**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEES ON APPROPRIATIONS WELCOME COSATU’S VIEWS ON SECOND SPECIAL APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Parliament, Saturday, 18 September 2021 –**The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) expressed its support of the Second Special Appropriation Bill during the joint public hearings of the Standing Committee on Appropriations and the Select Committee on Appropriations held virtually yesterday.

The trade union movement which was the only organisation which presented to the committees said that the Bill would provide the needed relief to millions of South Africans who are unemployed and have no source of income. Furthermore, Mr Matthew Parks who presented to the committees, said the Bill is progressive and it will ensure the provision of critical relief to thousands of companies by preventing their closures and saving jobs.

The proposed allocations are: R3.9 billion to National Treasury, for South African Special Risks Insurance (Sasria) for insurance claims emanating from the social unrest in July; R26.7 billion to the Department of Social Development for the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) for the extension of the Special Relief and Distress (SRD) Grant; R1.3 billion to the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, to support businesses affected by the social unrest; R700 million to the Department of Defence and R250 million to the Department of Police, for the deployment of police and military personnel during the unrest.

Mr Parks said the SRD grant is a critical poverty intervention by government and it will give the much needed relief to those who are unemployed. He also called for its extension beyond March 2022 and its increase to R624 in line with food poverty line. He said Cosatu called on the committees to ensure that the Bill is speedily passed by Parliament.

Asked by Members of the committees about the conditions attached to the support for businesses, Mr Parks said there are few conditions as the businesses must be able to regain their capacities and ensure that they employ more people.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Appropriations, Mr Sfiso Buthelezi called on Cosatu to share with the committees the implications for the national fiscus of Cosatu’s proposal for the extension of SRD grant beyond March 2022 and its increase.

Amongst the ways to find money for the extension and increase of the SRD grant, Mr Parks proposed reprioritisation by government departments of their budgets and their avoidance of corruption, wasteful and fruitless expenditure.

The Chairperson of the Select Committee on Appropriations, Ms Dikeledi Mahlangu, welcomed the contribution of Cosatu on the Bill, which she described as progressive.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, MR SFISO BUTHELEZI, AND THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, MS DIKELEDI MAHLANGU.**