**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY QUESTION NUMBER: 3150**

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# 3150. Ms B S Masango (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:

1. What measures have been put in place by (a) her department and (b) the SA Social Security Agency to ensure that social grants are paid only to those persons who qualify for them;
2. what punitive measures have her department put in place against (a) persons who unduly benefited from receiving social grants through fraud and/or corruption and (b) officials who have helped such persons to unduly benefit from receiving social grants through fraud and/or corruption? NW3860E

# REPLY:

South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the whole Department of social Development (DSD) portfolio has adopted Zero Tolerance stance on fraud and corruption.

1. Taking into account that payments of social grants is largely technology driven, various Information Communication and Technology (ICT) capabilities have been developed to prevent fraud during payment of social grants. These include interfaces with other government departments which host citizens’ databases. This will strengthen SASSA’s ability to validate information on income for applicants, and also to regularly monitor changes in beneficiary circumstances, which may not always be timeously reported by beneficiaries.

SASSA has existing interfaces with Department of Home Affairs to confirm identity and life status, as well as, Persal and Government Employee Pension Fund

(GEPF) interfaces confirming employment in the public sector, and or a pension from government.

SASSA has also implemented interfaces to perform bank account verification to ensure that the account details correspond with that of the applicant.

Other interfaces which are being added in the current financial year, including Department of Correctional Services database (to validate whether the applicant is in a Correctional Services facility) and the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). This is to determine whether the client is currently contributing to UIF, as this could affect the amount of the grant to which he/she is entitled. Additional interfaces will be added as they are identified and negotiated with other organisations. These interfaces already exist with the COVID SRD and will be incorporated into the existing grants as well.

These capabilities should strengthen the ability of SASSA to validate the information provided on application of a grant, and can also be used to inform the need to review existing social grants in the future.

1. SASSA’s fraud corrective mechanism is mainly on prevention capability as indicated above, however, loss recovery, disciplinary action and criminal referrals are additional mechanisms.
	1. When SASSA finds any person to have unduly benefitted, criminal referrals and loss recovery processes are undertaken.
	2. As a mechanism of resolving cases wherein an official is suspected to have assisted such unduly beneficiary, (i) criminal referral, (ii) loss recovery as well as (iii) disciplinary actions are undertaken.