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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 829**

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

(1) With reference to the SA Social Security Agency’s (SASSA) proposed new operating model that will result in the clustering of regions to enable effective service delivery, (a) on what authority is the Chief Executive Officer currently implementing the proposed model and (b) what are the details of the strategic considerations that were taken into account when formulating the proposed cluster model;

(2) whether SASSA obtained the relevant approval for the implementation of the proposed model from the Department of Public Service and Administration, the National Treasury and her department; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) whether the cluster head positions displayed on SASSA’s website were evaluated and graded; if not, why not; if so, (a) on what dates were the positions evaluated and graded and (b) what were the outcomes in each case;

(4) whether the secondment of the cluster heads from other positions at SASSA were in line with the (a) current SASSA policy on secondments and (b) Public Service Act regulations; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(5) whether the proposed model will support SASSA in delivering essential services during the Covid-19 pandemic; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW1036E

**REPLY:**

(1)(a)

The SASSA Act No 9 of 2004, Section 6.1 (a) stipulates that the CEO is responsible for the management of the Agency subject to the direction of the Minister. This in essence includes inter alia the review of the operating model to enable the efficient service delivery.

The proposed model is not yet implemented since it is still on route for approval by the three Ministers in line with section 7(2) of the SASSA Act, 2004.

Kindly note that the three Regional Executive Managers are seconded on a temporary basis to manage two additional Regions each for the period of six months which will lapse at the end of October 2020. It should be noted that the said employees are not compensated as a result of the job enlargement and consultations took place before they were seconded. The secondments are in line with the Staffing Practices Policy of SASSA.

(b)

The CEO, in consultation with EXCO, identified the need to review and streamline the current operating model, business processes and Organisational structure to ensure alignment to the strategic direction of the Agency.

The following strategic considerations were taken into account:

* The National Development Plan
* The President’s expectations, the Minister’s expectations, the CEO’s expectations and the Stakeholder’s expectations
* The strategic direction of the Agency in alignment with its Mandate
* The CEO extensively consulted with internal stakeholders through roadshows across the Provinces
* The assessment of the current operating model and the desired “future” state
* The segregation of functions between Core and Support functions
* The composition of EXCO as well as the synergy between EXCO and the Regional Executive Managers
* The rationalisation of Organisation Structure i.eSpan of control, lines of reporting, delegations of Authority, staff complement, the evaluation and grading system
* Different and yet complementary roles with respect to strategic, tactical and operational planning

(2) SASSA is in the process of obtaining the necessary approval from the Minister, in consultation with the Ministers of Finance and Public Service and Administration. At this stage there is no approval therefore implementation cannot be effected as it is depended on approval by the three Ministers.

(3) (a) The Regional Executive Manager’s positions were evaluated and graded at salary level 15. The newly proposed Cluster Head positions are not yet evaluated and graded as the said process will follow after the approval by the relevant structures.

(b) The outcomes of the evaluation and grading processes is dependent on the approval of the operating model by the Ministers. In the event that the operating model is approved, the said job will be subjected to the evaluation and grading process.

(4) The secondment of the cluster heads is in line with:

1. The current SASSA Staffing Practices Policy which states that “the secondment of a staff member from another Branch/Department/Organisation may be considered when the need exists to fill a vacant post on a temporary basis”.
2. Section 62 of the Public Service Regulations, 2016, which states that “a secondment may only take place if the employee or person being seconded has the necessary competency and the period of secondment does not exceed 12 calendar months, unless due to operational reasons determined otherwise by the Minister”.

The secondments of the Cluster Heads were approved in line with the above legislative framework, policy provision and Human Capital Management Delegations for a period of six months, effective from 01 May 2020 until 31 October 2020. The seconded employees have the necessary competencies since they have occupied the same position i.e Regional Executive Managers for more than seven years.

As already mentioned, the three Regional Executive Managers were duly consulted and they accepted additional responsibilities at no additional costs to the Agency. Whether the operating model is approved or not approved, relevant Human Resources (HR) interventions will be effected.

(5) The operating model was developed in October 2019 which was before the realisation of the COVID 19 pandemic. As a result, the proposed model did not directly address the COVID-19 pandemic, however the Agency developed a broad Risk Plan that ensured the efficient rendering of essential services during any calamity.This was based on the SWOT as well as the PESTLE Analysis deliberations conducted during the proposed operating model sessions. SASSA has subsequently adopted a Risk Plan with mitigating strategies which incorporates COVID 19 pandemic. Same will beincluded in the operating model if approved.