

**Ministry**

**Employment & Labour**

**Republic of South Africa**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 2437 [NW2814E]**

**2437. Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Employment and Labour:**

(1) Whether he has been informed that churches and other faith-based institutions and/or religious organisations are currently experiencing problems in claiming and/or are being refused COVID-19 Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Scheme (TERS) benefits; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so,

(2) whether religious organisations currently qualify for such TERS benefits; if not, why not; if so,

(3) whether his department will as a matter of urgency and high priority clarify this by (a) expressly stipulating that religious organisations fall within the approved sectors that can claim and (b) making any alterations necessary to the online claims site to allow religious organisations to successfully select their sector and submit their claims; if not, why not, in each case; if so, what are the relevant details in each case? NW2814E

**REPLY:**

1. Within this Covid-19 Ters Benefit, a special category of Charitable Industries was opened at UIF, which included Religious Bodies who have been able to apply for the Covid-19 Ters Benefit on the basis of all insured workers, meaning institutions that had registered could then apply.

However, to date no formal queries nor complaints were received that faith based organisations are experiencing problems with TERS.

From 27.03.2020 TO 15.10.2020, all employers / employees that meet the requirements as stated in the directive, including those from faith based, qualified and were paid TERS.

From 16.10.2021, it is sector based as per the directives. However, there is a bullet that states any industries and business establishments that form part of the value chain of the above qualify too.

2. According to UIF records under the Charitable Industry:

A Number of 2 666 Religious Bodies applied for this benefit.

An amount of R 516 272 762.64 was paid out to these Charitable bodies.

It is not clearly outlined in any communication that faith based do qualify outright. However, that the directive clearly states that those that lost income and are contributors to UIF is sufficient and was basis for all to apply.

3. As stated the directive allows for discretion of the UIF to include or not, however no communication clearly states that. As stated above, the category that accommodates churches already exist.