

SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS (NATIONAL ASSEMBLY)

Standing Committee on Appropriations
Attention: Mr. D. Arends

29 May 2020

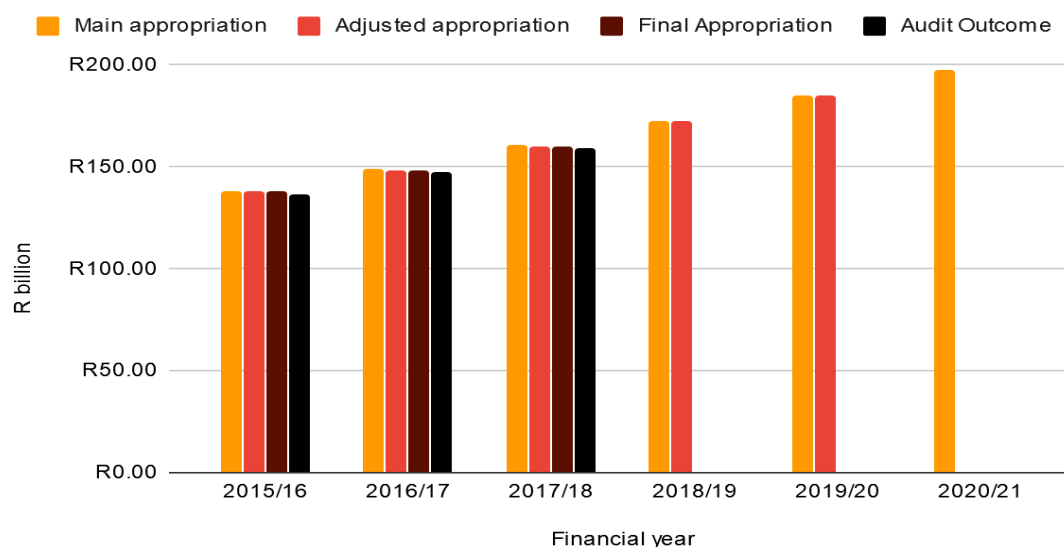
1. INTRODUCTION

This submission is made in response to an invitation for making written submissions on the 2020 Appropriation Bill, the purpose of which is to appropriate money from the National Revenue Fund for the requirements of the State for the 2020/21. Our submission is made at a time when the lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching consequences for the economy which is heavily impacted by the public health imperative to slow down the spreading of the coronavirus by curtailing business activities, residents' movement and the ability to secure a livelihood. Our analysis therefore focuses on both the appropriations put forward in February 2020 when the 2020/2021 budget was tabled and the implications COVID-19 has in the interim brought to the fore for public spending. Due to Black Sash's sectoral focus on social development, our submission largely offers analysis of social spending rather than an exhaustive analysis across all areas of spending. We conclude with recommendations for adjustments to spending plans when the special adjusted budget is tabled.

2. ANALYSIS OF APPROPRIATIONS TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social Development is Vote 19. The purpose of the vote is to 'ensure protection against vulnerability by creating an enabling environment for the provision of a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable social development service'. When looking at the overall budgeted versus actual expenditure of the department in nominal terms, it is clear that there has been underspending in prior years.

Figure 1: Analysis of budgeted versus actual in nominal terms for Social Development



Source: National Treasury

Figure 2: Underspending on Social Development budget (national)

Financial year	Main appropriation	Adjusted appropriation	Final Appropriation	Audit Outcome	Difference between main appropriation & actual spending
2015/16	R138.17 bn	R137.89 bn	R137.89 bn	R136.41 bn	R1.76 bn
2016/17	R148.94 bn	R147.93 bn	R147.93 bn	R147.34 bn	R1.59 bn
2017/18	R160.71 bn	R160.36 bn	R160.36 bn	R159.4 bn	R1.31 bn
2018/19	R172.9 bn	R172.82 bn			
2019/20	R184.79 bn	R184.72 bn			
2020/21	R197.72 bn				

Source: National Treasury, Vulekamali

We note in 2017-18, Social Development underspent by R1.31 billion rand, in 2016/17 by R1.59 billion rand and in 2015/16 by R1.76 billion rand, when the main appropriation was compared to the audited actual spend. Despite the appropriation growing slightly there has been a trend of underspending. The

Auditor General in his most recent report has chastised a number of departments and municipalities for material underspending.

