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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 123**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 10 FEBRUARY 2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 1 - 2021**

**123. Ms B S Masango (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) (a) On what date were the conditions of the old-age grant (OAG) last reviewed?

 (b) by what amount is the OAG increased annually?

(2) whether the conditions of the grant take into consideration the number of dependants the applicant might have when spouses’ combined income is above the threshold; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so,

(3) whether the refusal for the grant is a blanket refusal; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so,

(4) whether there is a review and/or appeals process on a case-by-case basis; if not, why not; if so, what are the various thresholds for refusal? NW127E

**REPLY:**

1 (a) The OPG means test formula was last reviewed on 01 April 2011. The formula however is linked to the value of the grant, which is reviewed annually, based on the budget allocated for the grant.

(b) Provision is made for annual inflation related adjustment to all social grants, including the Old Age Grant. However, in recent years, due to fiscal constraints, and budget cuts across government.

(2) The means test assesses the income and assets thresholds of both a single and a married applicant, and does not consider the number of household members. One of the policy proposals in the Discussion Paper on Comprehensive Social Security is to align the means test criteria with the criteria for tax thresholds, and progressively move towards universalisation of all social grants. With regards to dependants of applicants, the Department’s policy is to provide individually for them. For example, if there are children in the household of the applicant, the caregiver can access the Child Support Grant. If there are dependants who have a disability, they can access the Disability Grant, and if there are adult dependants, they can access Social Relief of Distress.

(3) There is no such a thing as “blanket refusal” because every application is subjected to policy provision, including the means test.

(4) Yes, Section 18 of the Social Assistance Act (Act 13 of 2004) makes provision for applicants whose application has been declined to may appeal SASSA’s decision with the Independent Tribunal for Social Assistance Appeals.

Once again, I would like to reiterate that there is no such thing as “blanket refusal” as every appeal is assessed on a case-by-case basis. The same qualifying criteria provided for in the Social Assistance Act are used to assess the appeal cases. The 2021/2022 threshold for the Old Age Grant is as follows:

* R 87 720 for and individual
* R175 440 for a couple

The asset threshold for the OPG is:

* R 1 247 400 for an individual, and
* R 2 494 800 for a couple.