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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 2369**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 12 NOVEMBER 2021**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 25 - 2021**

**2369. Ms L H Arries (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

What plans has her department put in place to assist Expanded Public Works Programme workers, who have Persal numbers and have as a result been rejected by the SA Social Security Agency system in their attempts to access social grants? NW2741E

**REPLY:**

I would like to bring it to the attention of the Honourable Member that no application for any of the social grant is rejected by virtue of the applicant being part of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). On application for a social grant, every applicant has to declare his/her source of income. Applications are subjected to a means test thresholds for a specific grant, and applicants are approved when the meet the eligibility criteria.

Recently, SASSA completed a verification process against the PERSAL (government payroll system) to identify social grants beneficiaries on this system, but have not declared income on their applications. Beneficiaries whose names appear on the PERSAL were all suspended pending verification. Upon completion of this process, it was found that many were EPWP workers or interns, whose stipends do not exceed the means test threshold. The affected beneficiaries’ social grants have since been investigated from this month.

However, I must clarify that the reinstatement does not absolve beneficiaries from declaring their source of income to SASSA. Each affected beneficiary will thus have to review their grant, and provide information on the stipend received, to ensure that SASSA records are up to date. The onus is on beneficiaries to inform SASSA as soon as their financial circumstances change.