**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS CALLS FOR ECONOMIC INCLUSION OF WOMEN AND YOUTH OWNED COMPANIES**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 15 February 2023 –** National Treasury and the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer, appeared before the Appropriations Committee for a briefing on their 2022/23 3rd Quarter Expenditure as well as requests for contract expansions and deviations.

Departments that showed significant underspending in the third quarter included Cooperative Governance R2.6 billion, Social Development R1.9 billion, Transport R1.5 billion and Basic Education at R766, 5 million.  According to National Treasury, departments with significant overspending were the Department of Public enterprises at R7 billion, followed by the South African Police Services at just under a billion, Science and Innovation R684 million and Higher Education close to R600 million followed by Environmental Affairs and Employment and Labour at around R350 million.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Appropriations, Mr Sfiso Buthelezi said “Underspending towards to end of the year is a problem and can be a hindrance to the committee fulfilling its oversight”.

National Treasury also said that most deviations did not go to women or youth owned companies and that women and youth owned companies remained a concern as over 70 percent of companies had no women or youth representatives.

The Committee raised its concern with women and youth not benefiting from government procurement in general. Mr Buthelezi said “The new Public Procurement Bill should be unapologetic in transforming the economy of our country to deal with centuries of economic exclusion of the majority of its citizens.”

The Committee, however, remains concerned with continued delays with the implementation of infrastructure projects due to various factors such as red tape, human resources and financial capacity in departments and entities as well as construction mafias.

The Committee undertook to further engage with National Treasury on issues of performance of SOCs, because of their importance in achieving Economi Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, job creation and Fiscus sustainability.

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

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