

# Government Gazette Staatskoerant

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA

Vol. 556

Pretoria, 19 October 2011  
Oktober

No. 34692

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## GENERAL NOTICE

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social development

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Department:  
Social Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## GREEN PAPER ON FAMILIES

### PROMOTING FAMILY LIFE AND STRENGTHENING FAMILIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this Green Paper, Government is putting forward proposals on how South African families should be supported, in order to flourish and function optimally. It calls for families to play a central role in the national development pursuits of the country and the building of a better South Africa. For this ideal to be realised, family life and the strengthening of the family should be promoted in the country.

Government recognises that many social ills in South Africa are the result of either weak family systems or non-existent families, altogether. It also understands that the family is facing a fundamental crisis, which needs to be remedied immediately. It is for this reason that this endeavour was launched, in order to provide guidelines and strategies for promoting family life and strengthening families. It was envisioned that these twin processes would help families to attain certain levels of well-being. In turn, the promotion of family life would enable families to fulfil their requisite roles and responsibilities in society and ultimately make them catalysts of progress and national development.

The family policy was seen as a vehicle for achieving these goals and helping to prevent the family from further disintegration and vulnerability. To this end, the National Department of Social Development (DSD) undertook research, in order to determine the circumstances that impacted upon family life in the country.

The research findings provided the basis for the DSD to embark on a national consultative process across the nine provinces of South Africa. This process augmented the research initiative and culminated in a national consultative workshop, which was convened by the DSD to elicit input from national stakeholders, including the following: government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and the business sector. Several decisions were made by various structures of government to provide guidance in

the finalisation of the National Family Policy, which resulted in the writing of this Green Paper.

It is now 17 years since South Africa attained democratic rule and yet the country is still confronted by numerous socio-economic challenges of the past. Despite the progress made by Government and other role-players in raising the livelihood of many South Africans, families still live in extremely perilous conditions. In many respects, the history of South Africa and the country's political economy continue to mould the quality of life of most families in significant ways, for example, the industrialisation of South Africa in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the discovery of diamonds and gold, and the resultant urbanisation are inextricably bound to the past and contemporary erosion of the family. The migrant labour system, based on the carving up of 'African reserves' which, in turn, guaranteed a steady supply of cheap labour to the emerging industrial and capitalist enclave, was a direct product of industrialisation. This form of labour was regarded as temporary and connected to the reserves.

The main assumption of both the political establishment and business at the time was that migrant labourers would be guaranteed social protection by their extended families and that they would return to their communities, once their labour was no longer required. However, this system led to the manifestation of various social problems in the country that had a direct bearing on family life. One such problem was the absence of able-bodied men in African villages, which greatly undermined the extended family in many ways. It also meant that only women and the elderly were in a position to play vital roles in meeting the needs of the family. This arrangement placed a significant burden on women and contributed to the phenomena of female-headed households and absent fathers, and the outflows from this today. For generations, the migrant labour system has continued to undermine the African family and created conditions for its disintegration.

Race and economic relations are also important factors that have shaped family life in South Africa. Even before apartheid was officially pronounced, a dual economy was already unfolding in the country, which not only determined economic transactions between Europeans and other races, but also reconfigured social relations among them. This duality was further reinforced by the underdevelopment of African economies and reduced their functions to that of migrant labour reproduction.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned, the family is still a dynamic unit of socialisation that has not remained static. It is characterised by changing patterns of socialisation and interaction. The character and form of the family have evolved and still continue to do so – from the onset of colonial rule, through apartheid, to the present democratic dispensation and an increasingly globalised world. Although South Africa has experienced consistent economic growth in the past decade, the onset of the global financial crisis in the latter part of 2008 threatened the country's economic growth. Consequently, various industries were either closed down or had to reduce their workforce. The loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs meant that many families were facing a grim future, due to lack of income. They were again expected to shoulder the failures of both the economy and the labour market.

This Green Paper takes cognisance of both present and past negative trends and how they severely curtail the family's ability to meet its needs. By placing the family in the historical context and political economy of the country, the Green Paper highlights the manner in which this historical context continues to shape family life. As this Green Paper is released into the public domain, it is hoped that the country will engage with it and make suggestions for further improvements. Input is sought from all South Africans on wide-ranging issues relating to the family and has to be incorporated into the Green Paper before the process moves forward.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

Human beings have always lived in families from the beginning of time. The family is a pillar of society, as it influences the way society is structured, organised and functions. The family remains central in the lives of its members, from birth to death, and provides them, among others, with psycho-emotional and economic support. The family has been and continues to be the principal institution in society, playing a vital role in socialisation, nurturing and care, as well as determining the conditions of social reproduction, due to the family deriving its meaning from being both a biological and a social unit. Furthermore, the family continues to be a cornerstone of human civilisation, because of its ability to transmit society's values, norms, morals and mores.

In various parts of the world, the structure and content of the family have undergone changes over the centuries. It is continuously changing and adapting to societal and global transformations. Social phenomena are also constructed and given meaning in the family environment, for example, the concept of marriage and the bearing and rising of children; religion, governance, authority, the value and importance of education, and the rule of law. Responsibilities and obligations to both family and community members, and society in general are also defined within the family milieu. When individuals eventually leaves their family and enters other settings, such as school and the workplace, the family would have already prepared them for the transition. The former can only transpire within a family that has the capacity to execute its roles and responsibilities in society. In the main, a strong family, as opposed to a weak one, is able to achieve this competently.



A strong family has particular features which enable its members to contribute meaningfully to their own development and prosperity, as well as the betterment of society. A strong family usually has access to different kinds of resources, ranging from emotional and material to spiritual resources, which enable it to meet the needs of its members. It also demonstrates commitment, whereby each member is appreciated, recognised and valued. Another attribute of a strong family is the ability of members to share experiences, complement each other and spend time together. This enables family members to do many things together. Strong families are also able to effectively deal with conflict, stress and crises. Finally, a strong family has what is known as rhythm, which is expressed in routines, rituals or traditions. These patterns of behaviour enhance family stability.

There is a strong link and interplay between the family and other institutions in society, for example, the structure of a country's economy will influence the extent to which members of a family are able to enter and participate in the labour market. The way an economy is structured will, to a large extent, determine whether family members are able to derive livelihoods from decent work opportunities, earn a living wage and have benefits which enable them to have acceptable standards of living. The economy's structure will also have a bearing on the ability of family members to access quality health care, quality education and decent employment. In the same vein, the burden of disease and illiteracy, due to, among others, lack of skills and income may be shouldered by the family.

Although the family is regarded in a positive light, because of its caring and nurturing functions, it also has the ability to foster and legitimise the oppression of women in certain circumstances, for example, patriarchy has emerged as one of the family's most enduring forms of domination. In South Africa, as in most African countries, patriarchy existed alongside colonial subjugation and racial discrimination. Women, particularly black women, carried a double burden under

colonialism and apartheid, as they remained subordinate to both men and a settler population. Hence, women's choices were severely limited because of their gender. This is starkly illustrated by the manner in which apartheid capitalism reinforced patriarchy through the labour issue. This system favoured men for employment opportunities, while the labour of women was merely seen as an adjunct to men's efforts. The dawn of democracy in South Africa did not significantly alter the former arrangements, despite the country having instituted a progressive Constitution and after instituting forward-thinking legislation.

Therefore, this Green Paper is a call to all South Africans to create a new dispensation that deliberately supports and strengthens families in the country by eliminating all conditions eroding the family, inter alia, poverty and inequality, unemployment, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), gender inequality and gender-based violence, domestic violence and child abuse. It places the family at the centre of national policy discourse, development and implementation by advocating for rights-based policies and programmes which support family life and strengthen families in South Africa.

With Government spearheading this endeavour and in partnership with various stakeholders, the Green Paper also calls for the emboldening of people-to-people support and the building of healthy relationships in the country. The Green Paper is premised on an understanding that families must be supported where they are already thriving and strengthened where they are under threat. These endeavours are taken as mirroring the broader goals of social transformation, nation-building and the strengthening of democracy, the building of communities, and the engendering of social cohesion and human solidarity in South Africa.

## 1.2. Perspectives and Approaches on the Family

### 1.2.1. *Family theories*

Scientific theories rely on deductive arguments to advance explanations about human nature. Without theories, we cannot determine why and how things happen the way they do. What is noteworthy, is that theories are important where they help to frame our understanding of the social world and, in this case, the family. They are neither absolute nor finite.

In general, two kinds of family theories are distinguishable:

- a. Those that are 'about the family', or explaining how families work.
- b. Those that consider family ideas to be useful explanations (as the phenomenon to be explained, e.g. the state of the economy in a country helps to explain the divorce rate in that country). (White and Klein, 2002).

In order to analyse and explain the family, various perspectives were proffered by different theorists. Sociological approaches seem to have dominated this area for a considerable period. Anthropological theories later came to the fore, however, to enrich the analysis of the family. These perspectives originated from Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The theories also contributed to the manner in which the family was understood and interpreted in South Africa. During apartheid, race supremacy also permeated understandings of the African family from political authorities, as well as certain academic scholars. These were used to bolster racist policies and legislation.

Sociologically, the family is seen as part of a wider force of social change which has, in turn, moulded its form and content. As societies develop and take on new forms of technology, the family also adapts in response to these changes by altering its structure, for example, from an extended type of family to a nuclear one. In this way, some theorists posit the family as traversing different stages as societies change, notably from the primitive form to the village, then the city and

then the state. The first stage would be typified by certain family forms that are qualitatively different from those in the latter stages, for example, the roles of family members and kin, in terms of obligations and responsibilities towards one another, contract as the family form shifts from the extended to the nuclear.

#### *1.2.1.1. The structuralist-functionalist perspective*

The structuralist-functionalist theory was a very influential sociological theory that proffered explanations about the family and continues to add know-how on the family. The structuralist-functionalist perspective is based on the understanding that society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium. Different social institutions, for example, contribute important functions in society: education offers a way of transmitting society's skills, knowledge, and culture to its youth; politics provides a means of governing members of society; the economy provides for the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services; and religion provides moral guidance and outlet of a higher power (Mooney, et al., 2009).

The structuralist-functionalist perspective regards the family as part of a greater whole. This approach also looks at how the family influences society in general. It focuses on change and shows how the family organises itself in order to perform certain functions in society for its survival. In this way, change in one unit would spiral to other areas and result in disequilibrium, or various units combine to establish societal equilibrium. The structuralist-functionalist perspective notes that the family is the context within which reproduction, nurturing and socialisation take place. The main thrust of this approach to family analysis lies in its explanation of its functions in society, whereby behaviour is structured in a certain way and relationships between individuals are organised in terms of rules.

#### *1.2.1.2. Symbolic interactionism*

Another influential sociological theory on the family is known as symbolic interactionism. This perspective is informed by three positions. The first position

is that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning that these things have for them. Such things include everything that they may note in their world, namely, physical objects, other human beings, institutions and activities. The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third position is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he/she encounters (Blumer, 1986:2). Symbolic interactionism analyses families on the basis of how individuals experience and understand their social worlds. In this way, the social behaviour of individuals results in the creation and maintenance of society, and is changed by the social interaction between them. Interactions are, therefore, based on the manner in which individuals give meaning to symbols that are derived from the way they communicate with one another. Symbolic interactionism is micro in focus while the structuralist-functionalist perspective is macro in approach.

#### 1.2.1.3. *The systems theory*

The systems theory is another significant perspective which provides insights into the family. This theory was founded on the assumption that all kinds of systems (concrete, conceptual, abstract, natural or man-made) have common characteristics, regardless of their internal nature. These systems can serve to describe nature and the way people existed. Their methods operate in an integrated manner (Skyttner, 2005). With regard to the family, the systems theory notes that individuals cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be understood as part of a unit, which is their family. Families are considered to be systems of interconnected and interdependent individuals that cannot be understood separately from one another. The family systems theory permits one to understand the complexity of families and to see how change in one individual influences other family members. It enables one to also appreciate the manner in which interactive patterns guide family relations.

