**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS CONCLUDES PUBLIC HEARINGS ON DIVISION OF REVENUE BILL**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 15 March 2023 –** The Standing Committee on Appropriations has concluded virtual public hearings on the 2023 Division of Revenue Bill. Organisations such as Amandla.mobi, Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSTU), Budget Justice Coalition (BJC), Section 27, Rural Health Advocacy Project (RHAP) and TB Accountability Consortium (TBAC) made their submissions to the committee.

The committee reiterated that some of the challenges the country has faced included the debt owed by municipalities to Eskom and the concerns about accumulation of the debt. The committee said failure of proper billing by some municipalities has been identified as a root cause of non-payment by customers and urged COSATU to encourage members who might not be paying to pay for services.

The organisations welcomed the increases in social grants and efforts by the government to pull millions out of poverty such as the increase in allocations to Early Childhood Development, however, they submitted that the increases were not enough to address the high costs of living.

The committee told organizations that through the Second Adjustment Amendment Bill, R2.4 billion was allocated to the South African Post Office as it is important in the distribution of grants to communities.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Sfiso Buthelezi said: “One of the most important factors in the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan is localisation which leads to higher economic growth and more employment opportunities using public procurement.”

The committee said it was disappointing that there were conditional grants made available to municipalities which end up being unused and that these resources end up being returned to the National Treasury.

The committee welcomed all submissions and called for realistic solutions that take into account the ongoing problems in the country such as the shrinking economy, flowing of illicit goods and foreign-owned shops that don't pay taxes. It said it  appreciates the submissions and interest shown by organisations in making valuable contributions to the Bill.

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

For media enquiries or interviews with the Chairperson, please contact the committee’s Media Officer:
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