

# SA needs to work towards sustainable social protection measures - Presidency

A meeting between President Cyril Ramaphosa and a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) collective has affirmed the need to work towards affordable and sustainable social protection mechanisms that complement job creation and drive local demand, with due consideration of the fiscal implications.



Source: [Pexels](#)

President Ramaphosa, supported by minister of social development Lindiwe Zulu and minister of finance Enoch Godongwana, met with the CSOs on Tuesday, 18 January to discuss a proposal for the extension and improvement of the R350 Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRD) beyond March 2022 and possible policy pathways to the introduction of a Basic Income Grant (BIG).

## Engagement between the president and CSOs was “constructive”

In a joint statement on Friday, 21 January, the Presidency said the meeting was held in response to the request by the Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ), Black Sash Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII), #PayTheGrants, and Amandla.mobi.

“The president expressed his appreciation for the constructive manner in which the engagement took place, and the acknowledgement by the CSOs regarding the unprecedented measures government has taken to help households facing the economic devastation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic,” the Presidency said.

The SRD grant coverage has grown significantly since its introduction, from 6 million to 10.3 million recipients a month. Through this grant, the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) have successfully reached many of those most vulnerable in society.



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The Presidency said research has confirmed the positive impact of this grant in reducing poverty and hunger.

“President Ramaphosa expressed his deep concern around the hardship faced by the more than 13 million unemployed and impoverished people in South Africa and the need for the government to protect the dignity of all its people while being mindful of the resource base,” the statement read.

The CSOs also presented research on the critical role that social security plays in reducing poverty and hunger and improving socio-economic conditions.

“Recommendations from the CSO Collective for the SRD Grant included improving the design of the grant; extending it, expanding the eligibility criteria to reach more people who need it, and increasing the value of the grant,” the Presidency said.

The meeting agreed to have further engagement on the proposals as part of broader consultation among all stakeholders on social protection measures that are appropriate to the country’s circumstances and the needs of the South African people.

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