



MINISTER
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X885, Pretoria, 0001, Tel: +27 12 312 7479, Fax: +27 12 325 7071
Private Bag X9153, Cape Town, 8000, Tel: +27 21 465 4011, Fax: +27 21 465 4469
www.dsd.gov.za

LuvuyoS@dsd.gov.za
Cell 083 406 1870

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NUMBER: 6064

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6064. Mr T B Munyai (ANC) to ask the Minister of Social Development:

What (a) progress has her department made in advancing the Universal Basic Income policy for Cabinet approval and (b) is the subsequent timelines for tabling it in the National Assembly for public consultations? NW6791E

REPLY:

- (a) The Department has opted to develop a Basic Income Support Policy, after we investigated the feasibility of implementing a Universal Basic Income Grant (UBIG). The key finding was that a fully universal grant would not be feasible due to its prohibitive cost. Instead, a more feasible approach was recommended, which is to retain the other existing social grants to vulnerable children, older persons and persons with disability, and address the remaining coverage gap for the working age population. The Department has therefore conducted extensive research to assess the feasibility of providing a Basic Income Support (BIS) to the working age population aged 18-59, who are the only remaining category of citizens excluded from the current social grants framework.

This draft policy is building on the existing COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (cSRD) provision introduced during the COVID pandemic. The Department has sought to rather use this as a platform from which to develop a more permanent form of income support to the working age population. The primary intent is to identify mechanisms, systems and funding options to turn the cSRD provision into a permanent income support policy targeted at adults aged between 18-59 years, who are unable to support themselves and their families.



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- (b) The draft policy on Basic Income Support (BIS) for the unemployed working age individuals between 18-59 has been consulted extensively across government, civil society and communities. The Department then approached the Social Protection, Community and Human Development (SPCHD) Cabinet Committee in November 2024 to request approval to publish the draft policy for public comments. The Department was then directed to strengthen the section regarding linkages with economic opportunities and costing as well as further consult with relevant departments on same. The Department has since, conducted consultations with all relevant government departments including National Treasury. The latter requested that the Department elaborate more concretely on the linkage interventions by specific stakeholder departments and in addition update the costing and financial implications.

Aligned to the above, the Department and partners convened a policy colloquium on 28-29 October 2025 that brought together key policy stakeholders across government, academia, and think tanks to explore international and local interventions that bridge social assistance with pathways into work and income generating opportunities. This approach ensures that social grants do not operate in isolation but serve as a foundation for inclusive economic participation.

The Department is currently working with the Presidency to refine the draft BIS policy and update the costing. The update will be done in consultation with both the National Treasury, and this will be completed by the fourth quarter. The Department anticipates re-tabling the reviewed draft BIS policy before SPCHD Cabinet to request approval to publish same for public comment in the last quarter of this financial year.