#### 1.2.1.4. *Conflict theory*

The conflict perspective views society as composed of different groups and interests competing for power and resources. The conflict theory explains various aspects of our social world by looking at which groups have power and benefit from a particular social arrangement (Mooney, et al., 2009). Thus when it comes to the family, the conflict theory assumes that conflict is inherent to all human groups, including the family. It concentrates on the balance between order and disorder in the family structure, and tries to explain how harmony is achieved in the family setting. This theory helps in the understanding of hierarchical structures and their bases, for example, gender, social class, race and age. While family members share many interests, their interests also differ. Thus, individuals act in ways that advance or protect their interests. A latter derivative of this theory is the feminist theory. This theory observes that the family produces patriarchy which keeps women subordinate to men.

#### 1.2.1.5. *Economic perspective*

In economic terms, the family is seen as an economic unit that lives together and shares resources for the common benefit. It is a unit of production, which takes on different forms from context to context. Despite its importance, economists often avoid an elaborate analysis of the family. Rather, the common approach in economic theory has been to treat the family as a single economic unit — ‘the agent’. This implies that the family acts as if it were an individual, in particular, that it has well-defined preferences for outcomes. Economists justify this by arguing that everyone in the family has the same interests, or if their interests differ, that the family has a dominant member and follows that member’s wishes (Canning, et al., 1994).

Many theories explaining the family were biased towards family structures and functions that were predominant in the European context and they did not take into account the experiences of other families in different parts of the world. As a result, new theories emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to counteract the Eurocentric

view of the family. The concept of cultural relativism, for example, gained ground in anthropological analyses and argued that the family should be studied within the context of its culture. The so-called civilised cultures that were put forward in the early evolutionary theories of Darwin were challenged in as much as they also lent credence to family types. Thus, anthropological theories put forward families of different cultures for analysis. Aspects relating to kinship and mutual obligations were seen as differing from context to context.

### **1.3. The Rationale for the Green Paper**

#### *1.3.1. Comparative analysis*

This draft Green Paper emanates from the efforts by Government and other stakeholders to develop a policy framework on the family in South Africa. Such efforts are not exclusive to South Africa, but form part of various global policy initiatives that have been striving to raise the quality of life of the family on a continuous basis. This is due to the world's recognition of the centrality of the family in human progress.

Different countries use family policies for different reasons. In the Scandinavian countries, particularly Denmark and Sweden, family policies have focused on fertility, due to an ageing population. In order to persuade women to have more children, governments in the region have encouraged both family life and work. Family policies in this region have also placed a strong emphasis on gender equality by giving women various options related to their working life, so that they are empowered to have children, while deriving maximum benefit from their work. Family policies in these countries place a high premium on quality childcare. Family policy finds expression in a multiplicity of family-related programmes and services, including childcare, counselling, social services and income maintenance, among others. The former also forms part of a comprehensive and universal social welfare system.

In Latin America, the targeting of families with conditional cash transfers has impacted positively on family well-being. Inadvertently, such measures have acted as family policies. Extensive analysis of programmes such as *Bolsa Familia* in Brazil, *Oportunidades* in Mexico and *Chile Solidario* in Chile, among others, by the World Bank, suggests that conditional cash transfers generally help reduce poverty levels, income inequality and the participation of children in the workplace.

In addition, results from various evaluations of conditional cash transfers suggest that programmes had positive effects on growth-and-development monitoring visits to health centres by children. Overall, the conclusions so far show that conditional cash transfers reduce family poverty and child labour, which contributes to the participation of both mothers and fathers in the workforce (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2011:28).

The downside to the mentioned interventions is the way governments in this region conceptualised the family. Social programmes tend to consider the existence of a single model of a 'happy' family: the man as the economic provider and the mother as the housewife. This traditional model of the family corresponds to only 20 per cent of the total number of households, and to 24 per cent of urban families in 18 Latin American countries. Poor and extremely poor families are mainly female-headed, while adolescent mothers, extended families, double-income and other types of families are not considered (Arriagada, 2011). The Latin American experience has some lessons for South Africa. In Latin America, cash transfers target families, while in South Africa, social assistance measures, such as the Child Support Grant or Old Age Pension, target individuals. The Latin American type of intervention has clearly identifiable links to supporting family life and family strengthening.

Studies surveying certain countries have also shown that family policy is not a single concept, but rather a range of concepts which entail *a perspective about*



*policy in relation to families.* They hinge on laws, regulations, benefits and programmes that are designed to achieve specific objectives for the family as a whole, or for its individual members (United Nations, 1999). In one study, eight countries which were surveyed, namely, Ireland, Malaysia, Mauritius, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, South Africa (which was described as having no formal policy, although there were various institutional bodies with components relating to family issues), and Trinidad and Tobago, showed that government policies, programmes and initiatives addressed rapid and contemporary social and economic changes.

All approaches reviewed were direct or indirect responses to the consequences of the changes in the traditional social role of the family, as well as in the role of the individual as a member of the family (United Nations, 1999). Furthermore, actions take place through policies and other appropriate institutional mechanisms. In some countries, NGOs are involved in the implementation of family policy, either by means of participation in joint ventures with other governments, participation in advisory bodies, or independent activities (United Nations, 1999).

### *1.3.2. Why South Africa needs a policy framework on the family*

Over the years, it became apparent to policy-makers, academics, civil society actors and concerned citizens that there was no policy framework that specifically addressed the family in South Africa. Given the history of the country and the nature of its political economy, as well as the multiplicity of social ills from the past, which continued to confront the country, the absence of a policy framework in this area was identified as a critical policy shortcoming that needed to be urgently addressed. On the other hand, it is evident that the detrimental effects of the policies of colonial apartheid on the family, for example, land dispossessions, and the migrant labour and homeland systems, have a connection with contemporary South Africa.

Since 1994, Government has instituted various policy and legislative reforms aimed at, among others, the realignment of the country's institutions, in order to transform South African society. Despite this, *the family is not explicitly addressed in many of the country's policies*, but it is usually inferred. This means that many of the policies imply the family, but do not focus on the family as the first point of entry, with regard to policy implementation. Consequently, socio-economic benefits indirectly filter down to the family, instead of directly impacting the family. This is due to the fact that such measures do not originate from the deliberate targeting of the family in the first place. Instead of focusing on the family, many of the country's national development endeavours target individuals or specific categories, for example, the youth, the unemployed, children, women or people with disabilities.

Different policies and programmes focus on individuals and rarely place them in the family context. The needs of such individuals may not necessary be congruent with those of the family unit. Furthermore, past and present poverty analyses and other forms of intervention have primarily concentrated on households, as opposed to families, thereby causing policies to overlook intra-family dynamics in the country. By way of illustration, government departments may provide for different individuals in the same family: a house, free basic services, free schooling in certain schools, school feeding schemes in certain areas, free medical care in specified situations, various social grants and other services.

The positive outcomes and benefits for the family as a unit comprising these different family members are hardly ever considered and analysed, as attention is focused on numbers instead of impact. Emphasis is placed on demonstrating how many people enjoy such benefits outside family structures, while not focusing on their quality of life in the family context. Such an approach would be both preventive and developmental.

Evidence from research supports the above assertions and suggests that government programmes, such as the Social Assistance Programme's Disability Grant, Child Support Grant and the State Old Age Pension are used and pooled by recipients as some form of 'family grant' and are not only meeting the needs of the recipient (Samson, et al., 2008). This is part of the reason that social grants are making a significant contribution towards poverty reduction, because families use them as a family benefit. Therefore, focusing on the family would have more far-reaching positive societal outcomes than the current targeting of individuals and the fragmented approach which usually overlooks the family as a unit.

### 1.3.3. *Motivation*

The main driving force behind this initiative is the non-existence of any policy framework that anchors efforts directed at promoting family life and strengthening families in South Africa. It is also informed by the need to have a holistic approach towards the family, as current interventions are mostly based on individuals and not holistic. Consequently, duplication exists, among others, in the conceptualisation and delivery of various services to the family.

The family continues to remain an auxiliary or, at times, an unintended target of policies in other spheres of government, such as, among others, education, health, human settlements, water and sanitation. As a result, it is quite difficult to determine the manner in which various government policies promote family life and strengthen families. Crucially, the role of safety-net played by the family continues to be eroded 17 years after apartheid, with the result that the country is still being confronted by a host of challenges which are in themselves direct offshoots of disintegrating families.

Therefore, this Green Paper advocates an integrated and coordinated approach which addresses the needs of children, education, employment, healthcare, and initiatives that effectively and visibly complement existing sectoral policies and

attempt to meet the needs of individuals, while recognising that they are also members of families (United Nations, 2004). It is a comprehensive approach towards the promotion of family life and the strengthening of families in South Africa.

#### **1.4. Statement of the Problem**

The family is under threat and unable to play its critical roles of socialisation, nurturing, care and protection effectively, due to failures in the political economy and the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. Various societal forces, such as high levels of poverty and inequality; high unemployment, particularly among young people; teenage pregnancies; crime; unwanted pregnancies; HIV/AIDS; illiteracy; gender inequalities; absent fathers; former spouses or partners who impede fathers from playing a role in the lives of their children; domestic violence; and high numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children are acutely pronounced in South Africa, due to weakening family structures. Conversely, the aforementioned have constantly kept the family in South Africa under siege.

In addition, there is a disjuncture between the idealisation of the family and the cherished beliefs about what families are and should be. The reality points to the deterioration of the family in South Africa.

Research in the area has indeed confirmed the vulnerable nature of the family in South Africa, for example, in a 2009 study, the South African Institute of Race Relations observed that the family was facing various challenges which were undermining its ability to function optimally. Its research findings noted that family life in the conventional sense did not exist for many South African children, for example, almost 25 per cent of the country's under-18s were growing up without their biological parents. The number had increased by about 100 000 a year, from 3.7 million in 2002 to 4.2 million in 2007. The number of children who had lost one or both parents to AIDS stood at 1.4 million — more than in many African countries.

### **1.5. Vision**

The vision is for well-functioning, resourced, viable and prosperous families which play pivotal roles in South Africa's human, social and economic development.

### **1.6. Mission**

The mission is to empower families to play their requisite roles and responsibilities in South Africa.

### **1.7. Aims of the Green Paper**

The main aim of the Green Paper is to promote family life and strengthen families in South Africa. It takes the family as a key development imperative and calls for a new approach towards the family in South Africa. It seeks to mainstream family issues into government-wide, policy-making initiatives in order to foster family well-being in the country.

#### *1.7.1. Objectives of the Green Paper*

Furthermore, the aims of the Green Paper are:

- a. The enhancement of the socialising, caring, nurturing, loving and supporting capabilities of families, so that their members are able to contribute effectively to the overall development of the country.
- b. The empowerment of family members by enabling them to identify, negotiate around and maximise economic, labour market and other opportunities available in the country.
- c. The improvement of the capacities of families to establish people-to-people interaction which makes a meaningful contribution towards a sense of community, social cohesion and human solidarity.

## **1.8. Principles of the Green Paper**

The Green Paper is informed by the following principles:

### *1.8.1. Human rights*

Human rights are first learnt in the family. Through socialisation, the foundation is laid for children to be tolerant of views other than their own and become active and responsible citizens in the future. Non-discrimination, mutual obligation and respect for diversity will guide Government and other stakeholders in the manner in which they interact with families.

### *1.8.2. Family diversity*

There are different types of families in South Africa which are products of various cultures and social contexts. Therefore, the need exists to recognise the diverse nature of South Africa's families in all initiatives that address their plight. This principle will guide Government and all stakeholders in their engagement with the family.

### *1.8.3. Family strengths*

Families have inherent capacities and strengths that sustain them in times of prosperity, as well as adversity. It is important to recognise these qualities, so that any intervention at family level will enhance these attributes.

