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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1439**

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**1439.** **Mrs G Opperman (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) Whether, in light of the number of social grants that increased from 2 million in 1994 to 18,2 million in December 2020, she has found that the SA Social Security Agency (SASSA) can sustain the R190 billion annual social assistance programme, taking into account the extra 6 million unemployed Social Relief of Distress grant beneficiaries since May 2020;

(2) whether SASSA is considering a more comprehensive social protection system; if not, how does SASSA envisage to sustain the current programme; if so, what are the relevant details of the programme? NW1638E

**REPLY:**

1. Yes, the Department can sustain the social assistance budget of R190 billion. This allocation is made in terms of the Social Assistance Act (Act 13 of 2004),which mandates government to provide social assistance to specified categories of vulnerable people, including children, the elderly above the age of 60 years and persons with disabilities. All the social grants are means tested, with the exception of the foster child grant, to ensure that only the most vulnerable are able to access it. Over the past 20 years, the budget has been kept constant at around 3% of the national gross domestic product (GDP), thus staying more or less in line with the economic performance of the country.
2. Yes, the Department is considering a more comprehensive social security system, which will create a three-pillar system comprising social grants, contributory social insurance and voluntary insurance to ensure that those who are able to contribute towards their own social security provision are provided with appropriate institutional platforms to participate in social security cover. The policy makes extensive proposals for ensuring that all working people in the country, both in the formal sector and those in atypical forms of employment are mandated or encouraged to make contributions during their working years, so that they will have adequate income in the event of retirement, death or disability. These policy proposals will be the subject of wide stakeholder consultations during this financial year.