



SANCRRC SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL CHILD RIGHTS COALITION

AN OPEN LETTER

26th May 2026

To: The President of the Republic of South Africa

CC: Members of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development;
South African Child Rights Actors and the Public

Subject: Appointment of the Minister of Social Development

His Excellency, The President of South Africa

The South African National Child Rights Coalition (SANCRRC) hereby acknowledge the recent changes in the Ministry of Social Development including the President's commitment to appoint a suitable Ministers for this critical function.

We fully recognise and respect the constitutional prerogative of the President of South Africa to appoint members of the Executive. However, we, as the South African National Child Rights Coalition (SANCRRC)- representing over 130 civil society organisations, individual experts, and more than 200 children from all provinces of South Africa respectfully urge that the utmost care and consideration be exercised in this appointment. For far too long, this Department, and consequently South African children and vulnerable adults, have been adversely affected by shortcomings in leadership and governance.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the Ministry of Social Development holds a critical mandate to improve the lives of current and future generations of children, strengthen families, and advance the socio-economic wellbeing of our nation. Yet, for over two decades, the Department has largely operated within a welfare-oriented framework, limiting the fulfilment of its broader social development mandate. A more balanced and integrated approach is required to effectively address poverty, inequality, and long – term development outcomes. We need a Minister with a deep, strategic understanding of social development as a driver of national progress.

We believe that this moment presents a critical opportunity to reposition the Department firmly within a **social development paradigm**-one that prioritises prevention, early intervention, and sustainable human development outcomes.

We further congratulate you, Mr. President, for your commendable leadership in ensuring that South Africa, now for the first time has a Cabinet approved National Strategy to Accelerate Action for Children (NSAAC) and the National Plan of Action for Children; a significant milestone for the country. However, effective, coordinated implementation of this strategy and plan is contingent on the urgent reintegration of the Office on the Rights of the Child (ORC) into the Presidency (DWYPD). Retaining the ORC in the Department of Social Development has created a fundamental governance conflict undermining the necessary separation between oversight and implementation. No line department can credibly be both referee and player. The position of the relocation of the ORC has been called for by South Africans over several years and affirmed by both The UN and AU Committees on the Rights of the Child. This position is asserted in the NSAAC and now requires decisive action.

Without strong, specialised leadership, there is a significant risk that South Africa will continue to fall short in meeting its commitments as enshrined in our own constitution, as well as the international and regional child rights treaties and agreements to which it is a signatory.

Clear and deliberate leadership will be essential to reposition the Department and restore confidence in its ability to deliver on its mandate. In light of the above, we respectfully propose that the individual appointed as Minister should demonstrate the following key competencies and attributes:

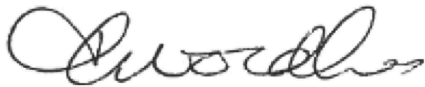
- Proven expertise as a **social development specialist**, with a clear understanding of developmental approaches beyond welfare service delivery
- Strong grounding in **preventative and early intervention strategies**, particularly in strengthening families and protecting vulnerable children
- Demonstrated knowledge of **fiscal policy**, budgeting, and the ability to leverage social investment to contribute to national economic growth.
- A deep commitment to promote and protect **children's rights, broader human rights, social justice, and community development**
- The capacity to lead **transformational, evidence-based reform** within the Department
- The ability to work collaboratively across government, civil society, and with children as key stakeholders
- A clear vision for integrating social development with broader national priorities, including poverty reduction, inequality, and economic inclusion

We believe that appointing a leader with these qualities will significantly strengthen the Department's ability to deliver on its mandate and advance South Africa's development agenda. We respectfully urge the Honourable President to apply the same level of oversight and rigour to the appointment of the Minister's advisors, and particularly the appointment of the Director General of this Department, as these roles are critical to ensuring effective leadership, continuity and accountability. We further recommend the formal inclusion of an independent panel of experts/sector leaders in this regard to enhance transparency, credibility and the quality of decision-making.

This letter reflects the collective voice of a broad coalition of organisations, individuals, and young people, reflecting diverse voices and lived experiences from across the country. A list of endorsing entities is attached hereto.

We trust that this submission will be given due consideration in the appointment process.

Yours faithfully,



South African National Child Rights Coalition (SANCRC)

Representing 130 civil society organisations, individual stakeholders, and over 200 young people across South Africa