

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA  
GAUTENG DIVISION, PRETORIA**

**CASE NO: 2023/071891**

In the matter between:

**INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

First Applicant

**#PAYTHEGRANTS**

Second Applicant

And

**MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

First Respondent

**SOUTH AFRICA SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY**

Second Respondent

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**ON ROLL : UNKNOWN**

**DOCUMENT: SECOND RESPONDENT'S SUPPORTING AFFIDAVIT**

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**TO: THE REGISTRAR OF THE ABOVE COURT  
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**AND TO: SERI LAW CLINIC  
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PRETORIA  
0002**



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And

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**First Respondent**

**SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY**

**Second Respondent**

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**SECOND RESPONDENT'S SUPPORTING AFFIDAVIT**

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I, the undersigned;

**BRENTON VAN VREDE**

do hereby make oath and state that:

1. I am a major male employed as the Executive Manager: Grant Operations by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), the Second Respondent in this matter, with its Head Office situated at 501 Prodinsa Building, SASSA House, Corner Steve Biko and Pretorius Streets, Arcadia in Pretoria.
2. The facts contained in this affidavit are within my personal knowledge, save where otherwise stated or is apparent from the context, and are to the best of my knowledge and belief, both true and correct.
3. In addition, my knowledge of the facts contained herein is derived from the documentation in relation to this matter which is now under my supervision and control.
4. I am duly authorised to depose to this supporting affidavit on behalf of the Second Respondent by virtue of the position I hold.

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5. Where I refer to matters of law, I do so on the advice of the First and Second Respondents' legal representatives; which advice I have accepted as correct.
  
6. I have read the answering affidavit deposed to by **EBENEZER NKOSINATHI DLADLA** on behalf of the First Respondent; and I confirm the truth of its contents insofar as same relate to the Second Respondent.
  
7. The purpose of this supporting affidavit is to confirm that SASSA is in support of the legal position taken by the First Respondent; that is to oppose the Applicants' application.
  
8. In order to avoid burdening the above Honourable Court with repetition, I will not deal with the averments that have been dealt with by the First Respondent in full details in the answering affidavit. Rather, the focus herein will be more on the issues relating to the SRD statistics.

#### **THE FUNCTION OF SASSA**

9. SASSA is a national agency of the South African government established in terms of section 2 of the South African Social Security Agency Act; 2004

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(Act No. 9 of 2004) to administer social assistance in terms of chapter 3 of the Social Assistance Act, 2004 (Act No. 13 of 2004). This entails the administration and payment of social grants, on behalf of the Department of Social Development (DSD), the First Respondent. SASSA is under the oversight of the First Respondent.

10. SASSA is a public entity in terms of Schedule 3A of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999), and it was established to centralise the provision of social assistance in improving service delivery to the people of South Africa.
11. The social assistance disbursed by SASSA takes the form of various grants and social relief of distress, most of them are means-tested; and if approved, paid either via EFT to the beneficiaries' own selected banks (including Post Bank accounts), or via a mobile money transfer on a monthly basis.
12. Further, SASSA's function includes processing applications for social assistance, verifying and approving applications, disbursing and paying the grants to eligible beneficiaries, preventing and detecting fraud.
13. SASSA verifies thoroughly all the applications and ensure that the grants reach the intended recipients and reduce the risk of identity theft and fraud.

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14. SASSA also aims at reducing long queues at its local offices across the country, so that the beneficiaries can have smooth experience when applying for their social grants.

### **SOCIAL RELIEF OF DISTRESS (SRD)**

15. The Social Relief of Distress (SRD) is administered in terms of Regulations on Social Assistance issued by the Minister of Social Development in terms of section 32 of the Social Assistance Act, in concurrence with the Minister of Finance, and thereafter implemented by SASSA.
16. The SRD is meant for South African Citizens, Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Special Permit Holders who are between the ages of 18 and 59 years, with insufficient means, who do not receive social grants on behalf of themselves, and have no financial support from any other source whatsoever.
17. The channels that the SRD applicants can use in applying for the SRD, is either the special SRD website or WhatsApp. Previously, the SRD applicants could, in addition, apply using the USSD and special email address, however these have since been discontinued.

18. In the application for the SRD the applicants have to submit, *inter alia*, the following essential details, amongst other non-essential but important questions, to enable SASSA to consider their application:
  - 18.1 Personal details (Identity number and their name and surname as reflected in their identity documents and captured by Home Affairs);
  - 18.2 Mobile number; and
  - 18.3 Banking details.
19. All the information is provided electronically with no need to upload any documents. There are no physical documents requested to be submitted to the SASSA offices, thus no need for the SRD applicants to go to SASSA offices.
20. Once the SRD applicant has been verified, feedback on the status of the application is communicated to him or her on the SRD website.
21. In the case where the application is declined, the SRD applicant has the option to appeal the decision by lodging an appeal on the DSD website,

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wherein the Appeal Tribunal will verify the SRD applicant's information against the latest and updated databases and make a decision to either approve or decline the appeal, if approved the application is referred back to SASSA for payment.

22. Once the application is approved, the funds of the beneficiaries are paid to their preferred method of payment, which can be via EFT to their own selected banks or via a mobile number. It is important to mention that prior to paying the funds into either of the said payment channels, SASSA verifies the preferred channel to ensure that it is linked to the correct beneficiaries. This is to mitigate the risk of paying the funds to the incorrect beneficiary and or to the fraudsters. It remains the responsibility of the beneficiaries to ensure that they maintain active payment channels that are registered to them and that they accurately capture their payment information when recording this as their preferred payment channel.
23. The SRD applicants can make enquiries of the status of their SRD application on the SRD website and or contact SASSA call centre for assistance.
24. The SRD system has opened a new way for considering, serving and paying beneficiaries by Government in the following way:

- 24.1 Paperless environment has been successfully implemented;
  - 24.2 There is more integration between the Government institutions, as well as Government and private institutions and the availability of data;
  - 24.3 Technological advancement in Government is more evident than ever before, with cellphone applications, digital payments, biometric verification and others.
25. The online application platform used in the SRD has proven to be the most effective and successful method by far.
26. As the result of the successful SRD system, SASSA intends to continue serving applicants of other forms of grants, from application to payment from wherever they are with a single device in the palm of their hands, making it more accessible to the beneficiaries at their convenience and safely so.

