Official reply: 08 September 2015

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION 2648 /2015**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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**2648. Adv A de W Alberts (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

Whether any performance requirements are prescribed to persons who receive social grants such as dependant children that are compelled to attend school and unemployed parents are compelled to look for work,; if not, why not, in the light of the unsustainability of social grants in the long term; if so, what are the relevant details? NW3050E

**Reply:**

Both education and social security are constitutional rights. Section 27(1)(c) of the constitution provides that everyone has the right to have access to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance. The South African Schools Act and accompanying regulations make schooling compulsory for all children, while the Social Assistance Act and regulations emphasizes the parental responsibilities of caregivers while making social work services available to those caregivers who are struggling. At present this seems to be working well with over 96% of social grant beneficiaries in school. The current legislation is developmental in nature; however the department is continuously reviewing it with the view of improving and giving better expression to the rights afforded to all in the Constitution. Well researched inputs that promote development without compromising the values of society, expressed in our constitution, are always welcomed.

From a fiscal stance the National Treasury does not seem to be worried about sustainability of the social grants, and they have publicly pronounced on this: “From a fiscal point of view, there is nothing unsustainable about the financing of the current system of social grants”.

(<http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/2013/07/02/treasury-assures-on-south-africas-welfare-bubble>). The department agrees with this view and has not seen any evidence suggesting any need to be alarmed. Furthermore, social grants remain one of government’s largest poverty alleviation programmes that also make a large impact on inequality. Both poverty and inequality is unsustainable in the long term.