

Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) Statement regarding the Ethical and Sustainable Delivery of Social Grants

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), a body made up of some of the country's foremost scholars, calls on government to find long-term, ethical and sustainable solutions to address the governance failures in the delivery of social grants.

The research published by our Members in peer-assessed journals has consistently demonstrated the substantial contribution of social grants to the social and economic development of South Africa's population. Child Support Grants, Disability Grants and Old Age Pensions have achieved significant reductions in poverty, improvements in nutrition, health, education and income for millions of households. As a fiscal policy, the grants are an essential platform to reducing the high levels of inequality experienced in South Africa and a vital source of livelihoods. Furthermore, the social grants policy in South Africa and administration thereof has been internationally lauded as an example of social development innovation, state capacity, social inclusion, redistribution and social justice. Many cash transfer programmes have been introduced in African countries inspired by the South African system.

The social grants system is now firmly established and constitutionally protected. Failure to find a legal, cost-effective, corruption-free and sustainable solution to the delivery of social grants after the current contract with Cash Paymaster Services expires will place the welfare of over 17 million people at risk. It will increase poverty and inequality, undermine the health, nutrition and social well-being of children, and will erode confidence and public trust in our constitutional democracy. It will have a retrogressive effect on the country's human development outcomes and is contrary to the state's constitutional mandate to advance

the human rights of all South Africans. Failure to act will have dire consequences for people's well-being, their everyday lives and for social, economic and political stability.

The Academy of Science of South Africa therefore appeals to government to act with great urgency to address the crisis with respect to the delivery of social grants, failing which the well-being of millions of the most vulnerable segments of our population will be jeopardised.