## THE DATABASE VERIFICATION

30. The ability for SASSA to share information with the various Government institutions assist to prevent double dipping by the SRD applicants, wherein the SRD applicant would be receiving funds from other Government institutions and yet still apply for the SRD, thus causing the money allocated for the SRD targeted individuals not being used effectively to assist those targeted individuals who are in financial distress with no source of income from anywhere.
  
31. Further, the additional demographic and socio-economic information provided by the SRD applicants during the once off application process, though not mandatory, is very useful and important in that it enables government to have a better understanding of the beneficiaries of the SRD, enables researchers to analyse the information received and provide insights and may enable enhanced support and programme development for existing beneficiaries.
  
32. Therefore the verification process used in the SRD application in using the various databases, including information received from the questionnaires answered by the SRD applicants, is reasonable and related to the Government purpose, thus passes constitutional muster.

## **ONLINE APPLICATION**

P. 17

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33. It is important to mention that the purpose of the SRD is to provisionally assist individuals who are employable; currently in the job market; temporarily in financial distress and in need of funds. Their financial position is temporary because at any time they can be employed and their financial position be improved.
  
34. On a monthly basis SASSA verifies millions (now more than 15 million) of SRD applications and the outcome of this varies every month, demonstrating the dynamics of the labour market and remittances. For example in March 2023 SASSA approved 8 457 520 payments which reduced to 8 251 932 in April 2023 and increased to 8 577 975 in May 2023. Attached hereto marked Annexure SA1 is a spreadsheet detailing the statistics on the applications received for SRD and the approvals by SASSA.
  
35. SASSA does the verification every month. Once the SRD applicants apply there is no need for them to reapply as their information remains with SASSA and they will be verified every month to check whether they qualify for the SRD in the succeeding month.
  
36. Applicants should however cancel their application, should their long term outlook change, eg. permanent employment. If however, the nature of their funding sources remain sporadic, they can leave their application open and

SASSA will be able to pick up on monthly basis whether or not they meet the qualifying criteria.

37. The only time when SASSA will cease to assess the return SRD applications will be in cases where, for example the SRD applicant informs SASSA that they do not want to be considered anymore and that they have found employment (this cancellation can be effected on the SRD website) or in the case where the SRD applicant is deceased. Attached hereto is the September statistics for the return and new applications marked annexure **SA2**.
38. Taking into consideration the purpose of the SRD and the huge number of the applications that are dealt with by SASSA on a monthly basis, using the online method in verifying the SRD applications has had a great impact of enabling SASSA to process everything timeously, thus fulfilling the SRD purpose in providing financial assistance to those millions of individuals who are in dire need of financial assistance and qualify for the SRD.
39. As the result of the huge success achieved by SASSA with the SRD system in using the online application method, SASSA is considering gradually using the same application method with the other social grants.

40. The manual process suggested by the Applicants in this application, will make it impossible for SASSA to process all the millions of applications received monthly and to make payments to all the approved beneficiaries who are in financial distress within a given month.
41. Furthermore, SASSA has limited human resource capacity that is already overstretched with its current, non-temporary grants. Considering that SASSA is not classified as an essential service, adding the extra workload will very likely result in labour strikes, which will not only be detrimental to those who are accessing this temporary provision, but to everyone needing social assistance. Hence the Applicants plea may be more harmful, and even unconstitutional, as it does not allow for the progressive realisation of a new benefit, and even jeopardises existing rights.
42. As the result thereof the Applicants' contention that the online method is unconstitutional cannot be sustainable and ought to be dismissed.

## **PAYMENTS OF THE SRD**

43. When making the SRD application there is a provision available wherein the SRD applicants are required to upload, if they prefer payment via EFT into their bank accounts, their banking details and/or also indicate a payment channel where the funds should be paid into when their SRD

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applications are approved. This remains a responsibility of the SRD beneficiaries to provide accurate and timely information.

44. Upon the SRD applications being processed and approved, SASSA needs to ensure that the monies are paid to the correct beneficiaries.
  
45. The approved SRD applicants are paid into the latest account populated and verified on the SRD system. They are paid to the preferred and chosen method by the SRD applicants, which would be one of the following:
  - 45.1 EFT- via the SRD beneficiary bank account; or
  
  - 45.2 Cash send- via the major banks through validated cellphone number.
  
46. Internally (within SASSA) the SRD payments are done through the SRD payment system, which uses biometric authentication by officials to release funds.
  
47. It is important to mention that, the majority of the SRD grant beneficiaries have opted for their monies to be paid into their bank accounts and in

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accordance with the bank verifications to confirm that those beneficiaries are the rightful owners of the bank accounts.

48. As of 5 September 2023 the August 2023 payments of over 7 million approved SRD applicants were made via the banks. See attached the spreadsheet marked annexure SA3 containing statistics on beneficiaries who were paid via the banks.
49. Therefore, the hypothetical scenario by the Applicants that all the SRD applicants come from homes where one bank account is used for the entire household is highly improbable and far-fetched and ought to be dismissed.
50. SASSA has an ongoing challenge where the approved SRD beneficiaries have not provided SASSA with banking details that can be verified against their names. This has caused a delay for SASSA in processing the payments to SRD beneficiaries. It remains the responsibility of the SRD applicant to maintain an active payment instrument registered in their own name to be able to receive the SRD assistance.
51. Amongst those challenges faced by SASSA in making payments to the approved beneficiaries, is the non-verification of the identity of the SRD beneficiaries, wherein the ID number has been confirmed to have been



used in fraudulent matters such as Identity theft. In this instance SASSA piloted solution where SASSA would send messages to those beneficiaries requesting them to confirm their identities through facial recognition. This has proven successful in establishing that the identity number belongs to the approved applicant.

52. Other instances causing the delay for SASSA to making the payments to the SRD beneficiaries is where the payments are returned by the banks with *inter alia* the following reasons that- the accounts are closed, account pending confirmation that it is compliant with the requirements of the Financial Intelligence Centre Act and so on. Again SASSA will inform those SRD beneficiaries to resolve those issues with their banks and to re-upload their banking accounts or provide a new account into which SASSA can effect payment of the SRD beneficiaries.

53. In July 2023 SASSA received 14 936 472 SRD applications, upon the completion of the verification process, around 8 498 045 SRD applicants were approved and 7 188 849 SRD beneficiaries were paid. The reasons for all those SRD beneficiaries that were not paid, relate to those instances where SASSA is awaiting the SRD beneficiaries to either inform SASSA of verifiable payment details or to correct their payment information and to a lesser extent issues around fraud etc.

