**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS ENGAGES COSATU AND AMANDLA.MOBI ON MTBPS AND ADJUSTMENTS AND APPROPRIATIONS BILL**

**Parliament, Friday, 3 December 2021 –**The Standing Committee on Appropriations engaged today virtually with the Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and Amadla.mobi during public hearings on the 2021 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) and the Adjustments Appropriation Bill.

COSATU called for a mass stimulus package, as the United States, Europe and China have successfully done to turn their economies around. The labour federation said this would help battered businesses, save and create jobs, and thus increase state revenues to reduce the debt trajectory to a sustainable level.

COSATU told the committee that it appreciates the R11 billion allocated to the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme that has helped create over 550 000 jobs. It has helped provide young people with a salary, experience and confidence. COSATU also called for the government to extend and enhance the R350 Covid-19 Special Relief Dispensation Grant in the 2022 budget.

Amandla.mobi told the committee that over the past five years, it has been mobilising for justice and a dignified life for all by demanding social grant increases and expansion, the introduction of basic income, increased social spending and tax justice. But over the years, we have seen the implementation of anti-poor budgets over and over again, making it harder for millions to put food on the table each day.

They joined COSATU in calling for the increase and to keep the R350 Social Relief of Distress grant until it is turned into a permanent grant.

In welcoming both presentations, the committee engaged presenters on a range of issues highlighted in the presentations, which included complaints about budget cuts to certain government departments, and social relief of distress and children grants. The committee called on the presenters to also appreciate the extent to which the government has played its role with limited resources. The committee highlighted the fact that the government spends 60% of its budget on social wage.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Sfiso Buthelezi, also welcomed the presentations and thanked the presenters for participation. He said the significance of some of the issues raised in the presentations needs the attention of the whole country. He highlighted underspending and rollovers of departmental budgets, while the presenters complained about cuts of their allocations. Mr Buthelezi said when the budget is out it must be used. "Once it is underspent or rolled-over that means that there was poor or no service delivery," he said.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, MR SFISO BUTHELEZI.**

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