### *1.8.4. Community participation*

The family remains an integral part of South African society and its continued existence is dependent on vibrant and well-functioning communities. To this end, Government and other actors will promote active participation of the community in actions that safeguard and support the family.

#### 1.8.5. *Promoting and strengthening marriages*

Marriages are essential for the stability of families and ultimately society's well-being. Where marriages are flourishing, efforts will be made to promote them and where marriages are under threat, there will be a focus on strengthening them.

#### 1.8.6. *Promoting and strengthening parenting*

Family stability hinges on parenting. Parents or caregivers will be encouraged to play their expected roles in the upbringing of their children. Where there is a case of parental breakdown or its absence, means will be sought of strengthening this area.

#### 1.8.7. *Partnerships*

The delivery of services by Government and other role-players will be defined by mutual partnerships with the family. The family will play an active role in matters that concern it.

This Green Paper begins to place the family in national policy discourse and also responds to various concerns relating to the family, which have been raised by different sections of South African society. It endeavours to link the incidence of social ills and the persistence of socio-economic and other development challenges with the state of the family in South Africa. In addition, it calls for Government and civil society interventions to stem family disintegration. These actions should be aimed at the promotion of family life and the strengthening of the family in South Africa.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FAMILY IN SOUTH AFRICA

#### 2.1. Background and Context

Any analysis of the changing structure of the family and the challenges it faces in South Africa must be undertaken against the background of the country's history of colonialism, apartheid and the specific arrangements of the political and economic systems that shaped this history. There must also be an appreciation of the diverse nature of the South African family, which is also a product of South Africa's history.

Undoubtedly, colonial occupation and apartheid played an extensive role in shaping the family in the country. Due to the colonisation of South Africa, different nationalities settled in the country and became part of its landscape. South Africa comprises various families who are descendants of different racial groupings.

Firstly, the overwhelming majority of the population is comprised of the indigenous African population with its various ethnic groups, namely, the San, Venda, Tsonga, Ndebele, Tswana, Sotho, Zulu, Swati and Xhosa. Secondly, there are a significant number of families of European descent, such as the Dutch, English, Belgians, Germans, French, Italians and Portuguese. Thirdly, there are descendents of Jews, especially from Eastern Europe. Fourthly, there are the Indians and Malay families, who are the descendants of former indentured labourers and Malay slaves, and fifthly, the Chinese, who descend from Chinese labourers and merchants. Lastly, the Coloured population can be traced back to slaves that came from different parts of the world, including regions of the African continent, and the intermingling of races, especially



between Europeans and Africans. This is the racial and ethnic crucible in which South African families exist.

The first phase of South Africa's colonisation, after the arrival of the Dutch in 1652, provided the basis for the removal of indigenous people from their lands. Over the decades, land removals would be reinforced through various exclusionary and oppressive mechanisms. The early dispossession of land of African people, spearheaded by the Dutch and English settlers, set the stage for the initial weakening of the family in South Africa. The entrenchment of colonial rule not only resulted in the annexation of land, but also in warfare against the indigenous people, which led to killing, maiming and further displacement.

By the time the mining of diamonds and gold started in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, African people had borne the brunt of colonial conquest and occupation. Later, the industrialisation and urbanisation of the country led to the migrant labour system, which placed severe strains on the African family, as it caused men to live permanently apart from their wives and children. Through the single-sex hostel system, the labour question became interlinked with the undermining of the traditional African setup and its culture and family systems, as well as its role in socialisation. Migrant male workers were housed in same-sex hostels in appalling conditions. Arguably, the present manifestation of social problems, such as different forms of abuse, prostitution, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence, and the erosion of the roles and responsibilities of the family, emanate to a certain extent from the living and settlement arrangements that were part of the industrialisation process in South Africa, and the social and physical dislocation that accompanied these developments.

Colonial conquest and exploitation weakened the African family on two key fronts. Firstly, enforced labour migration compelled families to live apart. Secondly, the policies, laws and practices were aimed at impoverishing African families, which also had dire long-term consequences for them. The Native Land

Act of 1913 was passed, for example, and henceforth became the cornerstone of all forms of forced removals that targeted African people and, to a lesser extent, Indians and Coloureds. Race also became a very effective tool to exclude and marginalise Africans from all life opportunities. Their sole purpose was seen to be that of labourers (i.e. labour inputs) for the colonial and apartheid capitalist economy. With time, other laws were passed in order to keep Africans in impoverished and economically unviable geographic locations with little or no employment opportunities.

Black workers were subjected to a separate and restrictive labour relations regime through laws such as the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 (Act no. 11), which disallowed black workers to have membership of trade unions and representation in the workplace. Policies and Acts, such as the Civilised Labour Policy and the Wages Act (Act no. 27) of 1925, saw to it that Blacks were excluded from benefiting from state programmes designed to raise the standard of living of white workers. Black workers were retained at low wage levels, as they were seen as not deserving of a wage to support a family, because it was taken for granted that the family the worker left behind in the reserves was economically self-sufficient. As Katzen (1961:196) elaborated:

As this labour was recruited on a migratory basis, the workers did not receive a 'family' wage. The worker was fed and housed while on the mines and the low cash wage he received was merely supposed to supplement the earnings from agriculture of his family in the Native Reserves.

It was also taken as a given that the white worker was entitled to a 'civilised standard of living' and the black worker was excluded from this.

The institutionalisation of apartheid in 1948 only intensified racial discrimination and the exclusion of black people from socio-economic and other opportunities. Apartheid's battery of policies and legislation around, among others, employment, business, education, franchise, or even interracial marriages, had

negative effects on family life in South Africa. Apartheid also brought forth state-led violence, which was a more dislocating and well-orchestrated force against the citizenry. State-led violence had far-reaching implications for the family in South Africa.

From 1948 to the early 1990s, the worst forms of human rights violations and gruesome atrocities to be perpetrated by a state regime against a people became the hallmarks of apartheid governance in South Africa. Mass arrests and detentions, torture, rape, murder, repression and executions were carried out by state agents against South Africans fighting for the liberation of the country. The heightening of the liberation struggle and the resultant exodus of young men and women into exile, the unrest in black townships and constant political upheavals around the country all eroded family life.

In 1994, the new government inherited a brutalised and highly traumatised society with families which were on the decline. Indeed, the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission clearly testified to the horrors that families had endured for decades. Husbands, wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, sons and grandparents recounted heart-wrenching experiences during this period. All of them had lost loved ones through state-led violence and many were never debriefed or counselled. Their psychological traumas continue to play themselves out on a daily basis in contemporary South Africa in different ways.

## **2.2. Defining the Family**

There is no single definition of the family, as it differs from contexts to context. Nonetheless, definitions abound. Sociologically, the family is defined as a group of interacting persons who recognise a relationship with each other, based on a common parentage, marriage and/or adoption. The functions of families vary between different societies and there is no central function that all societies grant to the family (Ross, 1968 cited in Turner, 1999). Families display four systematic features, namely: intimate interdependence, selective boundary maintenance,

ability to adapt to change and maintain their identity over time and performance of family tasks (Mattessich and Hill, 1987).

Family tasks include physical maintenance, socialisation and education, control of social and sexual behaviour, maintenance of family morale and motivation to perform roles inside and outside the family, the acquisition of mature family members by the formation of sexual partnerships, the acquisition of new family members through procreation or adoption, and the launching of young members from the family when mature (Mattessich and Hill, 1987).

#### *2.2.1. Differentiating the family from the household*

Usually, the family is confused with the household but the two are not synonymous. Individuals living in the same dwelling constitute what is known as a household. They may or may not have the same familial ties, but will still share a living space, food and other essentials critical for human survival. A household can also mean a single person living in a structure.

#### *2.2.2. Defining the family in South Africa*

There are various family types that can be found in South Africa. These are namely:

- Three-generation — grandparent with parent(s) and child(ren)
- Nuclear — two parents and at least one child
- Skip-generation — grandparent with grandchild(ren) but no child(ren) of his/her own
- Single unmarried parent with at least one child
- Single married parent (absent spouse) with at least one child
- Elderly only — one or multiple

- Single adult — which is composed of only one member, who is an adult
- Child-headed — all members of the family are children, i.e. below 18 years of age
- Married couple — husband and wife
- Married couple with adopted children
- One adult with adopted children
- Siblings only — adults and children (all family members are siblings including individuals below the age of 18)
- Other — such as the extended family, which is multigenerational in character and includes family members who are bound by either blood or legal relations. They may cohabit or may not share the same household. This category also includes the cohabitation type of family that comprises two adults staying together without any contractual agreements and with or without children (Economic Policy Research Institute, 2008:14).

Polygamous families are also quite prevalent in certain parts of South Africa. In addition, migrant and refugee families and same-sex families are also some of the emerging families in South Africa.

According to a 2008 study by the Economic Policy Research Institute which relied on the 2005 General Household Survey (GHS) data for its analyses, there were some 13 million families in South Africa. At the time, 8.5 million families were living in urban areas and 4.5 million in rural areas.

The research found that the nuclear family was the most common form of family in South Africa in 2005. It comprised 23,25 per cent of all families at national level, followed by single adult families (20,40 per cent) and lastly three-generation families. Single-parent families comprised 11,06 per cent, while child-

headed families made up one per cent of families in South Africa. About 54 per cent of all female-headed families were three-generational and single-parent (unmarried) types. Some 36 per cent of all male-headed families were nuclear types. The proportion of single-adult families was almost twice as high among males as in females. There were more than twice as many skip-generation families headed by females compared to those headed by males. Families with adopted children comprised a very small percentage of families in South Africa, irrespective of whether the parents were a married couple or a single adult.

In addition, there were higher rates of adoption by single females than by single males. At provincial level, the highest proportion of families with adopted children was found among single-female-headed families in Mpumalanga, comprising two per cent of all female-headed families in that province. The Western Cape Province had the largest percentage of nuclear families (34,88 per cent), followed by Gauteng Province (28,32 per cent). Gauteng had the lowest percentage of three-generation families (8,79 per cent), however, followed by the Western Cape (11,19 per cent).

The provinces with the highest percentage of three-generation families were Limpopo (25,30 per cent) and Mpumalanga (20,67 per cent). The Eastern Cape had the highest percentage of single-parent (unmarried) families (13,62 per cent), followed by Mpumalanga (11,91 per cent). Limpopo had the highest percentage of child-headed families (2,05 per cent). The largest proportion of three-generation, female-headed families was found in the North West (33,38 per cent) and Limpopo (32,98 per cent). The greatest prevalence of female-headed, single-parent families was in the Western Cape (35,10 per cent) and in Gauteng (31,68 per cent). The highest proportion of male-headed nuclear families was in the Western Cape (47,13 per cent), Mpumalanga (37,54 per cent) and Gauteng (37,44 per cent).

This quantitative analysis has implications for the development of pro-family policies and programmes, for example, the data reflected that Limpopo had the highest number of child-headed families in the country. Therefore, initiatives that aim to address this problem should focus primarily on Limpopo province. Also, single-parent families (unmarried) experienced the highest poverty levels in the country. The analysis further revealed that women carried the brunt of most of South Africa's social ills, with poverty taking the lead. It also pointed to the diminishing role of the extended family, even though there are still assumptions that it is the main safety net in the country.

Research also underscored the centrality of the nuclear family, i.e. husband-wife-child family, in South African society. It showed that it is the family structure with the highest frequency in all population groups, although with considerable variation between groups. It is most common among Indians (55,1 per cent), followed by Whites (46,3 per cent), then Coloureds (40,1 per cent) and least common among Blacks (36,9 per cent).

### *2.2.3. The family and marriage*

Social science research demonstrates two almost incontestable conclusions: stable, marital structures provide profound benefits for men, women and children, while, on the other hand, the breakdown of stable, marital structures imposes significant social costs upon individuals and society. Marriage is more than the union of two persons; it is a social institution that is culturally patterned and integrated into basic social institutions (Young, 2004).

