Official reply: 12 November 2015

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION 3780 / 2015**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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**3780. Ms D Carter (Cope) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

Whether the request for a meeting (details furnished) to discuss with her the concern regarding the unilateral deductions that some SA Social Security Agency officials were making from pensioners each month in different parts of the country has been granted; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW4522E

**REPLY:**

As I have stated previously, I have set up a Ministerial Task Team made up of senior officials from the Department, SASSA, Black SASH and community organizations to look into this matter of illegal or unauthorised deductions and to recommend possible remedial actions, some of which we are currently implementing.

When I received the Honourable Member’s correspondence on this issue, I accordingly advised that we join our efforts by working jointly with the Task Team in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. This would have enabled the Honourable Member to familiarize himself with the work of the Task Team and the various measures we are currently implementing to address this matter. An impression created through sensational and misleading media articles that I don’t take this matter seriously is very unfortunate, especially from the Honourable Member who knows that we have been constantly briefing the Portfolio Committee about various measures we are implementing in this regard.

Unfortunately, the Honourable Member chose to conveniently hijack this serious matter in order to score cheap and warranted political points by publishing false media articles about how the Department and Government as a whole is handling this matter. This is an act of extreme political desperation for a political party that does not have a political agenda.

I take this matter seriously and I have instructed both the Department and SASSA to take necessary legislative measures to swiftly clamp down on illegal and fraudulent deductions.