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54. SASSA has notified the approved SRD beneficiaries whom they do not have valid banking details for that SASSA is unable to make the payments and is requesting the SRD beneficiaries to provide SASSA with their payment account details that are verifiable.
55. SASSA cannot, for security reasons, pay the monies into the payment details that are not verifiable against the details of the approved SRD beneficiaries, as this may cause the monies to be paid into the incorrect beneficiaries` and or fraudsters` accounts.
56. SASSA needs the payment details that are verifiable for security purposes and need to ensure that the correct beneficiary is paid.
57. Therefore the allegation by the Applicants that SASSA has intentionally failed to pay the approved beneficiaries moneys is incorrect and misleading to this Court and ought to be dismissed.
58. Consideration on the number and the reasons for the rejection of the declined applications, proves that the SRD online system, including the verification method used, is highly reliable and SASSA is able to prevent paying those applicants who do not qualify and prevent double dipping by those applicants. As the result thereof the allocated budget for the SRD by

the National Treasury is able to financially assist the targeted individuals who are really in financial distress with no financial means whatsoever.

59. In the circumstances the SRD on line application system is one of the most successful systems used by SASSA to deliver service to the public within the allocated budget. It remains the responsibility of SASSA to administer the SRD within the parameters and budget provided by government for the programme.

#### **ABUSE OF COURT PROCESS**

60. There are currently forums that exists where SASSA engages with the members of the public and their representatives, who amongst them are the Applicants in this application.
61. The main objectives of these forums is for SASSA to share information in relation to the SRD with the public, wherein SASSA would answer questions and or issues that are raised by the public in relation to the SRD.
62. The issues that are discussed at the forums in relation to the SRD includes *inter alla*, the application status, the appeal status, the improvements of the SASSA system, improved communication between SASSA and the SRD applicants, updates with the SRD applications and approval, appeal

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with regular updated statistics related to the adjudication processes. All the possible challenges with the banks, especially the Post bank.

63. In these forums, SASSA's communication unit will prepare information to be discussed in the forum, being the issues in relation to the SRD as indicated in the preceding paragraph. The issues would be all the items that would have been raised by the public or their representatives in social media platforms. SASSA will then update the community on the current status of the SRD. The Applicants in this application, have been attending these forums. Attached hereto are Terms of Reference for the forum indicating the second applicant's participation, marked Annexure SA4.

64. It is important to mention that the issues raised by the Applicants in this application before the above Honourable Court are the similar issues that were raised and dealt with at the forums. To name one, the issue of the delay in the payments, the Applicants were informed that all the technical glitches that SASSA had experienced at the initial teething stages of implementing the SRD on line application have since been resolved and all the beneficiaries who have supplied SASSA with verifiable payment details have been paid. At no point has the Applicants raised any significant discontent about the progressive initiative that government has been making on the administration of the SRD; and hence this application before the above Honourable Court has been a surprise; notwithstanding the Applicants' right to take such action.

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65. As the result thereof the Applicants' application before the above Honourable Court is an abuse of court processes.
66. In addition to the above, SASSA has a free of charge call centre that has been set up to assist with the SRD queries, wherein the SRD applicants and or beneficiaries can contact the call centre for any queries in relation to the SRD, including amongst other things the status update of the SRD applications, appeals status, pending payments and changing of banking details by the SRD applicants. SASSA has expanded its call centre capacity with an additional 300 agents to provide further support for this function. In addition, forum members (which includes one of the Applicants to this case), have dedicated resources to assist them with their clients, which ultimately enables SASSA to reach out to more clients.
67. The SRD applicants also have an option of sending all the queries relating to the SRD on emails through the provided email address on the website. These emails are attended to by the allocated team.
68. The forums that are held by SASSA with the community and the call centre set up are communication mechanisms used by SASSA to reach out and offer assistance to the community in relation to the queries raised in relation to the SRD. Therefore the SRD system is not a purely digital, but

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has significant human contact. This is different from the traditional form, however it is in line with how most institutions in this environment are transforming.

69. Further, it should be mentioned that with the communication mechanisms used by SASSA in reaching out to the community and attending to solving the issues raised by the community relating to the SRD and the fact that most of the SRD applications received by SASSA are made by the community using the SRD website, it is indicative that millions of individuals are aware of the SRD and that most SRD applicants have access to the website, thus the allegation by the Applicants that the SRD is not accessible to many people in the country is incorrect and ought to be rejected.

## CONCLUSION

70. When one considered the statistics covering the period when the SRD was introduced, around May 2020, it is clear that this is one of the most successful and effective systems, wherein the Government is able to deliver services to the targeted individuals in the quickest way ever, the major success is attributable to the use of the online method of application.

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71. The SRD online application method has proven to be the most successful system wherein the Government has been able to fulfil its constitutional duty as stated in section 27 of the Constitution, and it cannot be faulted in any way whatsoever.
72. SASSA contends that the Applicants' application is without merit for the reasons set out in this supporting affidavit as well as the First Respondent's answering affidavit.
73. In the premises the Applicants application ought to be dismissed with costs.

**WHEREFORE** the Second Respondent prays that the Applicants' application be dismissed with costs.

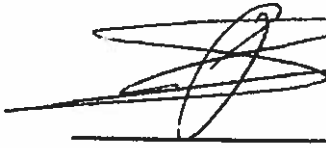


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**DEPONENT**

I hereby certify that the deponent has acknowledged that he knows and understands the contents of this affidavit, which was signed and sworn before me at Midrand on the 13 November 2023, the regulations contained in Government Notice No. R 1258 of 21 July 1972, as amended, and Government Notice No. R 1648 of 19 August 1977, as amended, having been complied with.



