

30 March [2020](#)

MEDIA STATEMENT

FIRST DAY OF GRANT PAYMENT TO OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Pretoria, 30 March [2020](#): The first of the two days set aside to pay social grants to older persons and persons with disabilities got off to a smooth start this morning across the country on day 4 of the 21-days lockdown which was implemented to contain and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa.

The payment of social grants highlights the importance of providing the safety nets for the poor and vulnerable particularly amid what has been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Without social grants, over 12 million vulnerable people who are currently on the social assistance programme will have no safety net to mitigate the negative socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 21-days lockdown, SASSA brought the social grants payment date forward and set aside [30-31](#) March [2020](#) as special days for older persons and persons with disabilities.

As at 16h00 today, 4, 2 million transactions to the tune of R3, 7 Billion were processed through the SASSA/SAPO Card. In addition, 3, 1 million beneficiaries were paid through various commercial banks.

The large transactions took place despite minor glitches reported in some areas. These glitches include long queues, overcrowding, failure to comply with social distancing and hygiene guidelines at some pay outlets. There were also reported cases of depletion of cash at some post office outlets due to higher than normal numbers of people.

Minister Zulu, accompanied by the Acting MEC of Social Development in Gauteng - Panyaza Lesufi, visited some pay points this morning to monitor compliance with the lockdown regulations and measures to contain the further spread of the virus.

“We could not have asked for a better start than what we witness today. We are pleased that in most areas that we visited, social grant beneficiaries heeded our call to give older persons and persons with disabilities an opportunity to be the first to access their grants. I would like to thank the Minister of Transport, the transport operators and some municipalities for their cooperation in ensuring that our senior citizens and persons with disabilities get to their pay points. I would also like to thank retailers and banks for enforcing the lockdown regulations for the safety and health of our people,” said Minister Zulu.

The post office and the majority of retailers provided chairs, trolleys, hand sanitisers and queue walkers to ensure compliance with hygiene and social distancing guidelines recommended by the Department of Health.

Minister Zulu was saddened to learn about the passing of three older persons who passed on today.

“I express my deepest and heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the deceased. Both of them were confirmed to be social grant beneficiaries at the time of their passing and I have instructed SASSA to process their payments without any delays,” Minister Zulu added.

Minister Zulu has directed social workers to provide psychosocial support services to the families of the deceased.

Minister Zulu takes this opportunity to appeal to social grants beneficiaries to comply with the lockdown regulations by using their SASSA/SAPO card to transact at local retailers and to avoid long queues to curb coronavirus.

“It is worth repeating that SASSA has paid money into all beneficiaries’ accounts and therefore there is no need to panic and rush and withdraw all of it on the first day of the month. The SASSA/SAPO card gives beneficiaries the convenience of transacting at any time of the month and anywhere in the country without the burden of carrying cash which expose them to criminal elements,” Minister Zulu said.

Beneficiaries can contact the Postbank Office Toll-Free Call Centre: [0800 53 54 55](tel:0800535455) or the SASSA Call Centre: [0800 60 10 11](tel:0800601011) for card or payment queries.

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