In South Africa, one out of every two marriages ends in divorce. Divorce affects not only the adults who make this choice, but the children as well. Children's emotional and psychological responses to divorce depend on their age. In most cases, children are often confused by the divorce and they are mostly traumatised by the event (Family and Marriage Society, 2009). Furthermore, stable marriages have a positive effect on the quality of family life. However,

certain cultural and religious practices lead to marriage being an oppressive institution.

Marriage in South Africa is honoured by the country's Constitution. The Constitution also prohibits marriage discrimination based on sexual orientation. Marriage is also safeguarded by legislation, such as the Marriage Act of 1961 (Act no. 25), the Customary Marriage Act of 1998 (Act no. 120), and the Civil Union Act of 2006 (Act no.17). These laws allow for the legal standing of marriages and civil partnerships between persons, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender. Broadly, family law supplements the roles of this legislation. It covers substantive and procedural family law rules and norms. These are important in the protection and preservation of families, because they deal with different aspects of the law that have a bearing on family life. Family law governs domestic or family-related issues that pertain to marriage or a legal status similar to marriage, the dissolution of marriage, and aspects relating to children and death.

In many societies, marriage is important for family stability. Marriages in South Africa are generally low, compared to the rest of Africa. Statistics South Africa observed that, in 1999, the rate of registered marriages was 355 per 100 000 of the population. In terms of race, the proportion of African people who were married was considerably lower than that of other population groups of all age groups, followed by Coloureds. Divorce rates in the same period were 83 per 100 000. Eighty-three per cent of all registered divorces were recorded in marriages lasting less than 20 years, with 28 per cent in marriages lasting between five and nine years, followed by marriages lasting from less than a year to four years (cited in Amoateng et al., 2004).



## 2.3. The Family and Post-Apartheid Social and Economic Challenges

### 2.3.1. *Macro-economic policy and responses to social and economic challenges*

At the beginning of the democratic era, there was a clear understanding of the need to investigate and establish, by means of research, information and statistics, the social and economic conditions under which South Africans had been living. This was important, as a clear picture was needed of the social and economic challenges faced by South African households and families, in order for Government to formulate appropriate policies.

In 1993, the Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development (PSLSD) was undertaken by the Southern Africa Labour and Research Unit (SALDRU) for this purpose. This study captured different aspects of living standards and covered demographic indicators, household services, household income and expenditure, educational status, remittances, marital maintenance, land access and use, employment, health status and anthropometry (SALDRU, 1994). In October 1995, the Ministry in the Office of the President — Reconstruction and Development, issued a report: *Key Indicators of Poverty in South Africa: An analysis Prepared for the Office of the Reconstruction and Development Programme*.

The conclusion of this analysis was that poverty in South Africa had racial, rural and regional dimensions, as well as strong employment, gender and age dimension. In May 1998, another report: *Poverty and Inequality in South Africa*, prepared for the Office of the Executive Deputy President and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality, was published.

The abovementioned studies further increased Government's knowledge of the extent of poverty and inequality in the country. From the studies and analyses performed, it was clear that the new government had to contend with an economy that was characterised by widespread poverty, high unemployment,

and the unequal distribution of income and resources among the different race groups in the country. South African society was very polarised, having emerged from a long history of social and political conflicts and economic exploitation. Therefore, radical policy responses had to be devised and implemented to deal with the manifest social and economic challenges. These were also informed by an understanding that individuals and, particularly, families as social units were shouldering the heavy burden of poverty, lack of income through unemployment and disease, to mention a few.

In order to build a new nation and transform the inequitable relations that were inherited from the apartheid dispensation, Government and its social partners developed the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and instituted various policy reforms. *The Reconstruction and Development Programme: a Policy Framework* was conceived as “an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework that sought to mobilise all our people and our country’s resources toward the final eradication of apartheid and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future.” The five key programmes of the RDP were identified as:

- a. Meeting basic needs
- b. Developing our human resources
- c. Building the economy
- d. Democratising the state and society
- e. Implementing the RDP.

It was envisaged as follows: At the heart of the “Government of National Unity is a commitment to effectively address the problems of poverty and the gross inequality evident in all aspects of South African society ... [and] ... alleviate the poverty, low wages and extreme inequalities in wages and wealth generated by the apartheid system to meet basic needs, and thus ensure that every South

African has a decent living standard and economic security” (Republic of South Africa, 1994).

In 1996, a new macroeconomic policy, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy was introduced with the intention of spurring economic growth and creating employment. The vision of GEAR was outlined as a competitive, fast-growing economy that would create sufficient jobs for all work seekers; the redistribution of income and opportunities in favour of the poor; a society in which sound health, education and other services were available to all; and an environment in which homes were secure and places of work productive.

The draft Green Paper drew some lessons from GEAR. One key lesson was that economic matters could not solely be pursued at the expense of social development. Even though GEAR’s economic prescripts were seen as good for the economy, their implications for social and human development were quite negative, for example, the retrenchments and attendant job losses which followed the implementation of GEAR placed severe strain on families as breadwinners lost employment. Economic policy should, therefore, not be separated from social policy.

In 2006, the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA) was launched. The objectives of this initiative were to introduce policies, programmes and interventions that would allow the South African economy to grow to such an extent that poverty and unemployment would be halved by 2014. Programmes that were established under ASGISA were infrastructure investment, second-economy initiatives, skills and education, industrial policies and sector strategies, macroeconomic policy and governance interventions. In the same year, the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) was established to support ASGISA.

The New Growth Path (NGP) was established in 2010 in response to the shortcomings of some of the aforementioned macro policies. It seeks to create five million jobs by 2020, through accelerated growth hinging on broadened public infrastructure investment; enhanced labour-absorbing activities across the various sectors; innovation through the 'green economy' and bolstered rural development. The NGP observes that there is a growing consensus that creating decent work, reducing inequality and defeating poverty can only take place by means of a new growth path founded on a restructuring of the South African economy, in order to improve its performance, in terms of labour absorption, as well as the composition and rate of growth.

The NGP also responds to the severe economic downturn from late 2008, as well as technological change. Nationally, it results from the insufficient job growth of the '00s and the need to accelerate employment creation, income growth and a decline in poverty (Economic Development Department, 2010). The NGP resonates with this draft Green Paper in many ways. Critically, the two documents touch on problems of jobless growth, economic inequities and rural underdevelopment, which have not fundamentally changed since 1994. For the draft Green Paper, the former constitute part of the causalities of family disintegration in South Africa.

Over and above macro-level policy interventions, sectoral policies and, specifically, government department policies which address social and economic challenges have been designed and implemented in the last 17 years. These have been in the form of social services and social assistance programmes targeted at specific marginalised groups, for example, children, the aged and people with disabilities.

Poor and vulnerable South Africans benefit from state social assistance in the form of the Social Assistance Programme. This year (2011), 15 million people are receiving social grants in South Africa, which is more than a quarter of the

population and over six times the number of grant beneficiaries in 1998. Social assistance will contribute R97.6 billion to household income in 2011/12, representing a substantial and enduring programme of poverty reduction. In addition, more than ten million people receive the Child Support Grant and nearly 440 000 caregivers receive Care Dependency or Foster Care Grants, while almost 2.6 million older persons receive a non-contributory pension (National Treasury, 2011). This approach has been driven by the need to alleviate poverty and create a better life for all South Africans.

Government also provides education to all young citizens and free basic services, such as electricity and water, to poor households and families. The provision of housing as part of quality human settlements, the provision of free primary healthcare and school nutrition programmes, and the subsidisation of early childhood development (ECD) centres have all been prioritised by Government.

### *2.3.2. Poverty and unemployment*

One of the cardinal outcomes of past discriminatory and exclusionary policies is the high poverty and inequality levels in the country, especially among the majority African population group. Poverty and inequality continue to deter the family from playing its various roles in society and make it difficult for its members to meet their needs. According to the *Draft Anti-poverty Strategy of 2008*, there is little doubt that mass poverty continues to present itself as a challenge in the country.

The immediate cause of poverty is a lack of, or low earned income. Poverty still reflects apartheid settlement patterns and virtually all poor households are found in the former Bantustan regions, informal settlements and townships. Government's *Fifteen-year Report of 2008* points out that persistent inequality is largely the result of the reproduction of existing disparities in ownership, income, resources, skills and other determinants of people's capacity to take advantage

of opportunities. In addition, inequalities reduce the redistributive effects of economic growth and skew benefits of growth towards those who are already better off.

The main objective of the post-apartheid government has been to eradicate poverty and extreme socio-economic inequalities. Indeed, progress has been made in the fight against poverty as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Country Report of 2010 rightly observes:

The evidence suggests that MDG 1 may be an achievable goal if Government's poverty reduction strategies continue at current levels. There will, however, need to be a concerted effort to strengthen employment and income generation initiatives, and to ensure that integrated poverty reduction programmes address the ever-increasing income disparities (Statistics South Africa, 2010:37).

Even though MDG 1 (*eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*) might be attained, there is need for caution, because in spite of the positive strides which have already been made, the country still faces numerous challenges that impact negatively on many South Africans and the family, in particular. The country's unemployment rate is still very high and income inequality is among the highest in the world.

Furthermore, employment creation has not transpired at the anticipated rate and many people are still unskilled. The inability of many people to secure employment has led to families facing additional burdens, because family members have limited or no income to secure family livelihood. This situation continues to place a huge dependency burden on families. Given these facts, it becomes crucial to ascertain whether the foregoing interventions have promoted family life or strengthened families in South Africa.

### 2.3.2.1. *Child poverty*

Child poverty continues to be a worrisome trend in South Africa and is a direct consequence of family disintegration. It has also been exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic as parents and caregivers succumb to the disease. Child poverty has steadily increased in the last decade and seems to defy various policy interventions. A report by Streak, et al., (2008), which analyses the Income and Expenditure Survey of 2005/06 by Statistics South Africa, was able to paint a clearer picture of this phenomenon in South Africa. According to the report, child poverty peaked at 65,5 per cent and remains more extensive than poverty among adults (45,2 per cent), thus confirming that there is a greater incidence of children in poorer households. This is despite the massive injection of cash transfers into households with poor children through the expansion of the Child Support Grant.

The analysis also confirmed that the poverty rate remained far higher among African and Coloured than Asian and white children. There was no difference in poverty between boys and girls. Also, the child poverty headcount was far higher in the rural than urban areas, with large variation across the provinces. Limpopo was identified as the province with the highest child poverty headcount at 78 per cent. The Western Cape was the province with the lowest incidence of child poverty at 37,9 per cent. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal had similar rates of child poverty to Limpopo (Streak, et al., 2008).

### 2.3.2.2. *Feminisation of poverty*

The feminisation of poverty further characterises the overall poverty scenario in the country. Women endure a disproportionate burden of the outcomes of past policies, as far as poverty is concerned. Whereas men were working in various industries, many women remained in the rural areas to look after family members. Historically, women received income primarily in the form of remittances from their spouses. Cultural practices, such as patriarchy, also reinforced the exclusion of women in economic activities.

Furthermore, the gender division of labour continues to influence how families function. Women typically assume more household responsibilities and spend a larger portion of their time on unpaid care work than men and form a greater proportion of discouraged work seekers. This situation is further exacerbated by the inadequate provision of childcare facilities, causing the amount of time women spend on wage work to be reduced. Consequently, their vulnerability to poverty increases. There is, therefore, a gender dimension to poverty within families, as women continue to be marginalised in relation to men in terms of socio-economic opportunities, such as employment. In many instances, the burden of sustaining family life is placed on women who are often disadvantaged by structural, and gender inequalities and inequities.

