Official reply: 27 October 2016

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION 2117/2016**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

Date of publication on internal question paper: 16 September 2016

Internal question paper no:

**2117.    Ms E N Louw (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

In light of her department’s budget report which reflects a saving of more than R1 billion due to lower than anticipated social grants that were paid out, (a) how many people are intended to be social grant recipients but are not on the system to receive grants, (b) why are they not on the system and (c) what steps will she take to ensure that every person that must receive a social grant is in the system and duly receives the grant?                                                                                  NW2428E

**Reply:**

1. Each year grant projections are done by the Department of Social Development together the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and National Treasury. These projections are based on a number of factors, including historical trends and micro-simulation which takes into account the demographics and economic circumstances of the country. The Department had targeted some 16.97 million beneficiaries across all grants for the 2015/16 financial year and reached 16.83 million beneficiaries, which is 99.1% of its projected target.
2. SASSA is successfully meeting its targets. The 140 thousand difference between those projected and those reached falls within the 1% margin of error that the Department had set itself during the financial year for the projections. Similarly, more than 99% of the total R130 billion social grants budget was utilised, resulting in the R1 billion savings (which is less than 0.77%).
3. In addition to the very vast footprint of SASSA which comprises of 389 offices and 1 163 service offices across the country, the following initiatives aim to ensure that every citizen has access to social grants. These include:

* The Department of Social Development together with SASSA and the National Development Agency implement the Mikondzo programme. This programme focuses on taking all social development programmes to the people, through engagement with communities. This programme includes door-to-door interventions to identify and assist any citizens who could qualify for services, including social grants.
* The ICROP programme. This is a planned outreach programme where SASSA services are taken to areas which are under-serviced or where the distance to the nearest SASSA office is very far. This ensures that everyone has access to SASSA services
* The Regulations to the Social Assistance Act, 2004 were amended in 2008, to allow for applications for social grants to be taken for citizens who do not have identity documents or birth certificates for the children under their care.
* SASSA has a programme which focuses on the uptake of child support grants for children aged between 0 – 1 years of age. This is done as all research has indicated that the earlier the child support grant is paid, the better the long term benefits for the child.
* Communication programmes are constantly run to publicise the requirements for social grants, in particular the requirements of the means test.