The allocation to social development in the estimates of national expenditure has grown by 4.7% in nominal terms and 3.5% in real terms over the Medium Term Expenditure period. The budget is however not growing at the pace of the need. The immediate impact of COVID-19 was a humanitarian crisis with people fearing death due to starvation than the virus with many facing the threat of losing their livelihoods. The long term impact on poverty and unemployment is still unclear and will continue to emerge as the fight against the pandemic intensifies.

Social Development has five programmes, namely:

1. Administration
2. Social Assistance
3. Social Security Policy and Administration
4. Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support
5. Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery

Programme 2: Social Assistance is the department's highest area of expenditure. Key to note is that at a time when social relief of distress is crucial, the allocation at a national level is decreasing. The amount allocated to foster care grants is also decreasing.

Figure 3: Programme 2: Social Assistance

Programme 2 Sub-programmes R million	Adjusted Appropriation	Nominal Medium-term estimates			Average growth rate: 2019/20 - 2022/23	Nominal change between 2019/20 and 2020/21 (%)
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
Old Age	76,950.9	83,105.6	90,053.5	97,068.3	8%	8.0%
War Veterans	1.7	1.8	1.2	1.0	-16.4%	5.9%
Disability	23,077.6	24,390.1	25,488.5	26,521.6	4.7%	5.7%
Foster Care	5,080.8	4,965.3	4,829.4	4,795.3	-1.9%	-2.3%
Care Dependency	3,429.8	3,568.6	3,808.9	4,077.4	5.9%	4.0%
Child Support	64,967.3	69,765.2	74,779.8	80,735.4	7.5%	7.4%
Grant-in-Aid	1,237.5	1,632.2	1,978.4	2,421.2	25.1%	31.9%
Social Relief of Distress	410.0	407.0	407.0	407.0	-0.2%	-0.7%
Total	175,155.6	187,835.8	201,346.7	216,027.1	7.2%	7.2%

Source: National Treasury, Estimates of National Expenditure, own calculations

Providing Social Relief of Distress (SRD) is a function which involves multiple spheres of government. Initially, the national government's social response to the COVID-19 pandemic was focused on the SRD programme through distribution of food parcels, with the Department of Social Development projecting the delivery of one million food parcels¹.

Prior to the lockdown food parcels and vouchers were provided, for a period of up to six months, to support a small number of vulnerable households faced with undue hardship due to a loss of income or as a result of natural and other disasters, but nowhere near the scale of the humanitarian crisis that unfolded since lockdown. The administratively onerous SRD application process, which requires an assessment and sign-off from an already overburdened social workers, was waived so as not worsen the undue hardship.

The Dispatch Live in mid-April 2020 reported that in the Eastern Cape more than 260,000 households are so destitute that they do not know where their next meal will come from. The Social Development

¹ Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Social Development. April 2020. Meeting summary of Portfolio Committee on Social Development, 22 April 2020

MEC for the province conceded that the SASSA budget allocation for the year of R45.5m was highly inadequate to provide food parcels to desperately poor families during the national lockdown². An examination of the Provincial Department of Social Development's Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure report contains a line item for food parcels under the departmental transfers. Note that the 2020/21 Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure are not yet available for analysis, therefore 2019/20 is shown below. For 2019/20, an amount of R71 million was budgeted for the social relief subprogramme in the Eastern Cape.

