**Memorandum from the Parliamentary Office**

**Minister**

**NA question for Written Reply: 2398**

**Recommended / Not Recommended**

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**Mr. M Toni**

**Acting Director-General: Department of Social Development**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 2398**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 24 August 2018**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 26 - 2018**

**2398 [Dr C P Mulder (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Social Development:†**

(1) Whether she has found that there are currently any delays in respect of new SA Social Security registrations and the processing of new applications to the system; if so, (a) what are the reasons, (b) what are the details and (c) by which date does she expect the situation to be normalised;

(2) whether she will make a statement on the matter? NW2645E]

**Reply:**

1. There have been some delays experienced by new applicants for social grants in being able to lodge applications, particularly in the Gauteng province.
2. This has been largely as a result of a labour dispute related to the function of biometric enrolment, which is a function SASSA has insourced, as part of the application process.
3. With the revision of grants administration processes, SASSA indicated its intention to take the biometrics of every applicant. Prior to the contract entered into with Cash Paymaster Services (CPS), SASSA took fingerprints manually from every new applicant. With the new payment contract, it was decided to discontinue the taking of fingerprints, as CPS was doing this, to enable payments, and SASSA could use the fingerprints taken by the contractor for purposes of ensuring the integrity of the database, by eliminating duplications. Having both SASSA and CPS take fingerprints was seen as a duplication of effort.

With the contract with CPS having come to an end, SASSA is again required to take fingerprints, as the value of biometric data in eliminating duplicate payments and fraud has been extensively proven. A dispute has arisen with staff who feel this is not their responsibility, despite this having been done prior to the contract. This has impacted on the ability of some SASSA offices to process new applications.

1. The matter is being addressed with organised labour. In addition, an interim process has been developed to ensure that new applications can be processed, even while the matter is being addressed.
2. A full statement will be made once the matter has been resolved.

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**Approved by the Minister on**

**Date……………………….**