

MEDIA STATEMENT

SOUTH AFRICA RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS ISSA GOOD PRACTICE AWARD FOR SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMMES IN AFRICA

Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire, 18 May 2023 -: The Minister of Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu, yesterday received on behalf of the department, the prestigious International Social Security Association (ISSA) Good Practice Award in Social Security for Africa 2023, at the ISSA Regional Social Security Forum for Africa Awards Ceremony held on 17 May 2023.

South Africa is participating in the ISSA Regional Social Security Forum (RSSF) being held from 17 – 19 May 2023 in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire. For the Good Practice Award, a total of 138 entries were received from 48 member institutions in over 30 countries in Africa.

The Good Practice Award on the entry entitled: "Gradual extension of social security coverage to vulnerable children: The case of the Child Support Grant, South Africa" recognises South Africa's efforts in extending social security coverage to vulnerable children. During the Forum, South Africa will in plenary showcase interventions implemented to ensure that South Africa's social security system provides the much-needed protection to vulnerable children.

At the dawn of democracy, the new government introduced the Child Support Grant (CSG) in 1998 to replace the racially based State Maintenance Grant (SMG) which had been in existence from the 1930s providing income protection to white families, excluding most black families and their children. The new grant removed the racially discriminatory features which expanded the coverage to all eligible children.

Subject to a means-test threshold, the CSG was introduced at a value of R100 and has increased over the years to R500 as of 01 April 2023. The grant has grown over the years with an increase in the age limit from 7 to 18 years old with just over 13 million children now receiving it monthly amounting to approximately R76 billion per annum.

As from 01 June 2022, the department introduced a supplementary provision as an additional payment to the CSG to the value of R250 bringing the total amount to R750.

This was introduced to assist relatives taking care of orphans and children living in Child Headed Households to provide for their basic needs and promote family preservation.

Minister Zulu said: "We view the CSG as an investment the government is making in the lives of our children, especially those from poor and vulnerable households. The State continues to play a pivotal role in the social protection of children, ranging from social grants to free schooling and free health care amongst others."

At the same Award Ceremony, the Department's Agency, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) received two (2) certificates of Merit with Special Mention on (i) Social Relief of Distress for victims affected by regional floods in the KwaZulu-Natal province and (ii) Social Relief of Distress: Social assistance for people in distress at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

The Agency also received a certificate of Merit on the introduction of electronic deductions on funeral insurance premiums for social grants beneficiaries by South African Social Security Agency.

ISSA is the world's leading international organization for social security institutions, government departments and agencies. It was founded in 1927 under the auspices of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and today has over 320 member institutions from over 160 countries.

Minister Zulu will participate in the joint session of the African Union-ISSA Regional Social Security Summit that will feature other African States, the African Union Commissioner on Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development and the International Labour Organization (ILO) on 19 May 2023.

The Summit will feature the official launch of the "Africa Social Security Institutions Coordination and Cooperation Forum" in the framework of the activities of the African Union.

Speaking ahead of the Summit, Minister Zulu said: "South Africa looks forward to sharing our commitment to extension of social security coverage to all from a human rights perspective and ensuring that the State of the People is improved through social-economic development.- this is line with achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want."

Whilst in Abidjan, Minister Zulu used the opportunity to meet with her counterparts responsible for Employment and Social Protection, as well as Solidarity and the Fight Against Poverty, having recently signed a partnership agreement with the latter on Comprehensive Social Security, Poverty Eradication and Development Welfare Services.

The Minister reiterated the importance of African countries sharing best practices on social security related matters to improve the wellbeing of all African people's and further reiterated the need to accelerate the implementation of reforms and foster cooperation among all stakeholders within this sector.

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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