When it comes to indicating levels of unemployment in South Africa, there is a policy issue that relates to the use of the narrow definition of unemployment, as opposed to a broad definition, which includes discouraged work seekers. As there are greater numbers of women who fall in the category of discouraged work seekers, the use of the narrow definition obscures the true extent of female unemployment. The Labour Force Survey of 2007 reported that female unemployment rates had been higher than those of males from 2001 to 2007, with similar patterns in the absorption and participation rates (Statistics South Africa, 2007). The figures below highlight unemployment trends and show the extent to which the problem is manifested in South Africa. More importantly, the statistics illustrate how gender-based unemployment is and that women constitute a significant number of discouraged work seekers.

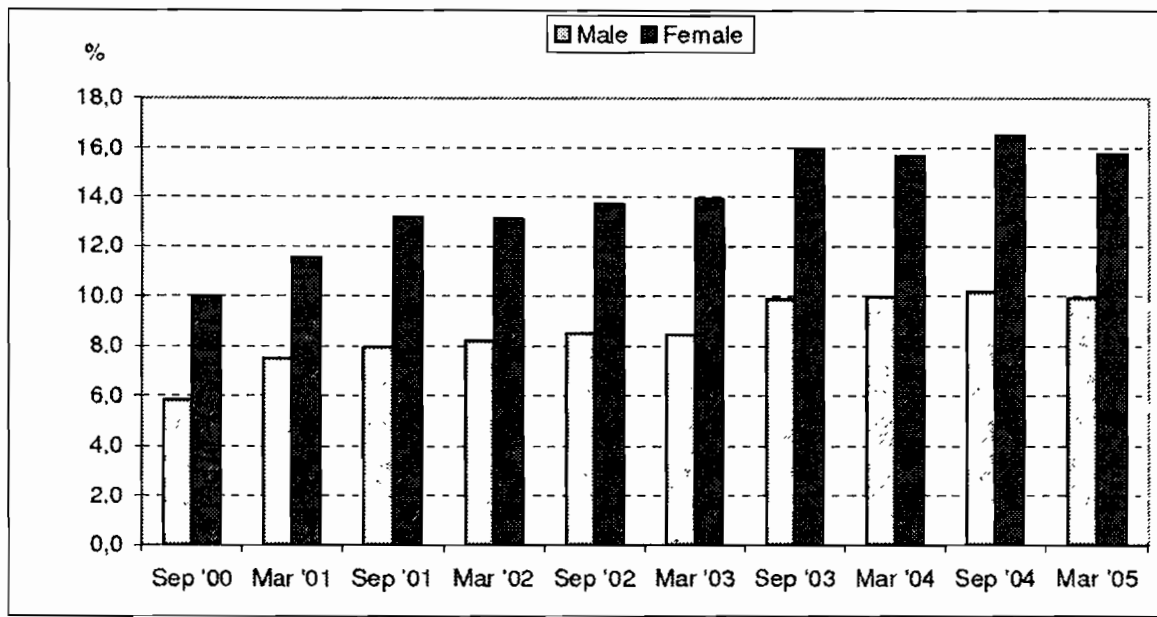


**Unemployment rate (narrow definition) by gender and population group, March 2001 to March 2007**

Sex and population group	Mar 2001	Mar 2002	Mar 2003	Mar 2004	Mar 2005	Mar 2006	Mar 2007
<b>Male</b>							
Black African	29.4	31.4	32.6	29.4	26.7	25.8	25.0
Coloured	19.9	21.4	20.3	16.2	16.6	18.3	16.9
Indian/ Asian	14.4	17.5	18.2	14.0	15.4	11.8	11.3
White	6.0	5.0	5.6	3.9	4.4	3.6	4.1
<b>Average</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>21.1</b>
<b>Female</b>							
Black African	33.0	39.5	42.6	39.9	37.6	36.2	36.4
Coloured	22.8	27.2	24.7	20.2	21.2	19.6	22.9
Indian/ Asian	20.5	24.0	28.7	21.0	22.6	18.2	17.9
White	8.2	6.6	7.7	6.3	5.9	6.2	4.6
<b>Average</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>33.9</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>30.8</b>

Source: Statistics South Africa – Labour Force Survey, (2007)

**Gender differences among discouraged work seekers, March 2001 to March 2007**



Source: Statistics South Africa – Labour Force Survey (2007)

**2.3.3. Population trends and implications for families**

The mid-year population estimates of 2009 by Statistics South Africa place the country's population at 49.32 million, with Africans in the majority and constituting 79 per cent of the total population, or some 38.6 million. About 25.2 million or 52 per cent of the population is female and nearly one third (32 per cent) of the

population is younger than 15 years. This large population of children under 15 translates into a high dependence ratio, as these children are mainly still being looked after by families. Some 3.5 million or seven per cent is 60 years or older.

The estimated overall HIV-prevalence rate is some 11,0 per cent. The HIV-positive population is estimated at some 5.35 million. Life expectancy at birth is estimated at around 50,3 years for males and 53,9 years for females. The reduction in life expectancy means that mostly breadwinners or parents who fall ill and die. This situation has implications for policy development in that the burden of disease is placed on families, as they have to care for the sick. Furthermore, when children are pushed into parental roles, it also stifles their normal development.

A rise in population numbers will invariably exert pressure on the resources available to families and their members. Even though South Africa's population is currently on the increase, there has not been a corresponding rise in family savings or investments in the national economy. Low labour absorption rates and limited employment opportunities mean that families will have less income and this limits their ability to care for their members.

More importantly, however, a skewed population distribution also has implications for a country's social and human development outcomes, for example, a country with a large youthful population, such as South Africa, will require extra capacity from Government, other role-players and especially families. This is because young people still have to be nurtured, socialised and cared for before they can be on their own. At this juncture, they are also not contributing economically to society through their labour, or other innovative efforts and investments. This leads to a higher dependence burden, as there is a smaller working population.

On the other hand, young people can also be seen in positive terms, with regard to high population ratios. This should offer what is known as the demographic dividend, where a large proportion of the population is economically active, thereby reducing dependence ratios and poverty rates, and promoting growth. The dividend can only be earned, however, if these young people are in school, at tertiary institutions or in transition to working life.

Demographic or population trends are directly correlated with family life in relation to three variables: fertility, mortality and migration. The former are not meaningful on their own, but are important with regard to the availability of resources in the present and the future in the light of meeting the needs of the population and guaranteeing good-quality life. The variables are also significant for socio-economic development.

Historically, South Africa had policies on migration which kept people out of the cities (influx control) or controlled movement between cities, especially with regard to women and the unemployed (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1995). This had a major impact on the population profile of the country in different geographical areas, for example, there are more old people and women in rural areas. Although influx control no longer exists, there is a need to consider whether new policies should encourage new patterns, for example, providing housing not only for male migrants, but also for their wives, or promoting economic development in rural areas, so that people are not forced to migrate (Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1995).

The political economy is of significance in that it may create the 'diswelfare' of certain members of society. Economic policies that place a high premium on economic growth without considering social and human development, for example, the GEAR, or which have exclusionary measures, as in the case of apartheid, will have negative effects on the family. It is for this reason that the Green Paper echoes earlier calls by Government to unite economic

development, and social and human development efforts. Economic policy cannot work in isolation of social policy. Therefore, the need exists to integrate the two as they reinforce each other. Otherwise, a focus on only the economy will definitely result in skewed development and growth without employment. The net result will be a highly unequal society.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PROMOTING FAMILY LIFE AND STRENGTHENING FAMILIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

#### 3.1. Introduction

In preceding chapters, it was discussed how colonialism and apartheid did much to damage and undermine the family in South Africa — especially the African family — through various exclusionary policies and legislation. It was also shown how that legacy continues to manifest itself in contemporary South Africa. In this chapter, it is recognised that past and present challenges that are presently undermining the family in South Africa can be addressed by strategies which promote family life and strengthen families. In Chapter One the main aim of the Green Paper was identified as: *To promote family life and strengthen families in South Africa*. Its objectives were stated as follows:

- a. The enhancement of the socialising, caring, nurturing, loving and supporting capabilities of families, so that their members are able to contribute effectively to the overall development of the country
- b. The empowerment of family members by enabling them to identify, negotiate around and maximise economic, labour market and other opportunities available in the country
- c. The improvement of the capacities of families to establish people-to-people interaction which makes a meaningful contribution towards a sense of community, social cohesion and human solidarity.

The key question then is: How can government policies promote family life and strengthen families in South Africa?

### 3.1.1. *Public policy and the family*

In response to the above question, it can be stated that Government already has existing policies and programmes that meet the needs of families in various ways. However, many of them are not family-focused. Even though such programmes exist in the country, the challenge lies in making them family-specific. This Green Paper notes that the **family perspective** should inform the Government's policy-making process. In order for the vision, mission, aims and objectives of the Green Paper to be achieved, the family perspective needs to be at the centre of policy-making in South Africa. It would have three major components:

- a. Sensitivity to changing family patterns and relationships
- b. Full recognition of family roles and functions
- c. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the effects of public policy on families.

A family focus in policy-making would lead to policies that are more in tune with contemporary family life, take more account of the functions and well-being of the family, and meet family needs and aspirations (Wicks, 1991).

### **3.2. Promoting Family Life**

Like many other families in the developing world, South African families have been forced to adapt to colonialism, urbanisation and globalisation. Family life refers to those activities that enable a family to effectively play its roles in society, such as nurturing, socialising, parenting, and the delineation of both sex and gender roles. The ways in which family members behave and interact with one another are all central to family life. Family life will also cover the quality of relationships between various members, for example, between parents and children, or between spouses and siblings.

Government is already providing a range of services to citizens which inadvertently enhance the well-being of families and embolden family life. As mentioned before, the provision of social grants covering children, the aged and people living with disabilities promotes family life in South Africa. Therefore, Government's delivery of services and the work of civil society can effectively support family life by employing the family perspective.

### 3.2.1. *Family support*

The promotion of family life finds expression in actions that aim to support the family. Family support refers to mobilising support for children's normal development in adverse circumstances. It is about mobilising that support in all the contexts in which children live their lives, for example, the family, school, peer group, sports team and church. Family support may also occur naturally through informal support systems of kin, neighbours and friends. It may be planned, arranged or delivered by professionals or para-professionals, for example, the health, social service or education systems (Galligan, 2000). There are three categories of family support:

- a. *Developmental family support* — strengthening the social support and coping capacity of children, and adults, in the context of their family and neighbourhood, personal development groups, recreational projects, youth programmes, parent education, or other adult education relevant to family living and relationships, would be examples of developmental family support. This type of family support is not problem focused and is, in principle, open to all who are encountering the ordinary challenges of parenting and family living.
- b. *Compensatory family support* — aims to compensate family members for the disabling effects of disadvantage or adversity in their present or earlier life. Examples of compensatory family support would include high-quality day nursery programmes for pre-schoolers from very disadvantaged home circumstances, and special youth programmes

for those at risk in communities with high rates of truancy and early school leaving. Compensatory family support can serve as one important strand in the range of strategies necessary to counteract the toxic effects on personal, family and neighbourhood life of social exclusion.

- c. *Protective family support* — seeks to strengthen the coping and resilience of children and adults in relation to identified risks or threats experienced within individual families. Examples of protective family support include: day fostering for the children of drug-abusing parents; refuges and support groups for women who are victims of domestic violence; and support programmes in child behaviour management for parents encountering serious problems in this regard. Protective family support will recognise the value of relationships, routine (such as bedtime) and rituals (such as birthdays and Christmas) in giving greater structure and stability to home life for a child in stressful family circumstances (Galligan, 2000:15).