 7180762-7 ASD  
DEBATIEN

**COMMISSIONER OF OATHS**

**FULL NAMES:** PE/CA MAPHO SEBATI

**BUSINESS ADDRESS:** Plot 650 Molofo Road

**OFFICE:** Kameeldrift

SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS
CLIENT SERVICE CENTRE
2023 -11- 13
KAMEELDRIFT
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE



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STATISTICS ON SRD R350 COVERING JANUARY 2022 TO OCTOBER 2023

MONTH	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
Number of applications received	13 998 344	14 200 390	14 429 310	14 657 042	14 836 472	15 145 012	15 345 591
Number of approved applications	8 457 520	8 251 832	8 577 975	8 604 659	8 682 130	8 746 589	8 755 081
Number of declined/rejected applications	5 317 495	5 710 298	5 601 151	5 794 114	5 979 977	6 118 850	6 326 022
Number of pending applications	3 951	1 140	18	20	18	18	7 904
Number of canceled applications	181 770	178 251	180 530	184 424	205 374	206 178	197 895
Number of revived applications	42 217	42 115	43 813	44 436	44 656	46 464	46 386
Number of unpaid approved applications	15 381	18 634	15 823	19 387	24 317	26 913	12 303
Number of unpaid approved applications	767 414	788 539	892 169	946 165	931 062	1 130 506	1 264 002
Number of applicants paid	7 690 106	7 453 363	7 685 806	7 656 494	7 751 049	7 616 061	7 501 079

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**Annexure SA2**

**Total number of Covid SRD applications as at 05 September 2023**

Province	New applicants	Return applicants	Total applications	%
Eastern Cape	256 409	1 672 846	1 929 255	13%
Free State	109 123	723 281	832 404	5%
Gauteng	418 917	2 526 032	2 944 949	19%
Kwazulu Natal	639 510	2 935 185	3 574 695	24%
Limpopo	266 520	1 719 728	1 986 248	13%
Mpumalanga	224 953	1 136 985	1 361 938	9%
North West	128 354	914 211	1 042 565	7%
Northern Cape	53 453	265 251	318 704	2%
Western Cape	220 425	933 829	1 154 254	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 317 684</b>	<b>12 827 348</b>	<b>15 145 012</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Total applications by gender as at 05 September 2023**

Province	Female	Male	Total
Eastern Cape	1 061 403	867 852	1 929 255
Free State	461 688	370 716	832 404
Gauteng	1 544 391	1 400 558	2 944 949
Kwazulu Natal	1 948 749	1 625 946	3 574 695
Limpopo	1 117 188	869 060	1 986 248
Mpumalanga	755 832	606 106	1 361 938
North West	570 181	472 384	1 042 565
Northern Cape	171 214	147 490	318 704
Western Cape	648 902	505 352	1 154 254
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 279 548</b>	<b>6 865 464</b>	<b>15 145 012</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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**Annexure SA3**

**Total paid as at 31 October 2023 by Region & Bank name (for October 2023 payments)**

<b>BANK NAME</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>%</b>
ABSA	191 258	2,6%
AFRICAN BANK	42 742	0,6%
ALBARAKA BANK	133	0,0%
BANK OF ATHENS	8	0,0%
BANK ZERO MUTUAL BANK	88	0,0%
BIDVEST BANK	8 138	0,1%
CAPITEC BANK	3 131 337	42,9%
DISCOVERY BANK LTD	3 276	0,0%
FINBOND MUTUAL BANK	1 803	0,0%
FINBOND NET1	214	0,0%
FNB	226 462	3,1%
GRINDROD BANK LIMITED	349 047	4,8%
GROBANK LIMITED	313	0,0%
ITHALA	11 105	0,2%
NEDBANK	203 699	2,8%
SA POST BANK	1 565 046	21,4%
SASFIN BANK	21	0,0%
STANDARD BANK	336 347	4,6%
TYME BANK LIMITED	1 229 997	16,8%
UBANK LTD	5 919	-0,1%
Other	52	0,0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7 307 005</b>	<b>100,0%</b>

Annexure SAH

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**South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) & Civil  
Society Forum on COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress  
(SRD Forum)**

**Terms of Reference**

**February 2023**

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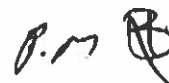
**SRD Forum  
Terms of Reference**

**1. Background**

- 1.1. On 22 September 2022 the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) hosted a meeting with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The meeting was attended by Black Sash, the Children's Institute and #PayTheGrants (#PTG). From the Government side, the meeting was attended by representatives from the Department of Social Development (DSD), Independent Tribunal for Social Assistance Appeals (ITSAA), and the National Development Agency (NDA) and Post Bank.
- 1.2. The CSOs represent the interest of a large number of SASSA grant beneficiaries and provides beneficiaries with additional support and information related to Social Assistance. The meeting between Government and CSOs provided a platform for the parties to share information on the administrative processes relating to social assistance and related challenges.
- 1.3. From the CSO's side, the most critical issue is the payment of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant taking consideration of the urgent need and its limited duration.
- 1.4. It is therefore agreed that the main focus of this platform will be the SRD Grant.

**2. Purpose**

- 2.1. The purpose of this forum is to provide a platform for SASSA, Civil Society and any other parties deemed fit by SASSA and Civil Society to engage on issues affecting grant applicants and beneficiaries related to the COVID-19 SRD Grant.
- 2.2. The Forum will be hereafter referred to as the SRD Forum.
- 2.3. Through the sharing of information and unpacking of challenges identified, the Forum will serve as an engagement mechanism to address and resolve challenges with the SRD process and administration systems of the SRD grant more efficiently and expediently.



**SRD Forum  
Terms of Reference**

2.4. The Forum will serve as a platform to improve communication where Government keeps CSO's up to date with issues related to the SRD Grant. Information from the forum will be filtered to SRD Grant applicants and beneficiaries on the ground through information sharing.

2.5. CSOs have the opportunity to escalate systemic challenges that may be supported by individual cases around application, declines, appeals, payment and other to the Forum and resolving these a holistic way. (Individual cases are to be handled by the mechanism set up for such).

2.6. Key issues that will be addressed, but not limited to:

- Improved communications and access
- Updates with applications and approvals
- Appeals with regular updated statistics related to adjudication processes
- Historic Payments including SASSA reconsiderations for 2021
- Applications: Asylum seekers and Special Permits
- Third party databases?
- Communication:
  - Communication channels
  - Implementation of newsletter
- User interface: portals.
- Caregivers using system generated quad 7 number for R350 and related issues
- Payments
  - Payment date vs pay file
  - Banking Fees
  - Freezing of accounts.
  - Bank Verifications
  - Cash send (Process, Issues and monthly statistics)
- Retail stores (Payment channel): Details of agreement - Post Bank

**SRD Forum  
Terms of Reference**

- Systematic issues: General
- Change of cell numbers
- Beneficiaries not sure of payment month (due payments)
- Details: statements of transaction history
- Balance inquiry (Does the customer pay for the service?)
- Referred cases:
  - Total number of referred cases; and
  - Sharing monthly statistics (where available) and progress reports.

2.7. The Forum will provide a platform to be forward thinking in a consultative manner to provide inputs towards the development policies relating to the consideration of working towards providing permanent social assistance or income support for the unemployed. In this regard, the SRD Grant can serve as a template or starting point towards providing recommendations for improvement to work towards a basic income grant. Basic income support or alternative policy proposals.

2.8. Key considerations for proposals relating to the improvement of the SRD Grant will be to consider increasing the amount of the grant to at least the Food Poverty Line, developing the application process to be a hybrid process, increasing the means test threshold to the Upper Bound Poverty Line, and addressing challenges of government databases as a means of verifications.

### **3. Membership**

3.1. The following organisations will be permanent members of the Forum:

- SASSA
- Department of Social Development
- National Development Agency
- Black Sash and Partners



**SRD Forum  
Terms of Reference**

- Children's Institute
- #PayTheGrants South Africa
- Post Bank
- ITSAA

3.2. All participating organisations will nominate individuals to serve as the "core group/representatives".

3.3. Participation in the Forum is voluntary and other Civil Societies may be invited to join.

**4. Meetings**

4.1. It is envisaged the Forum will meet on a monthly basis. Or bimonthly basis.

4.2. Considering SASSA's payment cycle and potential issues emanating from the payment process, meetings should preferably be convened towards the end of each month.

4.3. Monthly or bi-monthly meetings shall take place on the last Thursday of that month by default, unless alternative dates are otherwise communicated and confirmed one month in advance, preferably at the prior meeting.

4.4. As far as possible, meetings will be physical. Virtual meetings will serve as an alternative should physical meetings not be possible.

4.5. Meetings will be hosted by SASSA, preferably at a central venue (Central Johannesburg) to ensure maximum participation; where feasible.

4.6. Ad hoc meetings can be scheduled as and when required.

4.7. The meeting will be co-chaired by SASSA and a nominated person from Civil Society (CSOs prefers to rotate the chairmanship amongst Black Sash, Children's Institute and #PayTheGrants).

4.8. CSOs will be given an opportunity to input on agenda items before each meeting.



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## SRD Forum Terms of Reference

4.9. Both SASSA and CSOs will be allowed to invite social partners and relevant stakeholders to participate in the meeting.

4.10. Minutes from these meetings are to be distributed by the secretariat to membership within 5 working days following that meeting; where feasible.

### 5. Secretariat

5.1. The secretariat will comprise of:

- Ms. Kgothatso Sibanda (Black Sash)
- Mr. Daddy Mabe (#PayTheGrants South Africa)
- Ms Barbara Suzah Magolego (SASSA)

5.2. The secretariat will be responsible for the following:

- Development of the draft agenda in consultation with the chairpersons (SASSA & CSOs)
- Minutes of the Meeting (SASSA & CSOs)
- Distribution of Minutes (SASSA)
  - Minutes must be distributed within 5 working days post the meeting.
- Notifications and Logistical arrangements (SASSA).

### 6. Feedback Mechanism

6.1. In order to timeously address issues affecting beneficiaries elevated to CSOs, SASSA appointed two dedicated customer service agents.

6.2. The dedicated customer service agents are Mr. Tiego Lekalakala ([TiegoLE@sassa.gov.za](mailto:TiegoLE@sassa.gov.za)) and Mr. Nkosenhle Zulu ([NkosenhleZ@sassa.gov.za](mailto:NkosenhleZ@sassa.gov.za)). All correspondence should also be copied to the following email addresses:

- [Maphutik@sassa.gov.za](mailto:Maphutik@sassa.gov.za)
- [MaseROM@sassa.gov.za](mailto:MaseROM@sassa.gov.za)

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Page 6 of 9

**SRD Forum  
Terms of Reference**

- 6.3. CSOs must use this channel for individual beneficiary enquiries. It is envisaged that this channel will only be used by the core members of the Forum.
- 6.4. Enquiries should be done in batch form rather than for individual cases where appropriate.
- 6.5. Feedback will be provided on a weekly basis, or clearly communicated where a longer response time is required.
- 6.6. Issues that are not resolved through the dedicated channel can be escalated to the monthly Forum meeting for discussion/resolution.

**7. Communication**

- 7.1. Discussions and outcomes of the meeting can be communicated to the public in the form of a joint press statement or report authorised by the joint chairs of the Forum.
- 7.2. Where joint press statements or reports are not readily available due to delays or challenges, or decided as unnecessary, communication can be undertaken by individual core members through request to and authorisation from joint chairs.
- 7.3. Member organisations reserve the right to communicate individually on or reference to this Forum's work, within the established bounds of what has been or can be shared.

**8. Confidentiality**

- 8.1. The existence and purpose of this Forum shall be public information.
- 8.2. The discussions and minutes of the Forum will be confidential, unless otherwise requested and confirmed by joint chairs.
- 8.3. Information/content emanating from meetings shall only be shared in a format agreed to by Core Members.

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**SRD Forum  
Terms of Reference**

**9. Lifespan of the Forum**

- 9.1. Understanding that the present purpose of this Forum is based on the current SRD Grant and future possible social measures arising from it, and recognising that definite outcomes or timelines around this cannot be determined at present, this Forum will continue to exist indefinitely until mutually decided otherwise by the joint chairs.
- 9.2. Proposals for dissolution or otherwise termination of this Forum can be put forward by any Core member, to be discussed fully at a monthly or ad hoc meeting organised with due notice.
- 9.3. The existence of the Forum and the commitment to attend the meetings by all parties will continue despite any external inter organisational relationships or circumstances between the parties outside the forum.

**10. Amendment of the Terms of Reference (ToR)**

- 10.1. The ToR may be amended in writing after consultation with the core members of the Forum.

   
Page 8 of 9

S 94

SRD Forum  
Terms of Reference

11. Signatories

*Rachel Bukasa*

Black Sash

*[Handwritten Signature]*

Children's Institute

Department of Social Development (DSD)

*[Handwritten Signature]*

Independent Tribunal for Social Assistance Appeals (ITSAA)

08 February 2023

National Development Agency (NDA)

*[Handwritten Signature]* 2/8/2023  
#PayTheGrants South Africa

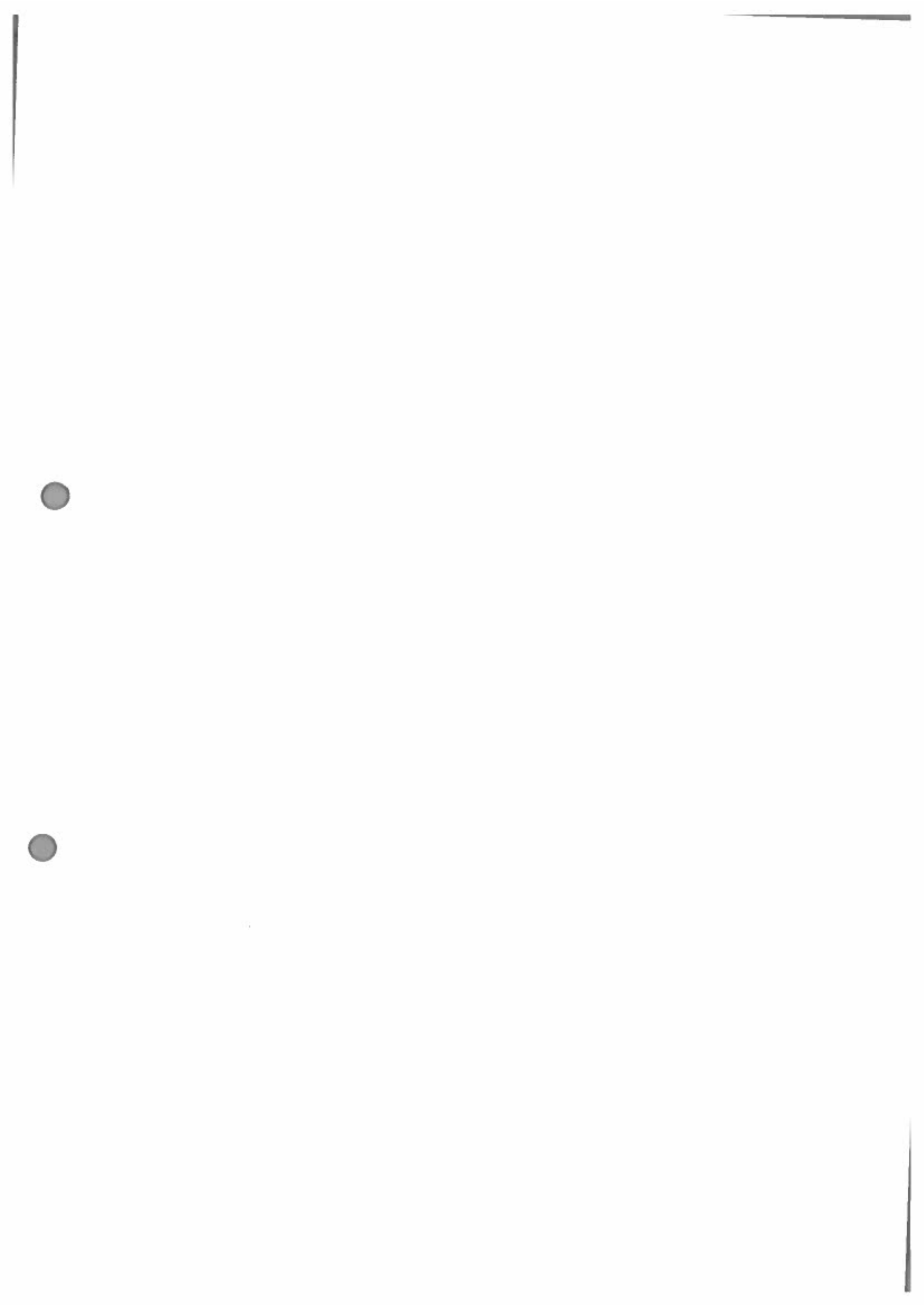
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Harris  
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*[Handwritten Signature]*

Post Bank

*[Handwritten Signature]* 2/2/2023

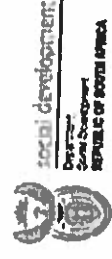
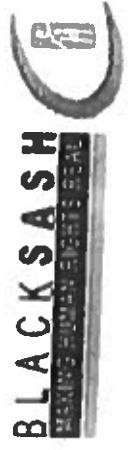
South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)



SA4

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Item	Discussion
Opening and Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The meeting was chaired by Ms Evashee Naidu (Regional Manager: Black Sash)</li> <li>The Chairperson welcomed and thanked participants for their attendance. The welcoming was followed by a round of introductions.</li> <li>Apologies were received from:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms Masego Maake (SASSA)</li> <li>Mr Kenneth Baloyi (SASSA)</li> <li>Ms. Marietha Harris (Post Bank)</li> <li>Dr Maureen Mogotsi (Department of Social Development)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Terms of Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chairperson proposed and amendment to the Agenda, combining the purpose of the meeting with the discussion on the Terms of Reference (TOR).</li> <li>The meeting agreed to start with the discussions on the purpose of the SRD Forum as defined in the ToR</li> <li>Black Sash suggested to change section 2.4 of the ToR be amended. The original version of section 2.3 read as follows:           <p><i>"2.3 Through the sharing of information and unpacking of challenges identified, the Forum has the potential to serve as an engagement mechanism to address and resolve challenges with the SRD process and administration systems of the SRD grant more efficiently and expediently."</i></p> </li> <li>The section was amended to read as follows, in order to highlight the focus on outcomes and be more solution driven:           <p><i>"2.3. Through the sharing of information and unpacking of challenges identified, the Forum will serve as an engagement mechanism to address and resolve challenges with the SRD process"</i></p> </li> </ul>

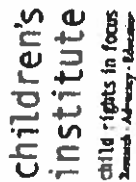


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**SRD Forum**  
**02 February 2023**  
**ANEW Parktonian Hotel, Braamfontein**

**Draft Minutes**

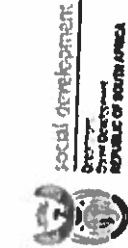
Item	Discussion
	<p><i>and administration systems of the SRD grant more efficiently and expeditiously.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amendment was accepted by the meeting.</li> <li>In terms of section 2.4. Black Sash proposed that the section be amended to put more emphasis on SASSA's responsibility in terms of communication. The original section 2.4 read as follows:  <i>"The Forum will also serve as a platform to improve communication whereby SASSA keeps CSO's up to date with issues related to the SRD Grant which will then filter to SRD Grant applicants and beneficiaries on the ground through information sharing."</i></li> <li>The Black Sash proposed a revised text which reads as follows:  <i>"The Forum will serve as a platform to improve communication where Government keeps CSO's up to date with issues related to the SRD Grant. Information from the forum will be filtered to SRD Grant applicants and beneficiaries on the ground through information sharing."</i></li> <li>The meeting accepted the amendments and the ToR was adopted.</li> <li>Delegates agreed to facilitate the signing of the MoU by the designated officials</li> </ul>
Minutes of the previous Meeting	<p>Participants reflected on the action list from the previous meeting. The action list included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All presentations to be shared with participants (DONE)</li> <li>Formal Communications to be sent to the Department of Social Development requesting the Chief Directorate: Social Assistance to participate in the SRD Forum. (DONE)</li> </ul>



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Item	Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SASSA Customer Care to provide a presentation on issues relating to the SASSA Call Centre. <b>(DONE)</b></li> <li>• SASSA Communications team to be requested to participate in the SRD Forum. <b>(DONE)</b></li> <li>• Post bank to create an open line for communication with Civil Society organisations. <b>(DONE)</b></li> <li>• Independent Tribunal for Social Assistance Appeals (ITSAA) to provide statistics on the state of appeals. <b>(Pending appeals, successful appeals etc.) (DONE)</b></li> </ul> <p>The minutes of the meeting that took place on 24 November 2023 were adopted without any amendments</p>
<p>Presentation: Status of Appeals - Independent Tribunal for Social Assistance Appeals (ITSAA) Mr John Mokoale Director: Pre-Adjudications &amp; Operations</p>	<p>Mr Mokoale presented the latest ITSAA statistics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between April 2022 and December 2022, ITSAA received 12 530 668 appeals.</li> <li>• Appeals for the months of April, May and June were completed.</li> <li>• For April, 910 307 appeals were processed. Out of this number, 177 770 (19%) were approved for payment.</li> <li>• For May, 1 296 235 appeals were processed. Out of this number, 20 014 (1.54%) were approved for payment.</li> <li>• For June, 516 199 appeals were processed. Out of this number, 15 299 (2.9%) were approved for payment.</li> <li>• Adjudication of July appeals will start shortly.</li> <li>• ITSAA is planning to finalise adjudication of appeals for the period July 2022 to October 2022 before the end of March 2023.</li> <li>• The Tribunal is dependent on updated databases from SASSA for adjudication. This dependence means that appeals are processed approximately 60 days after the appeal was lodged.</li> <li>• Outcomes of appeals are communicated to SASSA on a monthly basis.</li> <li>• The Tribunal is in the process of improving communication relating to appeals, including updating the appeals website with information relating to concluded appeals.</li> </ul>



UJA



Item	Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The establishment of a zero rated appeals website is being finalised. (Tentative finalisation: 01 March 2023).</li> </ul> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>#PTG enquired about beneficiaries whose status changes form approved to declined. ITSAA informed the meeting that the system is supposed to track such cases, which will be investigated.</li> <li>#PTG drop down menus on the appeals website. It was suggested that the website be revised to be more use friendly to beneficiaries.</li> <li>#PTG enquired about the rationale One Time Pin (OTP) security measure. The argued that is a burden to beneficiary. SASSA indicated that the OTP is a method of risk reduction, acknowledging the high risk environment that SASSA operates in.</li> <li>SASSA is exploring the possibility of using a password system that will allow beneficiaries to use a password rather than waiting for a system generated OTP.</li> <li>SASSA indicated that the possibility be explored whether ITSAA and SASSA system linked to enhance performance of the appeals system &amp; remove drop down list, reason for appeal.</li> <li>SASSA indicated that there should be barriers to appeals in order to minimise frivolous appeals and optimise resources and prioritise resources for deserving beneficiaries.</li> <li>SASSA indicated the importance and necessity of clients to be linked to cell phone numbers, since the SASSA system is based on cell phone numbers.</li> <li>In order for the cSRD grant to evolve there is a need for beneficiaries to be linked to a cell phone number.</li> <li>Black Sash expressed support to the password system replacing the OTP system.</li> </ul>



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**SRD Forum**  
**02 February 2023**  
**ANEW Parktonian Hotel, Braamfontein**

**Draft Minutes**

Item	Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SASSA indicated that they are obliged to tie clients to cell phone numbers, hence the KYC system was introduced to link clients to cell numbers.</li> <li>• SASSA emphasised that the most reliable method of payment is for clients to have their own bank accounts.</li> <li>• CSO should communicate to beneficiaries that Cash Send option remains high risk and bank accounts are encouraged.</li> <li>• Black Sash commented on the need for improved SMS communication indicating the reason for declined appeals etc.</li> <li>• In relation to NSFAS, Black Sash enquired on what basis NSFAS clients are declined. ITSAA indicated that if NSFAS indicates that a beneficiary is receiving monthly allowance, the appeal will be declined.</li> <li>• The meeting agreed to a tentative brainstorming session with Data base owners to discuss and seek solutions to beneficiaries who appear on databases such as UIF etc.</li> <li>• Black Sash indicated the main issues affecting appeals relates to the UIF database, PERSAL &amp; Means Test. Requesting how SASSA will analyse and address the issues and increase capacity in this area.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Presentation SRD Operations and Payments.</b>  <b>Ms. Carin Koster, General Manager - Solution Development (SASSA)</b></p>	<p>Ms Koster started her presentation with focusing on historic cSRD Payments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For January 2022, 84% total approved applications paid.</li> <li>• February clients will be paid after the standard grants payments have been completed and will commence from 13 February 2023.</li> <li>• Historic payments are made every month after the monthly pay period payments are completed</li> <li>• Thus far the average payment percentage since April 2022 is almost at 90% of clients being paid per month</li> <li>• Payments that could not be done for the specific approval month are due to amongst others the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Payment details changed and new account pending bank account verification.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



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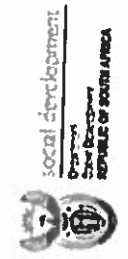
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Draft Minutes

Item	Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Referred cases – Confirmed fraudulent activity.</li> <li>○ Payments returned by the bank due to challenges with a bank account (EF70)</li> <li>○ Cash send clients</li> <li>○ Post bank clients.</li> </ul> <p><u>Fraud related Issues:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cell phone changes</li> <li>○ Cell phone number changes are currently done fraudulently.</li> <li>○ To curb this, SASSA decided on a EKYC process which is currently in technical development</li> <li>○ In the meantime, when a client informs us of a cell phone number change, we revert to the original number and block the incorrect / fraudulent number.</li> </ul> <p><u>Asylum Seekers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ These clients could initially not be paid pending the enhancement of the Post Bank retailer solution to accommodate the special ID numbers (clients do not have SA ID numbers).</li> <li>○ This enhancement has now been completed and the Asylum Seekers payments resumed</li> </ul> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's Institute inquired whether Quad 7 beneficiaries are being paid through post bank. SASSA request CSO's assistance with assisting quad 7 beneficiaries to get the required documentation from DHA.</li> <li>• In terms of referred cases CSO's indicated the 24-hour time limit for Identity confirmation/verification is not sufficient</li> </ul>



