All Departments to work together and ensure that programmes that will benefit older persons are provided especially in rural areas.

**COMMISSION 3:**

**ASSESSING STATE OF SERVICE CENTRES AND LUNCHEONS DURING COVID- 19 THE IMPORTANCE OF OLDER PERSONS ACCESSING SERVICE CENTRES AND OR LUNCHEON CLUBS.**

1. Gauteng Department of Social Development should engage the Notional Department of Social Development in an endeavour to review the NPO Act with a special focus on board members, management of centres and other related issues that talks to programmes for older persons.
2. Department of Social Development policies must be in line with what is achievable and not jeopardize the existence of the service centres.
3. Engage all Municipalities regarding environmental health certificates to assist older persons to register their centres.
4. Consider funding at least one organization in every ward so that older persons can be properly taken care of by a reputable organisation.

**PROPOSED COMMITTEE RECOMMENTATION**

The Committee recommends that the MEC for Social Development, Hon Morakane Mosupyoe should facilitate the responses from the Executive Council on all the issues raised as their representative in the Sector Parliament.

The Committee further recommends that the MEC for Social Development, Hon Morakane Mosupyoe engages the National Minister for Social Development through MinMEC to ensure that those resolutions that are a National competency are addressed and implemented at a national level.

**7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my appreciation to the MEC for Social Development, Hon Morakane Mosupyoe for cooperation and support during the Sector Parliament. The Leadership of the Deputy Chairperson of Committee’s, Hon Mpapa Kanyane in ensuring the successful hosting of the Sector Parliament.

My appreciation for diligence, dedication and commitment goes to Members of the Committee: T. Magagula, R. Ntse’khe, A. Ndlovana, B. Engelbrecht, B. Badenhorst, M. Mofama and D. Ledwaba for their dedication and support during this process.

The Committee would also like to thank officials that supports the Committee Mr S. Nqwala, Ms Z. Pantshwa-Mbalo, Ms S. Nenweli, Ms N. Jikolo, Ms L. Manthata, Mr J. Moloi, Ms T. Nzuke, Ms D Ngwenya, Ms N Ntlebi, Mr K. Xulu, Ms L Ntjia, Ms N. Mabuza and H. Ngobeni for their dedication in assisting the Committee to achieve its mandate.

**8. ADOPTION**

After extensive deliberations, the Portfolio Committee on Social Development adopted the 2021 Senior Citizens Sector Parliament report.

In terms of Rule 117(2)(c) read with Rule 164, the Social Development Committee presents to this House and recommends the adoption of the 2021 Senior Citizens Sector Parliament, taking into account the proposed recommendations made in the report.

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**Hon. Refiloe Kekana**

**CHAIRPERSON: SOCAL DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE**