



NEDLAC COMMUNITY CONSTITUENCY

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Statement of the NEDLAC Community Constituency on the reintroduction of the R350 SRoD Grant

The Community Constituency welcomes the contents of the media briefing of the Minister of Social Development today, 4 August 2021. In the briefing, the Minister indicated that applications for the R350 Social Relief of Distress (SRoD) Grant would be open from 6 August, and that the department expected grants to be paid from the last week of August 2021. The reintroduction of this grant is as welcome relief for the unemployed and poorest of the poor especially after we championed the continuation of this grant at NEDLAC up to a point of writing a letter to President Ramaphosa to advance the same.

According to the Minister, their rapid response research undertaken of the previous R350 SRoD grant showed that the monies were used to purchase vital/basic food. This was critical in enabling the government to meet its constitutional obligations to ensure that people accessed sufficient food, as well as the right to social security as part of the right to fundamental dignity. Buying local food supported local retailers and producers of food and this assists in the strengthening of local and informal enterprises in sustaining livelihoods of the people.

The previous SRoD eligibility disqualified female caregivers from receiving the SRoD for themselves due to SASSA's payment criteria. Consistent with our advocacy at NEDLAC and our letter to President Ramaphosa, the new criteria allows women who are caregivers to apply and access this well deserved grant for women who are the face of poverty in our country. This is a befitting gesture and a welcome step to open the Women's Month (August) with the affirmation of women as deserving beneficiaries of the SRoD Grant.

The Community Constituency has raised the issue of social security assistance for the people at every opportunity for over a decade. The Minister's media briefing coincides with the signing off by the NEDLAC Community Constituency Overall Convenor today of the report of the Comprehensive Social Security Task Team that will be submitted to NEDLAC EXCO. The work of this task team spanned six years, and research commissioned to investigate the feasibility of a Universal Basic Income Grant in South Africa.

This work predated the current calls for a Basic Income Grant. "The timing of the release of the report, given the increased vulnerability of millions of South Africans, especially black African women, in the face of Covid- 19, is very helpful", said Thulani Tshafuta, Community Constituency Overall Convenor at NEDLAC. "This now opens the way for the department and government to engage meaningfully on the next steps required for the introduction of a universal basic income grant that the Minister referred to in her speech today".

“We are expecting new research to be released about the increased affordability of a R1268 basic income grant due in part to the modelling of the multiplier effect of such a significant cash redistribution from one of our member organisations, SPII, in the coming weeks and as Community Constituency we will be championing the policy of a BIG in every platform in South Africa”, Tshefuta concluded. The Community Constituency will pull all efforts to mobilise and collaborate with all other relevant civil society players in pursuit of this task.

Issued by:

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