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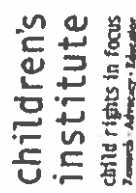
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SRD Forum  
02 February 2023  
ANEW Parktonian Hotel, Braamfontein

Draft Minutes

Item	Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommendation from CSO's was to extend the time limit to 48 hours. Clients can call centre to be send a new verification link.</li> <li>• SASSA clarified that for referred cases the time limit is three days (72 hours), the 24-hour timeframe is only applicable to the process of changing banking details.</li> <li>• Ms Koster requested CSO's to provide ID Numbers of problematic cases in advance, prior to the Forum meeting in order for cases to be investigated and for SASSA to provide feedback on systemic issues during the Forum.</li> <li>• SASSA currently working on a biometric verification system to identify clients.</li> <li>• In terms of Asylum seekers, SASSA started with payment to asylum seekers. Asylum seekers were sent a SMS notifying them of payment.</li> <li>• It was suggested that a package be developed on the process for asylum seekers to access their grants &amp; be distributed to relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>• SASSA Comms agreed to send this communication to CSO's regarding asylum seekers &amp; process to access grants</li> </ul>



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Item	Discussion
<p>Presentation: SASSA Comms Plan &amp; Strategy Ms. Dineo Mosete Senior manager: SASSA Communications.</p>	<p>Ms Mosete started her presentation reflecting on the objectives of the SASSA communications plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate and create awareness regarding the COVID 19 Social Relief of Distress</li> <li>• Provide SASSA employees and beneficiaries with information regarding COVID 19 SRD</li> <li>• Support ongoing communication and information campaign across government regarding COVID 19 SRD</li> <li>• Mobilise various stakeholders, cement relations and keep them updated on social grants issues related to COVID 19 SRD</li> <li>• Ensure consistent communication and marketing regarding Special COVID 19 SRD.</li> </ul> <p><u>The following issues dominate the SASSA Communications environment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delays in the payment of the COVID 19 SRD Grants.</li> <li>• New regulations a concern</li> <li>• High number of declines on the SRD Grant under the new regulations</li> <li>• SAPO experiences system glitches and grants beneficiaries redirected to ATMS and retailers</li> <li>• COVID 19 SRD Appeals Process Drop in the COVID 19 SRD beneficiaries a concern.</li> </ul> <p><u>A communication analysis conducted identified the following Frequently Asked Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase of the SRD Grant income threshold-clarity seeking questions</li> <li>• Some beneficiaries do not have digital access to use online application channels</li> <li>• Has the R350 payment amount changed to R624?</li> <li>• Is it plausible for government to dismiss applications for people who earn an income of R1000 or less?</li> <li>• Delay in COVID-19 SRD payments</li> </ul>



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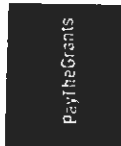
Item	Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People unfairly declined for COVID-19 SRD</li> <li>• Can I withdraw my R350 grant from retailers?</li> <li>• What is the qualification criteria for asylum seekers?</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SASSA Comms agreed to communicate number of approved/paid cSRD grants on social media pages on monthly basis.</li> <li>• Need for improved coordination between communication and stakeholder relations.</li> <li>• Black Sash enquire how SASSA is responding to frequently asked questions? SASSA comms explained that FAQ's gets answered through the customer care function.</li> <li>• Meeting agreed to provide detailed stats on SASSA Comms reach.</li> </ul>
<p>Presentation: Customer Care Mr Maphuti Kgare: Manager- Customer Care</p>	<p><b>Basic Call centre stats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the week, 23 - 27 January, SASSA call centre received 125 624 calls.</li> <li>• 99 664 call were answered</li> <li>• 25 724 call were unanswered.</li> </ul> <p><b>Main trends/customer questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payments Dates / Payments outcomes</li> <li>• Appeals May to December 2022 outstanding</li> <li>• Declined Merchants SRD R 350 grants continue to be Declined in Merchants, with reasons provided in various error codes 56, 53 and 68</li> <li>• Payments Approved with no payment date Approved but not allocated payment dates are increasing in numbers</li> </ul>



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Social Development Commission  
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SA+

SRD Forum  
02 February 2023  
ANEW Parktonian Hotel, Braamfontein

Draft Minutes

Item	Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change of cell numbers Increased in complaints about change of cell numbers without beneficiary's knowledge</li> <li>Change of Baking Details beneficiaries are asking if the can change from SASSA card to their accounts</li> <li>Bank verifications timelines, taking long</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SASSA to provide feedback on call centre contract at next meeting</li> </ul>
Resolutions/Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SASSA &amp; ITSAA explore possibility of improving system/appeals website to remove drop down list. reason for appeal.</li> <li>Brainstorming session with Data base owners to discuss and seek solutions to beneficiaries who appear on databases such as UIF (All stakeholders)</li> <li>CSO's to provide ID Numbers of problematic cases in advance, prior to the Forum in order for cases to be investigated and for SASSA to provide feedback on systemic issues.</li> <li>SASSA Comms to send information to CSO's on Asylum Seekers regarding process to access grants.</li> <li>SASSA Comms to provide stats on Comms activities and reach at next forum.</li> <li>Next meeting to take place after tabling of new cSRD regulation (April 2023)</li> </ul>

\*\*\*END\*\*\*



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## SRD FORUM

Date: 23 June 2023

Time: 10:00 – 15:00

Venue: Holiday Inn Sunnyside Park Hotel

Chairperson: TBC

### AGENDA

Time	Item	Presenter
10:00 – 10:30	Opening and Welcome Introductions & Apologies Adoption of the Agenda Previous minutes & action items	Chairperson
10:30 – 11:00	Presentation: Status of Appeals (Independent Tribunal for Social Assistance Appeals (ITSAA))	Mr John Mokoete Director: Pre-Adjudications & Operations (ITSAA)
11:00 – 11:30	Discussion	All
11:30 - 11:45	Tea Break	
11:45 – 12:15	Presentation: SRD Payments & Retailers	Post Bank
12:15 – 12:45	Presentation SRD Operations and Payments SASSA ICT & Post Bank	Ms. Carin Koster: General Manager - Solution Development (SASSA)
12:30 – 13:00	Discussion	All
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 14:30	Any other matters	
14:30 – 15:00	Discussions	
15:00	Closure	All