

## State's food projects 'are failing'

Government programmes meant to tackle food insecurity are plagued by a lack of co-ordination, which results in duplication, undermining the reduction of hunger and starvation in the country, MPs heard Tuesday, 2 February 2016.



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University of Pretoria professor Sheryl Hendriks told a workshop on food security and food safety hosted by several parliamentary committees that there had been no significant reduction in household food insecurity nor much improvement in child and adult nutrition since 1994. This was despite the multiplicity of government projects and the expansion of the social grant system to about 16-million people.

The drought and a sharp rise in food inflation that the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries expects will reach 12% by August, will only make matters worse.

Prof Hendriks said there were more than 60 national programmes aimed at improving food security, but with little evidence to demonstrate any effect. A lack of co-ordination had resulted in duplication and the unco-ordinated allocation of resources. “Numerous programmes and high levels of public investment will not necessarily lead to improvements in the lives of food-insecure people and households,” she said.

Programmes needed to be prioritised and institutions built to co-ordinate them, she said.

Prof Hendriks also said SA was one of 12 countries in which the rate of stunting had increased rather than declined during the period of implementation of the millennium development goals.

SA was also the only country in the Southern African Development Community in which stunting had not decreased over this period.

Surveys found that severe stunting in children aged one to three due to undernutrition was found to have risen from 6.4% in 2005 to 9.5% in 2012. Obesity had also risen, from about 10% of those surveyed in 2005 to about 30% in 2012.

A joint submission to the workshop by four government departments supported Prof Hendriks's conclusions.

They noted the absence of a single or coherent strategy to realise the right to food and the lack of a single co-ordinating body above the line ministries to oversee their performance.

source: [Business Day](#) via I-Net Bridge

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