In implementing the Green Paper, the support for family life will be articulated via certain programmes, for example, and not exclusively, the following:

- Promoting and strengthening the institution of marriage through preparatory or enrichment interventions
- Promoting and strengthening adoption in the country by encouraging all family types to participate in this endeavour
- Promoting and strengthening foster care
- Promoting and strengthening parenting programmes for first-time parents
- Promoting and strengthening gender equality between men and women
- Promoting and strengthening gender sensitive policies at the workplace



- Promoting and strengthening high-quality, comprehensive and holistic ECD in disadvantaged communities
- Strengthening existing child protection programmes in the country
- Strengthening and expanding existing programmes focusing on curbing teenage pregnancy
- Strengthening existing programmes focusing on stemming domestic violence and gender-based violence
- Promoting and strengthening youth development programmes.

#### 3.2.1.1. *Social cohesion*

Social cohesion is essential for family support in a country like South Africa and may serve as one of its pillars. Normatively, social cohesion may be taken as group solidarity. It is a tendency of a given society to identify with their society, that is, to feel that they are to society as parts of a whole. At national level, it is the communitarian-like spirit that animates the people of a given country to appreciate the need for mutual togetherness. It is the consciousness (though mostly unconscious) of a desire by a particular people to belong together (Tusabe, 2002).

One of the most desirable fruits of a people who live by the spirit of group solidarity or nationhood is that they identify that which is human in others, which gives them the capacity to dialogue with others and to be enriched by their good qualities. With the spirit of cohesion, people feel implicitly bound together to co-operate, realising common ends by the use of common means, each person guaranteeing his or her co-operation, so that all can depend on each other (Tusabe, 2002:85).

One indicator of social cohesion is social capital. Social capital refers to social networks, informed by trust, which enable people to participate in reciprocal exchanges, mutual support and collective action to achieve shared goals.

It can be identified on three levels, namely:

- a. Government — where it can manifest as a resource of public trust and an index of popular participation, commitment and trust in institutions of Government.
- b. Labour — social capital is a matter of livelihood strategies which are pursued, not only through employment, but also through social networks that facilitate access to goods and services, water, electricity, housing support, education, employment opportunities and welfare benefits.
- c. Business — social capital appears as another term for social responsibility (Chidester, et al., 2003).

As a policy agenda, the ultimate aim of promoting family life, family support and social cohesion would be to move towards a society that is driven by consensus, rather than externally enforced stability. It would also involve looking at social divisions encompassing class, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability and other dimensions of social difference and diversity. It would seek for a substantial narrowing of differentials between those from diverse socio-economic backgrounds within racial, ethnic and faith groups, and more egalitarian social structure. It would also promote human rights, social justice and economic inclusion (Ratcliffe and Newman, 2011).

Through the Green Paper, Government will create avenues for supporting initiatives that enhance social cohesion and human solidarity in South Africa, such as the following:

- *Community development interventions* — focusing on people's social and economic upliftment, for example, poverty-reduction initiatives, employment-creation and income-generation projects, and housing, education and health-related schemes.

- *Social economy* — this refers to activities which are pursued by local community actors in order to meet social needs, either through the production of goods, or services for the market economy. However, even though their initiatives generate income and even profits, their philosophical orientation is geared towards social and community goals. Co-operatives, savings clubs or *stokvels*, burial societies and self-help groups will be bolstered.
- *Indigenous social networks, grassroots movements, women's groups* — these will be identified by Government as key partners in the realisation of the aims and objectives of the Green Paper.
- *Home-based care systems* — either those that focus on the chronically ill members of the community, due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, or those that look after orphans and vulnerable children will be supported and strengthened.
- *Community policing forums* — crime is mainly a social issue and efforts aimed at its eradication at community level resonate with the vision of the Green Paper.
- *Recreational and theatre-based activities* — these are critical to raising morale in communities and they have the potential of not only releasing the creative spirit of family members, but can also act as barriers against negative forces, such as gangs, drugs and crime.

### **3.3. Family Strengthening**

Family strengthening refers to the deliberate process of giving families the necessary opportunities, relationships, networks and support for them to raise their children successfully. This will include involving parents as decision-makers, in relation to how communities meet their needs. When families fail to play their expected roles, they generally tend to place a heavy strain on other sections of society. This situation generally creates a heavy burden on the state, because family members are unable to make meaningful contributions towards society's

progress, due to their vulnerable nature (National Human Services Assembly, 2004). The strengthening of families is driven by certain core areas, namely:

- *Family Economic Success* — focuses on helping individuals improve self-sufficiency through expanded opportunities to work, earn a living wage that provides for the basic needs of the family and build assets that grow the family over time, such as home ownership and retirement accounts.
- *Family Support Systems* — stresses the building of appropriate and adequate systems of support for healthy family development that encompasses healthcare, childcare, education and other essential components of strong families.
- *Thriving and Nurturing Communities* — emphasises the building of a nurturing and supportive environment, in which healthy families pursue long-term goals crucial to sustainable family development. Essential elements for family success also include access to affordable housing, strong neighbourhood institutions, safe streets, supportive social networks, and an environment that promotes communities and strengthens bonds between families (National Human Services Assembly, 2004).

The strengthening of the family will rely on strategies which focus on those families that are under threat, or about to experience some form of vulnerability. The strategy will deal with certain family types that are unable to function optimally in society, in accordance with the stated mission, vision, aims and objectives of the Green Paper. Family strengthening will target certain families, for example:

#### 3.3.1. *Families at risk*

These are families that face imminent danger of disintegration and are characterised by disunity, ineffective communication, poor interpersonal relationships, poor parenting skills and irresponsible behaviour. Lack of support

or care, weak role clarification, mistrust and poor conflict management are usually evident in these families. Families at risk are prone to domestic violence, substance abuse and other forms of anti-social behaviour. In such families, members are usually not self-reliant, unemployed, or unable to earn an income through other economic means. Such individuals are mainly deprived of resources that can help them to perform their expected roles in society. Such families require state intervention, in order to help them function effectively in society.

### *3.3.2. Families in crisis*

These are generally families that function well enough to cope with daily challenges, but may experience a crisis as a result of sudden trauma or setback, such as, among others, death, a terminal disease like cancer or AIDS, disability, unemployment, domestic violence or a heinous crime like rape. In such instances, interventions are urgently required, in order to assist families to manage the existing crisis until they are able to revert to their own coping skills and systems. It is important that families that require support are not encouraged to depend on external support systems, but are assisted to become independent in their functions. Their innate strengths will serve as platforms for the intervention.

### *3.3.3. Families in transition*

Families in transition are characterised by change or disruptions, which may result from migration, separation, divorce or death. When this occurs, family members, especially those who are extremely vulnerable and dependent, fail to access resources that are important for their optimal functioning. Families in transition need special support from the state. Given South Africa's family plurality, the Green Paper will ensure that the strategies for the strengthening of families in transition will be in line with its principles, culturally appropriate, and sensitive to gender, age, race and disability issues. The strengthening of families in transition will also hinge on an intersectoral approach and/or inter-

agency/departmental collaboration, and be spearheaded by inter-disciplinary teams of professionals.

### **3.4. Family-strengthening Programmes**

Family-strengthening programmes will focus on the neediest and most vulnerable families, for example, well-implemented home-health visiting programmes and high-quality, comprehensive and holistic ECD initiatives can help improve outcomes for children where poverty and HIV are highly prevalent. Providing support to caregivers can also enhance the potential of families. Such programmes could alleviate the care burden of women and girls, and enable caregivers to take up other activities, such as income-generating initiatives, schooling and self-care. They can also be vehicles for the delivery of other services, for example, nutrition and healthcare programmes (Human Sciences Research Council, 2009:3).

Lastly, family strengthening will be attained through the following actions:

- a. Identifying the needs and challenges of families
- b. Recognising the resources they have
- c. Identifying family strengths and priorities
- d. Coordination of the roles of various agencies involved in the area
- e. Identification of unmet needs, gaps and support
- f. Developing strategies for intervention.

The promotion of family life and family strengthening will be informed by certain approaches that analyse and explain the family. These approaches will also underpin the delivery of services to families by Government and civil society.

### 3.5. Family Approaches

#### 3.5.1. *Rights-based approach*

The Green Paper on families is firstly informed by the rights-based approach. Its goals include achieving social justice, a minimum standard of living, equitable access and equal opportunity to services and benefits, and a commitment to meeting the needs of all South Africans, with a special emphasis on the needs of the most disadvantaged in the society. These ideas are firmly embedded in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Act no. 108), which guarantees all citizens the right to dignity as one of its central values (Patel, 2005).

#### 3.5.2. *The strengths perspective*

The strengths perspective is closely related to empowerment. It seeks to identify, use, build, and reinforce the strengths and abilities people already have. It is useful across the life cycle and throughout all stages of the helping process – assessment, intervention, and evaluation. It emphasises people's abilities, values, interests, beliefs, resources, accomplishments and aspirations (Zastrow, 2010).

#### 3.5.3. *Life cycle approach*

This will serve as an important perspective in the implementation of programmes that support family life and strengthen families. It will also provide a theoretical basis for their M&E. The family life cycle approach assumes that family life is changing continually and is influenced by psychosexual development and rites of passage such as marriage, divorce, child-rearing or retirement. During each of these stages of development, people modify their roles and relationships, and also alter the division of labour and their level of satisfaction (Baker, 2001).

The life-cycle approach will allow for a comprehensive analysis of life events, family crises, processes and challenges relating to age, gender, and roles and responsibilities of each family member. It will further help to promote an

understanding of an ideal and desirable progression through life's stages. This approach will also guide the provision of services and resources, by relevant actors, that are appropriate for specific developmental stages and ages of family members.

#### *3.5.4. Systems approach*

The systems perspective is also a structural approach, in which the family as a whole is considered to be more than its component parts. Therefore, the family is viewed as a social system because its members are interdependent and any change in the behaviour of one member will affect the behaviour of others (Baker, 2001). The theory will help service providers to analyse and interpret family-related issues and enable them to locate the family in the society. The approach will be helpful in analysing the family in South Africa and also link it to overall national development goals. It provides the lens to view the family not in isolation, but in concert with the country's history, its political economy and contemporary social forces. The promotion of family life and the strengthening of the family are all central to the overall stability and general well-being of South Africa. This perspective thus lays the foundation for an integrated approach to service delivery.

#### *3.5.5. The social development approach*

The social development approach recognises that the family is the basic unit of society and plays a key role in the survival, protection and development of children. Its rationale is that families should be supported and their capabilities have to be strengthened for the purpose of meeting the needs of members. Theories encompassed in this approach recognise that families require a range of supportive services in order to promote family life and development. Over and above the foregoing, certain families may require additional supportive services so that they can solve problems in human relations such as conflict, communication, parenting, substance abuse, family violence as well as addressing problems arising from life changes and events (Patel, 2005).



## CHAPTER FOUR

### INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

#### 4.1. Introduction

This Green Paper is Government's way of responding to the various concerns from a cross-section of South African society, which alluded to the fact that the family in South Africa was disintegrating. Many were of the view that something had to be done by Government and all stakeholders, in order to stop the family from further decline. The rationale and motivation of this endeavour were elaborated on in Chapter One; the key issues for consideration when addressing the plight of families were highlighted in Chapter Two; the means for analysing the conditions in which families find themselves and the tools for intervention, as possible solutions for promoting family life and strengthening families, were described in Chapter Three. The focus of Chapter Four is on the institutional mechanisms which are going to facilitate the implementation of the Green Paper.

#### 4.2. National Policies and Legislation

##### 4.2.1. *The Constitution of South Africa*

The overarching institutional framework that guides the implementation of South Africa's policies and legislation is the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Act no. 108). The Green Paper's main aim of promoting family life and strengthening the family resonates especially with sections 26, 27, 28 and 29 of the Constitution. The implementation of the Green Paper is dependent on the realisation of these constitutional rights, for example, Section 26 is concerned with the right to adequate housing and Section 27 enshrines the right to healthcare, food, water and social security.

With Section 26 and Section 27, the Constitution clearly notes that the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights. However, Section 28, dealing with the right of the child, and Section 29, regarding the right to education, do not have conditions for their realisation. They have to be provided by the state.

