

COSATU Submission:

Second Adjustments Appropriation Bill

20 May 2022



COSATU

Submitted to:

**Standing and Select Committees:
Appropriations**

Parliament

Republic of South Africa

1. Introduction

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) welcomes and supports the Second Adjustments Appropriation Bill.

The R18.1 billion appropriated for SASRIA provided critical relief to thousands of workers, families and businesses who suffered losses during the violence and vandalism that engulfed KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng in 2021.

The R500 million to support the Covid-19 vaccine programme was key to saving thousands of lives and livelihoods.

COSATU supports the Bill's passage by Parliament.

2. R18.1 Billion SASRIA Appropriation

COSATU welcomes the R18.1 billion appropriation for SASRIA. It helped thousands of companies who suffered damages to restock and reopen. This helped prevent thousands of workers who otherwise would have lost their jobs. This enabled workers who had lost wages, to get back to work and earn a salary to take care of their families.

This relief has helped thousands of workers who lost property, cars and homes to rebuild their lives.

This appropriation is in line with the state's mandate to support SASRIA and to ensure South Africans are covered in the event of riots and violence.

COSATU is however disappointed with the speed at which SASRIA and government dispensed payments and relief. Whilst the difficulties of managing such a crisis are understandable, the delays ordinary families experience at times is unbearable.

SASRIA and government need to consider faster response times, clearer lines of communication and appeal mechanisms for persons in similar situations in future. Workers and the poor cannot afford to wait months for relief. Delays result in people sleeping on the street, in community halls, being exposed to violence and crime and their remaining assets being lost.

3. R500 Covid-19 Vaccine Programme

COSATU supports this appropriation. The Covid-19 vaccines have proven to be highly effective and have helped save thousands of lives and livelihoods.

They are key to ensuring that whilst the 4th and 5th waves gathered pace and infection rates rose, that serious illness, hospitalization and death rates remained under control.

This helped ease the burden on health workers and health care institutions who have been overwhelmed by the pandemic.

It has saved thousands of workers' lives and enabled their families to be cared for.

It has enabled the economy to reopen, companies to rehire and workers to go back to earning a salary.

It has been a critical injection in the local pharmaceutical manufacturing industry which needs further such investments so that South Africa can avoid being dependent upon global vaccine supplies in future and rather be a source of such exports to Africa.

COSATU is deeply concerned at the plummeting rate of vaccinations and the resultant expiring and destruction of many of these vaccines.

This is an indictment upon us as a society. We should not be indulging in bizarre conspiracy theories. Vaccines have proven themselves for many pandemics to be key to saving lives and livelihoods. Science must be left for scientists not social media.

COSATU is deeply worried by the complacency that most South Africans now show towards vaccinating for the first time, but also towards receiving our booster shots. These are critical to maintaining our immunity levels and to avoid further unsustainable economic lockdowns.

COSATU and its Affiliates have done extensive work to mobilise workers and their families to vaccinate. As a result many sectors, in particular mining, clothing, textiles, education and health care have seen high vaccination rates.

We will be reviving these campaigns to mobilise those who have not vaccinated or gone for their booster shots to do so.

4. Conclusion

COSATU welcomes and supports the Second Adjustments Appropriation Bill and urges its passage by Parliament.

Thank you.



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