**FF Plus: W Wessels**

**16 May, vote 8, National Treasury**

Chairperson, the minister refers to our dire economic outlook and the risks to our fiscus, and we all know that our social needs are getting more and more, and the budget shortfall is more and more and a huge risk. And in those circumstances, I don’t think anybody can disagree that every cent is important. And then transparency is important in how money is spent and on what money is spent. When one looks at how SA links to our neighboring countries, we see that it is through the SA Customs Union and also common monitoring areas. The CMA agreement chairperson determines that the rand circulates freely in these countries. The governments of these countries, Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia are rewarded for this through a compensation agreement which amounts to about R1.4 billion per year.

In terms of the SACU agreement, SA’s SACU payments would amount to nearly R80 billion 2023/24, yes R80 million for this fiscal year. Yet little is known about how the SACU payments are calculated. National Treasury fails to publish the calculations for the CMA compensation and the SACU payments. Why? Because taxpayers deserve to know how these calculations are made and how their money is spent. Transparency is needed, likewise, taxpayers deserve a national treasury which fulfils its constitutional obligation to ensure both transparency and expenditure control in each sphere of government. Since the adoption of the Constitution, that has been the obligation of the Treasury, yet today, as with each Budget Vote speech, the minister said that the Public Procurement Bill will be produced soon. This has been the case for at least the last five years. This is absolutely unacceptable because National Treasury is failing to fulfil its obligation. They are failing to prevent corruption; they are failing to prevent greylisting; they fail to prevent it by also having a sluggish and tortoise-like approach to General Monies Amendment Bill that was introduced in this house, which led to the greylisting. Taxpayers deserve a national treasury whose own financial management and controls are sound. Not one who then receives adverse audit findings chairperson. Honourable chair of the committee is correct; Government fails to spend money because they steal it, and that’s the problem. Chairperson taxpayers deserve a national treasury and a government whose fiscal policy does not impoverish them but encourages financial and economic growth. They deserve a government who do not just collect tax but earns tax by delivering services in return for tax money. We all deserve better; we deserve a government that is transparent, who is responsible and who acts in the interest of the people out there.