Figure 4: Programme 2 of Provincial Department of Social Development: Eastern Cape

Estimates of the Provincial Revenue and Expenditure (EPRE) - 2019/20 Financial Year

Table 13: Summary of departmental payments and estimates by sub-programme: P2 –Social Welfare Services

R thousand	Outcome			Main appropriation	Adjusted appropriation 2018/19	Revised estimate	Medium-term estimates			% change from 2018/19
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18				2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
1. Management And Support	275 967	259 635	239 959	340 502	342 241	336 688	316 264	324 613	318 098	(6.1)
2. Services To Older Persons	135 548	162 104	190 612	202 124	204 621	198 564	203 614	213 825	221 793	2.5
3. Services To Persons With Disabilities	45 503	72 744	76 362	83 270	83 270	82 125	89 998	95 197	100 339	9.6
4. Hiv And Aids	76 701	113 367	126 413	133 845	133 845	133 043	141 602	149 714	157 713	6.4
5. Social Relief	16 266	39 389	41 184	42 835	42 835	42 040	71 037	51 221	53 900	69.0
Total payments and estimates	549 985	647 239	674 530	802 576	806 812	792 460	822 515	834 570	851 843	3.8

Under this subprogramme, in 2019/20, the amount budgeted for food parcels was R4.8 million for the year.

Figure 5: Departmental transfers from programme 2 of Provincial Department of Social Development: Eastern Cape

7.8.2 Transfers to other entities

Table 10: Summary of departmental transfers to other entities

Entity Group / Name	Audited			Main appropriation	Adjusted appropriation 2018/19	Revised estimate	Medium-term estimates			% change from 2018/19
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18				2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
Programme 2: Social Welfare Services										
Services to Older Persons										
Old Age Homes	74 979	55 907	33 983	39 792	39 792	38 848	36 744	38 765	40 858	(5.4)
Welfare Organisations	2 330	2 064	2 308	1 989	1 989	1 942	2 072	2 186	2 304	6.7
Service Centres	29 519	37 116	35 533	44 389	44 389	43 336	49 174	51 878	54 680	13.5
Older Persons (EPWP)	-	597	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Services to Persons with Disabilities										
Homes for the disabled	15 649	17 454	18 693	20 787	20 787	20 389	23 568	24 864	26 207	15.6
Protective Workshops	1 514	1 848	1 874	1 903	1 903	1 867	1 903	2 008	2 116	1.9
Welfare Organisations	7 676	7 261	4 387	5 355	5 355	5 248	5 578	5 985	6 203	6.3
Priority Project / CBR	1 720	1 946	2 153	2 270	2 270	2 230	2 313	2 440	2 572	3.7
Conditional Grant - EPWP (Disability)	256	270	-	-	-	-	276	-	-	-
HIV and AIDS										
Home Community Based Care Centres	18 942	19 266	17 118	17 632	17 632	17 632	18 656	19 682	20 745	5.8
Conditional Grant - EPWP (HIV)	229	713	-	-	-	-	800	-	-	-
Social Relief										
Priority Project (School uniform)	2 002	1 142	2 686	2 722	2 722	2 722	3 923	4 139	4 358	44.1
Food Parcels	3 588	4 169	4 501	3 465	3 465	3 017	4 810	5 074	5 353	59.4
Sanitary Dignity Project	-	-	-	-	-	-	22 815	-	-	-

Source: Provincial Treasury: Eastern Cape, Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure

² DispatchLive. April 2020. R45m for food parcels a drop in Eastern Cape ocean of hunger. Available at: <https://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/2020-04-16-r45m-for-food-parcels-a-drop-in-eastern-cape-ocean-of-hunger/>

While municipalities received support to the tune of R20 billion, through the fiscal stimulus package announced by National Treasury, it is unclear if the relief was passed to local residents. In several instances the local municipality food parcels distribution efforts have been mired with problems including corruption and fraud, and a distribution process that favoured certain political party members. Despite the large quantity of food parcels being distributed during lockdown, the number of food parcels were still insufficient and the delivery was slow compared to the actual needs of extreme hunger. The food parcel distribution systems revealed a lack of coordination between major players at national, provincial and local levels.

