



Media Release:

SOCIAL GRANT REGULATIONS INCREASES THE BURDEN ON WOMEN

May 2020

SANAC Women's Sector expresses concerns that the announcement by the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) will put a burden on care givers particularly women. The government has failed to promote gender transformative interventions to respond to the burden of care and the protection of grants that children are entitled to as prescribed by the President. On the 21st April 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the much-needed social relief measure during the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak that Child Support Grant (CSG) beneficiaries will receive an increase of R300 in May 2020 and an increase of R500 for the next five months. However, Treasury, SASSA and DSD have failed to comply with the pronouncement by the President. Grant relief is at this point necessary to keep communities and individuals afloat while the country battles an unforeseen economic crisis as a result of Covid-19 pandemic. "Measures aimed at the people, especially women are equally important as those that relates to the private sector enterprises. When the President has spoken, the rest of government must comply and support the President" says Silungile Mtambo, Chairperson of the SANAC Women Sector.

As the SANAC Women's Sector we are fully in support of the Community Constituency COVID-19 Front (CCC Front). At the onset, the CCC Front has advocated for Income Security for All. We fully support the demand for Income Security for All which includes smooth payments for all current South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) recipients, especially women.

Social Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu has revealed that the R500 increase in the child support grant will be a payment to the caregivers and not per child. This immediately contradicts the announcement by the President. The impact of this change in policy will affect women and children in need as seen with other households that a single parent with four children entitled to the same amount as a single parent with one child. Additionally, as the SANAC Women's Sector we further raise concerns announced that caregivers will not be allowed to access the new R350 special Covid-19 social relief distress grant for those who are unemployed and who do not access any other grant or payments from the Unemployment Insurance Fund. The child support grants support the child not the care giver, whereas the social relief grant will relief those in need including the care givers. Mtambo further says "Minister Zulu cannot short circuit children, nor can she in her advisory short circuit care givers particularly women. In South Africa, at least 92% of primary caretakers of children in poor households are women and include mothers, grandmothers and aunts".

The grant regulations place extra pressure on carers, the majority of which are women. The disproportionate impact of unpaid caregiving on women and girls is one of the key facets of gender inequality. According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), the rate of unemployment amongst women was 7,5 percentage points higher



than that of males in 2018. There are more women than men employed in the informal trade sector with 47,6% of women compared to 30,6% of men. Women are more likely than men to be involved in unpaid work. In the second quarter of 2018, about 55,2% of those involved in non-market activities were women. The General Household Survey of 2018 by Stats SA revealed that 43.1 percent of children lived only with their mothers while a much smaller percentage (3,3%) of children lived only with their fathers.

The limitation of funds to caregivers alone without including children living under the caregiver's household is therefore a blatant failure of the South African government to promote gender equality and to empower women. During apartheid, women were on the receiving end and in the new democratic dispensation, women are still in the receiving end. Mtambo further said "We know and understand the burden of women. Women continue to be subjected to social inequalities, racial disparities, and economic vulnerability. The grant policies set by the government are a detriment to women and children and should be changed accordingly to be inclusive and equitable."

Access Chapter 2 Executive Director Ms Steve Letsike said "It is important that the burden of caregivers is alleviated and the government must allocate these limited resources effectively to foster greater economic security for South Africa's poorest households. Children should access their entitled social grants, similarly as we support the call to care givers, not at the cost of limiting rights of both women and children, the State should not blind side people in need".

The SANAC Women's Sector calls for the government to:

- Alter the discrepancy of Child Support Grant beneficiaries (not caregivers) will receive R300 more per month in May 2020 and R500 more per month from June until October 2020.
- Prescribe and standardise the urgent amendment of the Covid-19 Social Grant Plan to include child support before expected rollout in mid-May.
- Remove the condition that disqualifies care givers from receiving the social relief grant if they are recipients of child support grants

The respect and promotion of gender equality and the protection of human rights must be a priority of the State even during the time of Covid-19.

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