**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1320**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 01 APRIL 2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 13 - 2022**

**1320. Ms B S Masango (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) Whether there is currently and/or has ever been research conducted by a certain company (name furnished) for the SA Social Security Agency (SASSA); if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what process was followed to appoint the specified company;

(2) whether there were any terms of reference from SASSA in respect of the research undertaken by the company; if not, why not; if so, (a) will she furnish Ms B S Masango with a copy and (b)(i) how and (ii) by whom were the terms of reference approved? NW1583E

**REPLY:**

1. SASSA and DSD officials have sat on and advised the steering committees which guides some of the work of FinMark Trust (FMT). FMT is a non-profit organisation (NPO) focused on making financial markets work for the poor in Southern Africa (SA). The NPO is financed from donor funding and conducts research work that the country as a whole, including SASSA, can benefit from. Some of the research they conduct include the following:
   1. FMT conducts an annual Finscope consumer survey in SA funded by the Banking and Insurance sectors, National Treasury, South African Reserve Bank and the Financial Sector Regulatory Authority. The results from the survey form part of the financial inclusion dialogue in SA and are presented to key stakeholders. The presentations to SASSA have happened regularly over the years at no cost to SASSA. FMT also publishes the results from these surveys on their website to make their results accessible.
   2. FMT/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) approached SASSA in 2018/2019 to conduct research on the SA Grant population to understand the need for digitisation of recipient payments, their requirements of financial literacy/education and to assess support for grant recipients to improve their capacity for livelihoods. The support was offered to SASSA at no cost and approved by the then Acting CEO. The scope of work was approved by, National Treasury, and Department of Social Development. Attached is the letter of support for the project which the then Acting CEO signed as well as the concept note for the projects which was formulated by both FMT and UNDP.

In 2020, SASSA approached the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for capacity building support on various areas including, improving customer experience and cost through improved digitisation, strategic communication, cyber security, data architecture, project management and gender integration (letter attached). After agreeing on the scope of work, the Gates Foundation using its own procurement processes secured the services of FMT to support SASSA in the aforementioned areas.

2. Scope of work done is available and provided for in the attached documents.
3. i) The Memorandum of understanding (MoU)

underscores the scope of work

ii) The MoU was signed by the current Chief Executive Officer of SASSA