Whilst it is acknowledged that food parcels play a critical role in the current humanitarian crisis, decisive and sustained interventions are necessary to address the persistent socio-economic challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, amplified during recent times.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused global health, humanitarian and economic crises. The impact will stay with the various countries, especially developing ones like South Africa, for years to come. According to a recent World Bank (2020) report which provides an overview of what countries have put in place as their response to COVID-19, some 84 countries have introduced or adapted social protection and jobs programmes in response to COVID-19. The majority have used social assistance and in fact, their flagship programmes to scale up transfers to their poor citizens. Two countries, Hong-Kong and Singapore have introduced temporary universal schemes to reach their citizens.

Food parcels as a means of social relief of distress is an immediate response. Converting the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant into a permanent Social Assistance grant is a short to medium term solution towards the progressive realisation of social security.

3. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RELIEF MEASURES

We note government's emergency economic and social relief measures to alleviate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting nationwide lockdown on individuals and households. While the relief measures are a small step in the right direction, they are insufficient to meet the current humanitarian crisis under lockdown conditions. For many people the threat of starvation or even the possibility of death from hunger, rather than from the coronavirus, is real³. It is within this context that we argue that the social grant relief measures remain inadequate.

COVID-19 has underscored the critical role of adequate investments in public health, comprehensive social protection programmes, dignified and decent work, and access to food, water, sanitation systems and housing. The coronavirus has also intensified the intersecting forms of inequality

³ As reported by Human Sciences Research Council, 66% of the people living in informal settlements are on the verge of going hungry or simply unable to afford buying food. A further 55% of the informal settlement residents do not have money to buy food.

including income and wealth within our country, and gender inequality, for which measures have to be put in place.

We note the recommendations of the United Nations (UN) Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its statement on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and economic, social and cultural rights. The COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted “devastating impacts across the world on all spheres of life – health, the economy, social security, education and food production”. The lockdowns to curb transmissions of the virus have caused jobs losses, endangered livelihoods and heightened exposure to violence. States are under an obligation to take measures to prevent or mitigate negative impacts. State parties are under an obligation to devote their maximum available resources for the full realization of all economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to health. As this pandemic and the measures taken to combat it have had a disproportionate negative impact on the most marginalized groups, States must make all efforts to mobilize the necessary resources to combat COVID-19 in the most equitable manner, in order to avoid imposing a further economic burden on these marginalized groups. Allocation of resources should prioritize the special needs of these groups.”⁴ However, these must be implemented within a human rights framework to mitigate against violations of economic, social and cultural rights and to reduce the suffering of the most marginalised groups. Social relief and income-support programmes must be provided to all those in need to ensure food and income security.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has encouraged innovative economic and social relief programme interventions by many countries, including Brazil, Namibia and Spain and has accelerated the implementation of such programmes in South Africa.

New Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant

The roll out of a temporary COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant, to those who have no income and do not benefit from other social assistance programmes or the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), is a significant new intervention. The South African government is beginning to address a recommendation by the United Nations (UN) Committee on the International Covenant for Economic and Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) to “ensure that those between the ages of 18 to 59 with little and no income have access to social assistance”⁵ by 31 October 2020.

Many South Africans are structurally unemployed. STATSSA estimates that 10.4 million people were unemployed by the end of 2019, prior to COVID-19. This number has grown considerably as it is

⁴ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
Statement on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and economic, social and cultural rights
E/C.12/2020/1 6 April 2020 p.3

⁵ Concluding observations on the initial report of South Africa by the United Nations Economic and Social Council
E/C.12/ZAF/CO/1 12 October 2018 p.9

estimated that a further 1.6 million jobs in the formal economy will be shed during the pandemic⁶. The South African Reserve Bank is projecting a negative economic growth of at least -6%. The formal economy is unable to absorb all those unemployed for the foreseeable future. Those with “jobs” in the informal economy often do not benefit from UIF, as they do not qualify, or benefits were deducted but never paid over to the UIF. A further 5.5 million people who were employed in the informal economy, has effectively become unemployed with their work or livelihoods being shut down by the lockdown⁷.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

A permanent Social Assistance grant for adults between 18 to 59 years

We welcome the roll out of the temporary COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant as the first step towards permanent Social Assistance grant for those between 18 to 59 years with no or little income. Our recommendation is that government convert the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant by the October 2020 deadline into a permanent grant for adults aged 18 to 59 with no or little income as per the recommendation of the UN Committee on the ICESCR. This will ensure that our government move towards the progressive realisation of social security.

