Democratic Alliance speech by

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Gauteng Department of Social Development budget fails to cater for the most vulnerable residents

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 This budget is full of wonderful empty promises. The MEC will proudly confess to achieving 100 % of all the department's targets, but this is due to continual reprioritisation of funds to subprogrammes to fool the uninitiated, so as to cater for shortfalls.

This means that this budget does not cater for the future. We need a budget that will give our vulnerable and poor residents of Gauteng hope and a passion for life, to reclaim a new future and improve their quality of life.

In this budget, the department has removed several critical outputs, especially those of NPOs that make up 46% of our budget, and moved them to the operational plan, so that they are no longer available to the portfolio for oversight and scrutiny. Therefore, the APPs are silent on the number of planned funded NPOs.

In the previous financial year, the department failed to spend the R66.4 million budget allocated for NGOs, while NGOs such as Avalon have waited for almost 5 years for bailout assistance and Tswelopele Frail Care Centre applied for assistance in 2019 were bluntly ignored by the department. Now the 74 disabled residents at the centre are fearful and uncertain of what their future holds.

This budget is silent on commitments to improving the lives of people with disabilities and especially on how children with disabilities will be accommodated at the government facilities so as to give them a future with hope and certainty, not dependent on handouts.

The programme to assist with crime prevention, anti-substance abuse and victim empowerment has no outcome indicators because the department has largely ignored social crime prevention and children diversion programmes as part of the anti-substance abuse programme. We urgently need to empower our victims and turn them into victors and not victims. This budget is failing them.

A department focused on the future would ensure that a drug rehab centre gets a temporary operational license to continue with its drug rehab programme when its license expires because the department's offices were closed during the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. Does the department care about the 30 substance dependents who have lapsed as they were unable to access treatment? Obviously not! This department is not looking to the future as it continues to fail the most vulnerable people who have been left out in the cold to fend for themselves

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