The Constitution also encompasses a Bill of Rights that enshrines the socio-economic rights of the citizenry. These constitutional provisions directly influence the plight of the family and the manner in which its members contribute towards society's well-being and stability. The Green Paper will be guided by these constitutional imperatives and macro government policies, such as the following:

#### *4.2.1.1. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)*

The RDP is still the cornerstone of all government policies. It is a coherent and integrated programme, which is people-driven and people-centred. It integrates the goals of growth, development and redistribution. The implementation of pro-family policies will also be directed by the RDP's tenets of meeting basic needs, building the economy, democratising the state and society, developing human resources and nation-building (African National Congress, 1994).

#### *4.2.1.2 The Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy*

The GEAR strategy aims to rebuild and restructure the economy in line with the goals of the RDP, in order to confront the challenges of meeting basic needs, developing human resources and increasing participation in the democratic institutions of civil society. The GEAR also calls for an inter-related type of development (Department of Finance, 1996). The family is part of the national economy and makes contributions towards its growth. Therefore, economic policy should be in line with the promotion of family life and the strengthening of the family in South Africa.

#### 4.2.1.3. *The White Paper for Social Welfare*

The White Paper for Social Welfare's developmental paradigm will guide the implementation of pro-family policies and services in the country. The principles of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) reaffirm Government's commitment to securing basic welfare and human rights and active citizen participation in promoting human well-being. Its strategies place emphasis on promoting family life, as well as strengthening families.

#### 4.2.1.4. *The New Growth Path (NGP)*

The NGP combines both macroeconomic and microeconomic interventions, so that the country might collectively achieve a more developed, democratic, cohesive and equitable economy, and society, over the medium term, in the context of sustained growth. The NGP's vision intertwines with the Green Paper's *raison d'être*. The family and its members are central to the realisation of the goals of the NGP. If the labour absorption capacity of the South African economy and the rate of growth were increased, the implications for the family would be profound.

In addition to the abovementioned, there are several policies and pieces of legislation that are important to the realisation of the vision of the Green Paper. There are also international protocols that will guide the implementation of the Green Paper (included in the appendix section).

### **4.3. The Role of Government Departments**

The implementation of the Green Paper would be dependent on a sound institutional framework, an active political administration and technical expertise. The former would facilitate the translation of the Green Paper's aims and objectives into actual programmes, delivered to the family by different stakeholders. At the centre of institutional and policy frameworks is the task of coordinating and integrating all levels of service delivery and existing programmes for the purpose of implementing the family policy.

Government will provide leadership in the implementation of the Green Paper, while also developing partnerships with civil society and the private sector. Such partnerships would be based on an integrated approach to social service delivery. Every government department has a role to play in the promotion of family life and strengthening of families in South Africa.

Among others, the following key departments will play a pivotal role in the implementation of the Green Paper.

#### 4.3.1. *The Department of Social Development (DSD)*

The DSD is the main focal point for actions aimed at supporting family life and the strengthening of families in the country. It will deploy its organisational, fiscal and human resources capacity to prioritise family issues across line function government departments. The department will also ensure that all policies, legislation and initiatives of Government are explicitly tilted in favour of families in the country. It will be the leading department implementing the Green Paper while performing the following tasks:

- Developing and facilitating the implementation of intersectoral and interdisciplinary protocols
- Mitigating the risk factors that impede families from fulfilling their various roles and responsibilities
- Ensuring an effective and holistic service delivery system, including prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention, and reunification/after care services and programmes
- Creating an enabling environment, in order to promote family life and strengthen families
- Advocating on behalf of families through the dissemination of information and education strategies.

#### *4.3.2. The Department of Arts and Culture*

The Department of Arts and Culture is crucial to the implementation of the Green Paper. It plays an essential role in anchoring South African society in its traditional value systems, while recognising the changing global order. It gives the nation a sense of pride and belongingness.

#### *4.3.3. The Department of Correctional Services*

The Department of Correctional Services has a crucial role to play in guaranteeing the well-being of South African families, as many offenders are also members of different families in the country. Since the department's primary goal is to facilitate the correction of offending behaviour, mainly through rehabilitation, families are considered as pivotal partners in this process. Families also play an important role in the reintegration of offenders back into society. The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005) also recognises the family as the basic unit of society, as well as the primary level at which correction should take place.

#### *4.3.4. The Department of Defence and Military Veterans*

The plight of South Africa's former combatants in the liberation struggle, who now constitute a large number of the country's military veterans, is well-documented. Military veterans and their families have faced huge challenges in meeting their needs since demobilisation. Unemployment, post-traumatic stress, depression and related psychological problems remain the main challenges faced by these individuals. The implementation of the Green Paper on families will respond to the aforementioned challenges.

#### *4.3.5. The Department of General Education*

The Department of General Education will respond to the vision of the Green Paper by, among others, ensuring that all South African children have access to quality education. The department will also ensure that an inclusive education and training system is availed to children with special educational needs and

assist families through the placement of such children in mainstream schools, full-service schools and special schools. It will also attend to the following:

- The involvement of families in the education of children
- Ensuring that life skills training at schools incorporates family issues
- The promotion of parental involvement in schooling
- The provision of ECD services
- Advocating for social service professions in schools
- The provision of Youth Development Programmes.

#### *4.3.6. The Department of Health*

The Department of Health will contribute towards the implementation of the Green Paper by ensuring that South African families have access to affordable and high-quality health services. It will also be involved in developing pro-family policies, and programmes and services addressing the mental and physical well-being of families, including:

- Primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare services
- Health services for families affected by HIV/AIDS, violence, malnutrition, infectious diseases, chronic illnesses and mental health-related problems
- Prevention programmes and specialised medical care services for individual members of families
- Health promotion and education at community level.

#### *4.3.7. The Department of Home Affairs*

This department has an important role to play in the implementation of the Green Paper through the registration of members of families by means of birth, marriage and death certificates. The issuing of South African identity documents, which are crucial for access to state social grants, such as Child Support, Disability and Foster Care Grants, or pension for the aged, remains a critical function of the Department of Home Affairs. The department's role of protecting

and regulating the interests of all inhabitants of South Africa, with regard to their individual status and identity, as well as specific rights and powers, is vital for the promotion of family life and the strengthening of the family.

#### *4.3.8. The Department of Human Settlements*

In facilitating the implementation of the Green Paper, the Department of Human Settlements will ensure that South African families have access to quality housing that is supportive of their optimal functioning. It will also make provision for the development of housing structures, including the implementation of the government-driven RDP housing programmes that are family-friendly and support community interaction. The department will focus on the following, among others:

- Housing development that takes cognisance of the diverse nature of the South African family
- Housing development that is holistic and has links with other social systems, such as clinics, schools, transport, sport and recreation facilities
- Housing that raises the livelihoods of families and is not merely used for shelter, but becomes an asset in the fight against poverty
- Human settlements which are supportive of family life and strengthen families.

#### *4.3.9. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development*

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development's mandate will consolidate the implementation of the Green Paper by ensuring peace and security in the country. The following will also be essential to the Green Paper:

- Providing a safe environment for all families in the country by ensuring that the criminal justice system responds to the needs of the family
- Prioritising the safety of children
- Ensuring the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into communities

- Promoting restorative justice, in order to preserve families
- Ensuring that there is an effective family law system in the country.

#### 4.3.10. *The Department of Labour*

The Department of Labour will be involved in the implementation of the Green Paper through, inter alia, the following:

- Ensuring that labour policies and laws support gender equity at the workplace
- Protecting workers' rights through the monitoring of employment conditions
- Monitoring fair practices at the workplace, especially with regard to maternity leave
- Contributing towards conditions conducive to the creation of employment by developing sound labour legislation
- Protecting children against child labour through the detection of such practices and the prosecution of perpetrators.

#### 4.3.11. *The Department of Police*

The Department of Police will be guided by the principles of the Green Paper as it executes its mandate of maintaining public order, protecting citizens and their property, and upholding, as well as enforcing, the law. Existing safety and security programmes that cover families and their members will be linked to the objectives of the Green Paper.

#### 4.3.12. *The Department of Sport and Recreation*

Sport and recreation are essential for national development, as they are central to human growth. They are also important catalysts for the realisation of mental health, and general health and social well-being.



The Department of Sport and Recreation will facilitate the implementation of the Green Paper by, inter alia, addressing the following:

- The use of sport and recreation in the fight against anti-social behaviour, and social vices, such as crime, juvenile delinquency and drug abuse
- Mainstreaming physical education in schools and institutions of higher learning
- Making sport and recreation accessible to South African families by creating safe parks and other facilities
- Encouraging marginalised groups, who are also family members, such as women, people with disabilities, the youth and rural dwellers, to participate in sport.

4.3.13. *The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry*

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry will facilitate the implementation of the Green Paper by making sure that poor and marginalised families have access to clean and free water services. The Green Paper will be linked to programmes relating to free water services that are currently being offered by Government through a clear identification of those families that are vulnerable and at risk.

4.3.14. *The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs*

This department is at the coalface of Government's service delivery and the implementation of policies. Most of the work of this department has a direct impact on the family. In order to harmonise all the department's efforts, multidisciplinary teams will be at the forefront of service delivery at this level. In addition, concerted efforts will be made to bring on board the participation of communities to improve the living conditions of families.

#### 4.3.15. *The Department of Rural Development*

The bulk of families in the rural areas are more vulnerable than their urban counterparts. In addition, rural children are more prone to child poverty than urban children. Most rural provinces also exhibit high poverty ratios. Therefore, rural development strategies need to have a strong focus on rural families, while being guided by the principles of the Green Paper.

#### 4.3.16. *The Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities*

This department will need to locate all these groups within the family setting and not treat them as disaggregated populations. Once these individuals are regarded as family members, service delivery will target families and not just women, children and people with disabilities. Effective service delivery and positive outcomes can transpire with the guidance of the Green Paper.

### **4.4. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**

The coordination of different government policies that promote family life and the strengthening of the family will be dependent on a clearly defined and executed M&E process. The M&E will then serve as an important stage for the implementation of the Green Paper. There are, however, many definitions or uses for M&E. In the case of policy development and implementation, M&E provides Government with the means for learning from past experience, improving service delivery, planning and allocating resources, and demonstrating results as part of accountability to key stakeholders (World Bank, 2004).

M&E will also be consolidated by ongoing research through the identification of changing trends in families, such as poverty and unemployment levels, nutrition standards, health and morbidity indices, and educational standards. Furthermore, M&E will be underpinned by a theoretical understanding of the family, as well as its roles and responsibilities in society. In this respect, M&E will be family-oriented, as its focus will be primarily guided by family-based theoretical positions as highlighted in the previous section.

#### **4.5. The Role of Professionals**

The Green Paper will also be implemented by various professionals, who are accountable to the state with regard to families. Through their work with families, the following professionals will interpret and give expression to the Green Paper's vision:

##### *a. Social service practitioners*

Social workers, social auxiliary workers, childcare workers, youth workers and community development practitioners are central to the implementation of the Green Paper, through their work with families and their members by providing, among others, psychosocial and emotional support, counselling, referrals, child protection services, social security and social development services. They will essentially be working in an integrated manner, as they deliver social services to families. They will also assist in linking family members to community and state resources, and other social services.

##### *b. Psychologists and psychiatrists*

Families at risk, or in crisis, suffer a lot of emotional stress, which also leads to other social ills, such as suicide, depression, substance abuse and domestic violence. Psychologists and psychiatrists play an important role in assessing family stability and making recommendations for intervention when there are family members facing various psychosocial challenges. These professionals also work in conjunction with other mental health practitioners.

##### *c. Lawyers*

Lawyers can improve the lives of family members by facilitating access to care, especially for vulnerable members. They can also advocate on behalf of the marginalised and inarticulate, so that they may access quality social services. In addition, family members' human rights can be secured by lawyers.