Increase the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed all poor people under severe strain. Many are on the brink of starvation and in desperate need of Social Relief of Distress. We urge government to increase the amount of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant from R350 per month per person to at least R1,227.

- a. R350 is highly inadequate to cover food, energy sources (electricity, gas or paraffin, wood), transport as well as the additional cost of complying with hygiene protocols during the pandemic. The monthly basket of staple food has increased by R253, from R3,221 on 2 March to before the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, to R3,474 on 23 April, at a time of reduced income, increase needs for home meals and restricted ability to shop around. Individuals and households are feeling the squeeze.
- b. The COVID 19 Social Relief of Distress grant is considerably lower than the food poverty line of R581 per person per month and cannot provide even basic nutrition for one person. The amount of R350 is also significantly less than the value of the Social Relief of Distress food parcel of R1,200 per month distributed by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). We recommend that government use the upper-bound poverty line of R1,227 as the baseline for determining the value of the grant.

⁶ Comins, L. April 2020. 1 million jobs could be shed in lockdown. Mercury News. Available at: <https://www.iol.co.za/mercury/news/1-million-jobs-could-be-shed-in-lockdown-46319187>

⁷ Ruth Hall, researcher <https://twitter.com/RuthHallPLAAS/status/1250394320391241728>

Both the “Caregiver” Grant of R500 (from June) per month and the COVID 19 Social Relief of Distress Grant of R350 per month target adult women and men with no or little income between the ages of 18 to 59 years. This begs the question of why the disparity in the amounts.

Individuals, male or female, who earn below the SASSA-determined means test and are between the ages of 18 and 59 years should receive a grant of the same value, irrespective of whether they are a caregiver or not. On the surface it would seem unfair that approximately 7 million unemployed adults (caregivers) receive R500 while a similar number are entitled to receive R350, unless government is transparent about the criteria used to justify the additional R150 for the CSG Caregiver grant.

Ensure all applicants receive grant value equivalent to 6 months

We note that as at 21 May 2020, there have been close to five million applications for the COVID-19 SRD grant of R350, with 2.6 million applicants currently being processed⁸. We note that SASSA had to remove duplicated and incomplete applications which account for nearly 50% of all applications received⁹. If 2.5 million applications are successful and they receive R350 each for 6 months, the cost will be R5,25 billion.

Those eligible for the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant and who apply after May, should receive back pay for the month(s) between May and October 2020. SASSA, supported by the National Development Agency (NDA) and other institutions, is still to roll out the COVID-19 SRD grant application process for eligible persons with no ICT (devices, data and interconnectivity), particularly in rural and peri-urban areas. The CEO of SASSA noted in a media briefing that this process is likely to only start in June 2020. It is not fault of eligible applicants that SASSA designed a system that is heavily driven by technology and that they do not have an option to apply at a SASSA office. Given that the COVID-19 amount is set at only R350 per month, it is necessary that each successful applicant benefits from the full six months of payment allocated for this grant, regardless of when they apply. We also wish to emphasize that all applicants who comply with the eligibility criteria should be awarded the grant. There must not be a limitation of the number of grantees for the grant due to budgetary constraints.

SASSA must have clear criteria in place and also communicate the recourse mechanisms to those whose applications are denied. The bank account into which money is transferred must not allow banks or credit providers to seize the grant to pay off any prescribed and other debt. Furthermore, where applications were made via the cellphones and computers of a ‘proxy’ i.e. relative, friend or

⁸ Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Social Development. May 2020. Meeting summary of Portfolio Committee on Social Development, 21 May 2020.

