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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 2317**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 09 JUNE 2023**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 23 – 2023**

**2317. Ms L L van der Merwe (IFP) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

Considering that when the COVID‐19 Social Relief of Distress grant expires in the 2023-24 financial year, there will be a reduction in the total number of grant beneficiaries from an estimated 26,6 million in the 2022-23 financial year to 19,6 million in the 2025-26 financial year, leaving approximately seven million persons without any form of income and/or support from the State, what are the full, relevant details of the alternatives that will be put in place to ensure that the State will not be creating a large-scale hunger crisis? NW2634E

**REPLY:**

Cash transfers are effective in addressing negative coping strategies such as poor diets or debts. The distribution of cash allowances boosts the local economy especially on market days. Cash can link with existing social protection systems or build the blocks for future longer-term assistance from the outset. Cash transfer programmes such as the R350 SRD grant have been shown to have many benefits, including reducing dire poverty, increasing school enrolment, and improving nutrition.

The Department has completed and consulted on the draft policy on Basic Income Support, as a pathway to address the long-term income needs of vulnerable working age individuals. We are now refining the draft based on the constructive input we have received from various stakeholders, with a view to taking the draft policy through the Cabinet process, in the hope that it will get the necessary support and fiscal commitment to enable its approval for implementation. Given the fact that such a policy, if approved, would require legislative amendments, the Department is seeking to petition Cabinet to extend the R350 SRD provision for a further two years to ensure continuation of the much needed income support, until the more permanent BIS policy can be implemented.