

SASSA celebrates 10years of Social Assistance Programme

SASSA, an agency of the Ministry of Social Development, was established in terms of the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004 to provide comprehensive social security services to eligible poor and vulnerable South African citizens. Since it started operating, the entity has played an important role of breaking the cycle of poverty through provision of social grants and also Social Relief of Distress (SRDs) such as school uniforms to children from poor households.

The year 2016 marks 10 years since the South African Social Security Agency opened its doors as a government institution to administer and distribute social grants. The 10 year celebrations serve as an opportunity for Government to assess progress made since its inception and also to have direct interaction with social grant beneficiaries. To date, SASSA pays social grants to more than **17 million** South Africans with a monthly investment of **R11 billion**.

Social assistance has over the years assisted families and children including those who are orphaned due to HIV and Aids. In addition, there are many families that would not be able to put food on the table if it was not for the social grants, given the gloomy economic climate which makes the creation of jobs difficult, and also given the fact that some of the job seekers are unemployable due to lack of skills.

The social assistance programme comprises the following grants and numbers of beneficiaries:

- Child Support Grant – **11,9 million**
- Old age grant – **3.2 million**
- Care Dependency Grant – **131 375**
- Foster Care Grant – **493 012**
- War veterans – **230**
- Disability grant – **1.7 million**

To expand its reach to vulnerable children in communities, the Department of Social Development adopted a community based prevention and early intervention child and youth care services model known as Isibindi Model. Last year, more than **455 922** learners living in youth headed households passed matric through the intervention of Isibindi Programme and **304 913** of these learners survived on social grants.

South Africa has been able to achieve goals of reducing extreme income poverty due to government's comprehensive social protection system, which includes social grants, access to free education to more than nine million children, primary health care for the poorest and the provision of free basic services of lights and water to indigent members of our society in municipalities.

Noting the successful extension of social grants to over 16 million, government through the Department of Social Development is working on proposals for the creation of comprehensive social security system that combines contributory and none contributory elements to eradicate poverty and income protection for everyone living in South Africa.