⁹ SASSA media statement. May 2020. Level 3 Lockdown Announcement Enables Faster Payment of Covid-19 Grants

neighbour, the cash payment and transfers part must be protected against fraud and theft, if not directly paid into the bank account of the successful applicant

Open SASSA offices

It is public knowledge that the SASSA Call Centre has not been coping with the high volumes of traffic particularly the request for food parcels and enquiries on the COVID-19 SRD grant. The Black Sash and many of the organisations who support this submission have fielded many complaints from the general public who have tried without success to contact the Call Centre. New grant applications, particularly for the disability grant is not being processed. Furthermore, existing grant beneficiaries whose grants have been suspended for one reason or another have no recourse to having their grants reinstated. SASSA and government departments, such as Home Affairs, delivering social security services must urgently open up their offices with a full staff complement to respond to the social and economic relief measures as announced by President Ramaphosa, as well as to new applications for existing grants.

No banking fees

SASSA must pay the banking fees so that the recipients receive the full cash value of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant. Commercial banks must be encouraged to permanently waive all withdrawal and SASWITCH fees for social grant beneficiaries. Even with the increase in grant allocations, the cash value of these grants is significantly reduced when subjected to withdrawal and SASWITCH fees.

Assistance to people with no ICT access

Applications for the COVID 19 Social Relief of Distress grant are being lodged electronically including via WhatsApp, USSD and email. SASSA is cross checking various databases so that applicants don't have to produce onerous paper work. We note the delays in the processing of the COVID 19 COVID 19 Social Relief of Distress grant. We urge, SASSA and other institutions involved in verification checks to expedite this process with greater urgency.

In rural and peri-urban areas with limited Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (devices, data and connectivity access, SASSA and the NDA still need to roll out methods to ensure that people benefit from the COVID 19 Social Relief of Distress grant and electronic voucher system. These methods need to be designed and communicated as quickly as possible so that the very poor are not left behind.

Protect personal information

Previous experience with social grant payments being diverted from recipients shows that it is essential to ensure the protection of personal information. With the application of the grant being primarily online, it is imperative that measures are put in place to safeguard the protection of the personal information of applicants. In order to avoid a repeat of the past, contractual agreements must be put in place to ensure the protection of personal and confidential data.

Increase the Social Grant Relief budget

On 24 April 2020, Mr. Tito Mboweni, the Minister of Finance, provided clarity on social assistance net spending. He stated in a media briefing that R50 billion of the R500 billion economic support package has been allocated to relieving the plight of those who are most desperately affected by the coronavirus. However, this represents only 10% of the total R500bn relief package.

To date 5 million applications have been received. Even if all 5 million people who applied for the COVID special grant were to receive R350 for six months, the cost would be R10,5 billion. To provide 5 million people with R1,227 per month for six months, will cost R36,81 billion. If 15 million people are eligible and receive R1,227 per month for six months, the cost would be R110.4 billion. We note that the full R50bn was not allocated for the COVID-19 SRD grant and therefore additional funds of at least R90 billion (110bn minus 20bn) would be required if all who are eligible apply. We strongly advocate that all applicants who meet the criteria for the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant receive the grant and therefore recommend that anticipated underspending in other departments can be used to ensure that all who meet the eligibility criteria receive the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant at the increased the amount. Going forward, we recommend that government convert the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant into an adult Social Assistance grant for those between the ages of 18 to 59 years with no or little income and ensure that it becomes a permanent part of the social assistance programme. Working on the assumption that 15 million will benefit from the permanent Social Assistance grant for adults, at R1,227 per person for an additional 5 months, a further R92 billion will be needed until the end of the financial year in March 2021. We would urge government to redirect finance from the military, the UIF reserves, Public Interest Corporation, Government Employee Pension Fund. the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP).

No resident should live below the poverty line. South Africa has committed itself in the National Development Plan to eradicating extreme poverty. The Sustainable Development Goal target is to eliminate extreme poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030. In line with our recommendation to raise the SRD grant to at least the level of the upper-bound poverty line, we recommend that the low amount for the child support grant (R440) is also raised to this level as no child should be expected to survive on less than the poverty line.

