



CABINET ANNOUNCES THE EXTENSION OF THE CHILD SUPPORT GRANT TO 18:

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT – Black Sash, the Children's Institute (University of Cape Town), and the Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security (ACCESS)

For Immediate Release: Thursday, 22 October 2009

The Black Sash, the Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security (ACCESS) and the Children's Institute (UCT) welcome Cabinet's decision to approve the extension of the Child Support Grant (CSG) from 15 to 18 years. This is an important, high-level, political commitment which responds to more than ten years of campaigning by civil society for this vital and effective poverty alleviation measure to be implemented. This is a significant milestone in our journey to realise the Constitutional rights of all our children to social assistance.

We are particularly pleased that today's announcement is accompanied a commitment to begin the rollout of the grant in January next year (2010) as well as the necessary budget calculations. We urge government to ensure that regulations and systems are in place to effect a smooth transition.

We are particularly excited that we can take this good news back to the hundreds of parents and caregivers who only this month shared their testimonies with us, describing how the loss of the grant at 15 had impacted on their families. The testimonies that we gathered at hearings around the country clearly showed that the Child Support Grant contributes significantly towards reducing child poverty and is linked to a decrease in child hunger and child labour, and an increase in school attendance. The report we were due to present to Parliament next week was entitled, "When the grant stops, the hope stops." Today, hope has been restored to millions of poor and vulnerable families throughout South Africa.

Click on the following link to read our report to Parliament on our Campaign to extend the Child Support Grant to 18:

<http://blacksash.org.za/images/csgcampaignreport.pdf>

Click on the following link to read the testimonies we have gathered over the past month as part of our campaign to extend the Child Support Grant to 18:

http://blacksash.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=78&Itemid=217

ENDS.

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