

## Foreword by the Chair

The findings and recommendations contained in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Comprehensive Social Security represent a wide range of views, empirical research and policy analysis based on the most recent data available. It is in keeping with the Terms of Reference as laid out by the South African Cabinet. It also includes additional areas that the Committee was requested to investigate such as Disability and a necessary expansion of the brief based on certain problems identified that required urgent attention in the short term.

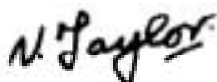
The findings in the report indicate that South Africa has made significant advances in addressing some of the most fundamental problems in social development. However, given the historic backlogs as a result of apartheid and the contradictory impacts of this phase of economic globalisation, the challenges of addressing structural poverty and inequality are many. Government's emphasis on the need to redesign the existing piecemeal and fragmented system in response to these challenges is timely and significant.

Throughout the Inquiry, the Committee was mindful of the complex nature of the issues that were before it and also of the many diverse and competing claims and interests that had to be considered. Despite this, the overwhelming experience of the Committee was the commitment shown by all sectors across South Africa to address persistent and pervasive poverty.

This report provides a comprehensive attempt to bring together the different elements of a fragmented social security system to address, in a coherent and phased way, the constitutional and democratic imperatives as well as the socio-economic challenges facing South Africa.

While this is not the first time issues of social security have been engaged, this Report is significant for a number of reasons. First, it is one of the most comprehensive inquiries into both public and private forms of social security in South Africa and seeks to identify those who fall through the system and are without any social protection. Second, it identifies the need to ensure that there are complementary and considered relationships between economic and social objectives. Third, it provides recommendations that could ultimately lead to comprehensive social protection within an integrated public-private benefit system. Fourth it prioritises the needs of the poorest and excluded in line with Government's policy framework. Fifth, it provides a baseline of social policy information and analysis that could contribute in a small way to building knowledge and capacity within and outside of Government to make informed decisions on available options to transform the lives of those who are in desperate need and protect the future of all.

Navigating and negotiating a process of social security reform, especially within a comprehensive social protection framework, as suggested by the Committee, is an ongoing and complex process. The Committee is pleased to be able to contribute to this process. The Committee recognises that while a long-term vision and policy framework is essential to ensure a balanced response to economic and social objectives, there is also an urgent need to respond to those whose everyday survival is being compromised.



*Professor Vivienne Taylor*

**Chairperson**