5. Summary of recommendations

In summary, we recommend as follows:

- 5.1 Convert the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant into a permanent adult grant for those between the ages of 18 to 59 years with no or little income and ensure that it becomes a regular part of the social assistance programme. This permanent Social Assistance grant should come into effect in November 2020.
- 5.2 Increase the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant to at least R1,227.
- 5.3 Create a single COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant, where all unemployed adults with no access to Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) are eligible for the same amount, irrespective of whether or not they care for children.
- 5.4 Ensure that those who are eligible, for the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant, without ICT are given access and that applicants receive the grant for a full six months from May to October 2020, irrespective of date of application.
- 5.5 Ensure the protection of personal information. contractual agreements must be put in place to ensure the protection of personal and confidential data.
- 5.6 SASSA and government departments delivering social security services must urgently open their offices with a full staff complement to respond to the social and economic relief measures as announced by President Ramaphosa.
- 5.7 Government must increase the package of R50 billion for social grants by an additional R180bn and ensure that the entire amount is spent on the social assistance net for the poor and the unemployed.

6. CONCLUSION

Black Sash's submission on the 2020 Appropriation Bill highlights that individuals and households are heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic that comes at a time when the economic circumstances in South Africa were already extremely tough. The monthly basket of staple food has increased by R253, from R3,221 on 2 March to before the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, to R3,474 on 23 April, at a time of reduced income. The R350 special COVID-19 SRD grant is welcome but not nearly enough to cover even basic food needs. We therefore call on government to increase the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant to at least R1,227 per recipient.

The new COVID-19 SRD grant should be converted into a permanent Social Assistance grant for adults between 18 to 59 years with no or little income effective from November 2020. Our calls are in line with that of the United Nations (UN) Committee on the International Covenant for Economic and Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which reminds state parties that they are "under an obligation to devote their maximum available resources for the full realization of all economic, 'social and cultural rights, including the right to health"¹⁰. The UN also emphasizes that "as this pandemic and the

¹⁰ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
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measures taken to combat it have had a disproportionate negative impact on the most marginalized groups, States must make all efforts to mobilize the necessary resources to combat COVID-19 in the most equitable manner, in order to avoid imposing a further economic burden on these marginalized groups". In line with our Constitution, the South African government as a signatory to the ICESCR has to "ensure that those between the ages of 18 to 59 with little and no income have access to social assistance" by 31 October 2020¹¹.

Submission endorsed by:

- 1. Alternative Information and Development Centre**
- 2. Assembly of Unemployed**
- 3. Botshabelo Unemployment Movement**
- 4. Cancer Alliance**
- 5. Children in Distress Network**
- 6. Centre for Applied Legal Studies**
- 7. Community Advice Offices South Africa**
- 8. Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)**
- 9. Dullah Omar Institute**
- 10. Equal Education**
- 11. Environmental Monitoring Group**
- 12. Health and Human Rights Program, School of Public Health and Family Medicine, University of Cape Town**
- 13. Institute for Economic Justice**
- 14. Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS)**

¹¹ Concluding observations on the initial report of South Africa by the United Nations Economic and Social Council E/C.12/ZAF/CO/1 12 October 2018 p.9

15. **Khayelitsha Health Forum**
16. **Klipfontein Sub District Health Forum**
17. **Manenberg Health Committee**
18. **Observatory Civic Association**
19. **Oxfam South Africa**
20. **Peoples' Health Movement South Africa**
21. **Right2Know**
22. **Section 27**
23. **Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition**
24. **Shayisfuba Feminist Collective**
25. **Social Change Assistance Trust (SCAT)**
26. **Socio-economic Rights Institute**
27. **South African Domestic Services and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU)**
28. **Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI)**
29. **South African Informal Traders Alliance (SAITA)**
30. **South African NGO Coalition SANGOCO Eastern Cape**
31. **Southern African Social Policy Research Institute NPC (SASPRI)**
32. **Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII)**
33. **Triangle Project**
34. **Women's Circle**
35. **Women on Farm Project**

36. Workers' World Media Productions (WWMP)