**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 2431**

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

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

**2431. Ms B S Masango (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

In light of the fact that the cash send mode of the Social Relief of Distress Grant payment is the most accessible method, especially for millions of beneficiaries who are unable to access banks, yet it is the one that is not being used because the SA Social Security Agency has not concluded contracts with banks, which is an additional exclusion of the already excluded applicants, what (a) total number of cash send applicants are waiting to be paid since the roll-out of the grant and (b) are the reasons for difficulties and delays in finalising contracts with the banks? NW2807E

**REPLY:**

1. No cash send payments for the first iteration of the grant are still outstanding. Of all the applications received to date, approximately 51% have provided information their personal bank accounts, into which the grants are paid. The cash send option, while being very convenient, is not the most popular method of payment for approved applicants. This is because many do not own their mobile phones, and one of the requirements for this payment option is that there has to be a positive, direct link between the applicant’s ID number and the mobile number.

For the month of August, only 8,8% of approved applicants chose the cash send option; while this percentage for September and October is 9,1% and 9,4% respectively. Given the delay in activating the cash send payment method, clients who had chosen this method were requested to provide banking details or to opt to be paid through the post office. The majority responded positively, and in August 2021, of the 734 358 approved clients who chose cash send as a payment method, 712 784 were paid through their own bank accounts or the post office. The numbers paid through their own bank accounts or post office in September and October were 804 559 of the total of 866 517 and 809 647 out of 900 753 respectively. This indicates that approximately 89% of the clients who originally chose the cash send payment option were able to access their funds.

The balance of the clients who have not yet been paid for these three months, are as a result of the failure of the bank details which were submitted, or a delay in the opening of accounts with SAPO for them. SASSA will continue to ensure that all approved clients are paid.

(b) SASSA was not given the authority to extend the contracts which had been in place with the banks for the first iteration of the grant. As this is a procurement process, SASSA had to first get approval from National Treasury to go on a closed tender with all registered banks, as advised by the Bid Adjudication Committee in order to ensure compliance with supply chain prescripts. This process is currently underway. Once completed, the cash send option will be available once again, and those clients who initially indicated this as their preference will be considered to be paid through this channel, provided they meet the conditions for this channel as set by National Treasury.