*d. Health practitioners*

All health practitioners play a vital role in maintaining family healthcare and well-being. Public health initiatives that target families, in order to decrease morbidity and infant mortality rates, also promote family life and the strengthening of families in the country. Public health campaigns against communicable diseases, guided by the principle of prevention and early identification of illnesses for early treatment, also mirror the Green Paper's approach.

*e. Safety and security personnel*

The Green Paper intersects with the work of safety and security personnel, for example, police officers are already engaged in programmes that protect family members, such as women and children.

*f. Economists, labour specialists and policy analysts*

The family has a central place in the economy and labour market. Economists, labour specialists and policy analysts have to be aware of the family's fundamental role in the production of human capital for both the economy and the labour market. Therefore, the development of economic or labour policies must also take into account the family's roles and responsibilities, and ensure that they are not inimical to family well-being. Policy analysts also have a role to play in providing alternative policy scenarios that promote family life, and realise family strengthening and well-being.

#### **4.6. The Role of Volunteers**

Volunteers have a critical role to play in the implementation of the Green Paper. Even though there are volunteers who receive some kind of stipend, many still offer their services without any expectation of remuneration. Already, the bulk of family-oriented activities, such as home-based care for those afflicted by HIV/AIDS, and care for orphans and other vulnerable persons, are all being undertaken by volunteers. The role of volunteers will be supported by Government and considered to be critical in the raising of the quality of life of

families and their members. Therefore, resources will be marshalled by Government, in order to make the work of these individuals more effective.

Furthermore, informal and indigenous social networks, such as neighbourhood structures, self-help groups, savings and burial societies, and spiritual and customary systems are of paramount importance and will be identified as key partners in the realisation of the goals of the Green Paper. These networks make up a large section of civil society.

#### **4.7. The Role of Civil Society**

Through its various departments, for example, the DSD, Government has already established working partnerships with civil society organisations (CSOs). It works in partnership with NGOs, FBOs, the business sector, organised labour and other role-players in the spirit of *Batho Pele* (People First), to build a better society. The department's entities, such as the National Development Agency (NDA) and the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) are also well placed to safeguard community and family preservation through the funding of CBOs and other organisations that foster development within communities, as well as administering social grants in poor communities. Civil society, therefore, becomes an important intermediary in the light of government public policy and an important avenue for articulating the vision of the Green Paper.

#### **4.8. The Role of Traditional Leaders**

Traditional leaders have a very important role to play in the Green Paper. They remain the custodians of the traditional value system. They also preside over land, marriages and the family in rural areas. Their engagement by Government is crucial to the realisation of the vision of the Green Paper.

#### **4.9. The Role of Business**

The role of business in the promotion of family life and the strengthening of families in South Africa needs to be informed by the manner in which employers are able to develop programmes that create a healthy balance between work,

and the family. In attempting to achieve a better work-life balance, business must be mindful of the fact that every employee is part of a family and, more importantly, a breadwinner. South African enterprises occupy a central place in the employment equation. To this end, it is important that recognition be given to the fact that better productivity of individual employees is reliant on a functioning and viable family. This also has a direct bearing on the organisation's productivity and profitability, because motivated workers will be more productive.

Business plays a critical role in ensuring that the work environment is family friendly through benefits that impact on the quality of life of family members and also have positive societal outcomes, such as maternity leave, childcare provision and other family-related benefits. The long-term vision for business, with regard to functioning and strong families, is an environment that will allow businesspeople to transact freely, without fear of crime, violence, and social discord, which are direct consequences of family breakdown. With regard to family strengthening, business plays an important role in supporting the efforts of organisations involved in different initiatives aimed at raising the quality of life of vulnerable families. Such efforts could be financially supported by business and undertaken as Corporate Social Investment (CSI).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This Green Paper arose out of a need to promote family life and strengthen families in South Africa. The DSD undertook several research projects and conducted intersectoral workshops in all the nine provinces of the country for the purpose of developing a policy framework on the family. As part of the national consultative process, community dialogues were arranged in rural and urban areas to enable South Africans to express their views on matters that concerned the family.

The unanimous outflow of this process was an acknowledgement by all role-players that the precarious nature of the family was intolerable and that drastic

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measures had to be taken by Government, CSOs, NGOs, FBOs, CBOs, traditional structures and the business sector, in order to restore the dignity of the family and arrest its downward spiral.

## GLOSSARY

*Child:* A child is a person under the age of 18 years.

*Child-headed family:* A child-headed family is a family without a parent and/or adult caregiver/s, which is headed by the eldest/responsible child assuming parental responsibility.

*Cohabitation family:* The cohabitation family comprises two adults staying together without any contractual agreements, with or without children.

*Collaborative model of family preservation:* This model concentrates on the collective actions of a network of service providers to strengthen families and systems. This model, therefore, calls for service providers to work together to address the needs of families holistically.

*Community:* A community is a number of geographically demarcated households, which may or may not consist of various cultural, economic, educational, religious and social groups that share common interests and have common needs.

*Dysfunctional families:* These are families which cannot effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities towards family members. They are also characterised by the poor physical, psychological and intellectual development of members. Economically, such families are not able to sustain themselves.

*Extended family:* An extended family is a multigenerational family that may or may not share the same household. It includes family members who share blood relations, relation by marriage, cohabitation and/or legal relations.



*Family:* A family is a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, adoption or cohabitation, characterised by a common residence (household) or not, interacting and communicating with one another in their respective family roles, maintaining a common culture and governed by family rules.

*Family at risk:* A family that faces imminent danger of disintegration and is characterised by disunity, ineffective communication, poor interpersonal relationships, poor parenting skills and irresponsible behaviour. Lack of support or care, weak role clarification, mistrust and poor conflict management are usually evident.

A family at risk is prone to domestic violence, substance abuse and other forms of anti-social behaviour. Such a family requires state intervention to function effectively in society.

*Family in crisis:* This is generally a family that functions well enough to cope with daily challenges, but may experience a crisis as a result of sudden trauma or setback, such as, among others, death, a terminal disease like cancer or AIDS, disability, unemployment, rape, or domestic violence. In such instances, urgent intervention may be required to assist the family to manage the crisis until such time that it can revert to its own coping skills and systems.

*Family policy:* Family policy refers to the principles governing actions directed towards achieving specified ends, through the provision of welfare, minimum standards of income and some measure of progressive redistribution in command over resources, in such a way as to shape the development of families.

Family policies identify families as the deliberate target of specific actions, and where the measures initiated are designed to have an impact on family resources and ultimately on family structure (Harris, 2004). Family policy is also linked to

policies that are implemented in other areas that have unintended outcomes or impacts for families, for example:

- Labour markets and employment policies
- Measures to protect children and older persons
- Prevention of social exclusion (Harris, 2004).

*Family preservation services:* Family preservation services are services to families that focus on family strengths in order to strengthen families, so as to keep families together as far as possible.

*Family reunification:* This is the reunification of family members who have been separated from their families for various reasons.

*Family resilience:* The ability of a family to respond positively to an adverse situation and emerge from it feeling strengthened, more resourceful and confident than before (Simon, et al., 2005).

*Family strengthening:* Refers to the deliberate process of giving families the necessary opportunities, relationships, networks, and support to become functional and self-reliant. The strengthening of families is driven by certain core areas, namely: family economic success, family support systems, and thriving and nurturing communities.

*Family well-being:* As a family policy goal, it is a value criterion that can be used to assess and evaluate the effects of existing government policies on families and predict the family effects of policies that are still being considered, but have not yet been adopted (Zimmerman, 1992).

*Foster child:* A foster child is a child who has been found in need of care by the Children's Court and placed in the care of a suitable foster parent/s, who is/are not the natural parent or guardian of the child.

*Household:* A household is a group of persons who live together and jointly provide food or other essentials for living for themselves, or a single person living alone.

*Moral regeneration:* Moral regeneration ensures that family members revive moral values which guide acceptable standards of behaviour that contribute to the well-being of families, communities and the broader society.

*Moral values:* Moral values guide day-to-day living and are principles, which express ideas about the worth or importance of certain qualities and standards for behaviour generally accepted by a particular group, community or society and which members personally feel are important.

*Non-household family:* A non-household family is a group of non-related people staying together, sharing responsibilities and governed by family rules.

*The state:* This is interchangeably used with the term, 'government'. For purposes of the family policy, the terms are taken as meaning the same, although the state's focus is much broader than that of government.

## **ACRONYMS**

<b>AIDS</b>	<b>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</b>
<b>ASGISA</b>	<b>Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa</b>
<b>CBO</b>	<b>Community-based Organisation</b>
<b>CSO</b>	<b>Civil Society Organisation</b>
<b>DSD</b>	<b>Department of Social Development</b>
<b>ECD</b>	<b>Early Childhood Development</b>
<b>FBO</b>	<b>Faith-based Organisation</b>
<b>GEAR</b>	<b>Growth, Employment and Redistribution</b>
<b>HIV</b>	<b>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</b>
<b>MDGs</b>	<b>Millennium Development Goals</b>
<b>M&amp;E</b>	<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-governmental Organisation</b>
<b>NGP</b>	<b>New Growth Path</b>
<b>RDP</b>	<b>Reconstruction and Development Programme</b>

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## APPENDIX A

Government policies with specific reference to the family policy are as follows:

- The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997)
- The Population Policy for South Africa (1998)
- South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment (2000)
- The Policy on Gender Equality (2002)
- The Policy on Financial Awards to Service Providers (2004)
- The Policy on the Management of Substance Abuse (2005)
- The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005)
- The Integrated Youth Development Strategy (2005)
- The National Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Management of Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation (2005)
- The Policy for Older Persons (2005)
- The South African Millennium Developmental Goals (2005)
- The Integrated Policy on Disability (2006).

Legislation is as follows:

- The Marriage Act, No. 25 of 1961
- The Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act, No. 80 of 1963
- The Older Persons Act, No. 13 of 2006
- The Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51 of 1977
- The Divorce Act, No. 70 of 1979
- The Child Care Act, No. 74 of 1983
- The Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005
- The Children's Amendment Act, No. 41 of 2007
- The Matrimonial Property Act, No. 88 of 1984

- The Mediation in Certain Divorce Matters Act, No. 24 of 1987
- The Birth and Death Registration Act, No. 51 of 1992
- The Social Assistance Act, No. 13 of 2004
- The Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependency Act, No. 20 of 1992
- The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction Act, No. 72 of 1996
- The Housing Act, No. 107 of 1997
- The Domestic Violence Act, No. 116 of 1998
- The Adoption Matters Amendment Act, No. 56 of 1998
- The Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998
- The Probation Services Act, No. 116 of 1991
- The Probation Services Amendment Act, No. 35 of 2002
- The Prevention of Illegal Eviction Act, No. 19 of 1998
- The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, No. 120 of 1998
- The Sterilisation Act, No. 44 of 1998
- The Health Act, No. 61 of 2003
- The Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act, No. 92 of 1996
- The Sexual Offences Act, No 32 of 2007.

International protocols relevant to the family policy are the following:

- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Elderly (Resolution 46/91) 1991
- The United Nations Standard Rules on Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1993
- Malta Statement of the NGO Forum, 1994
- Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified and adopted by South Africa on 16 June 1995
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995
- The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, 1995
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1999
- The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2000
- The Madrid Plan of Action for Older Persons, 2002
- The Draft Cotonou Declaration on Strategies for Implementing Follow-Up and Evaluation of the Plan of Action on the Family in Africa, 2004
- The African Union Plan of Action on the Family, 2004.

## **APPENDIX B**

Other government departments that are central to family life and family strengthening are the following:

- Department of Agriculture
  - Department of Communications
  - Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
  - Department of Finance/Treasury
  - Department of Land Affairs
  - Department of Public Works
  - Department of Science and Technology
  - Department of Transport.
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