

Taking away children's lifeline:**Centre for Child Law concerned about threat of disruption to grant payments****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2 March 2017**

The Centre for Child law is extremely concerned by reports that indicate that the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) has not yet come up with a plan to take over the payment of social assistance grants by 1 April 2017. It is regrettable that due to inaction on the part of SASSA the date is looming and there is a real risk that there will be an interruption in the payment of grants.

Social assistance grants are a lifeline for millions of children in South Africa. The need for social assistance grants is highlighted by the fact that 6 out of 10 children in South Africa live below the poverty line. Social assistance grants help these children. The grants play a massive role in reducing child poverty as well as ensuring that children's health, nutrition, and education needs are met. The Children's Institute's ['Children Count' database](#) notes that in 2016 almost 12 million children benefited from the child support grant; 470 015 children accessed the foster child grant; and 131 040 children with disabilities accessed the care dependency grant. These numbers speak volumes of the reach of the grants. Many researchers have pointed considerable impact that the grants are making – children are taller on average for their ages, and are getting to school earlier, and staying at school longer, as a result. The Constitutional Court has acknowledged that for many people, grants are “the only hope of ever living in the material conditions that the Constitution's values of dignity, freedom and equality promise.”

Karabo Ozah, attorney at the Centre for Child Law, stated that:

‘the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child commended South Africa's social assistance grants programme and welcomed “the substantial expansion in social security coverage for children in the State party, which has resulted in an overall decline in child poverty.” The current state of affairs threatens to undo this.’

The Centre calls on responsible duty bearers to ensure that come 1 April 2017 the payment of grants is un-interrupted and that the solution implemented is one that complies with the values in Constitution. The Centre further calls on the responsible parties to come up with a sustainable long term solution that will ensure that we do not find ourselves in this alarming situation again.

For comment contact:**Centre for Child Law – 012 420 4502**