**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES WELCOME FRUITFUL SUBMISSIONS ON SECOND ADJUSTMENT APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 15 March 2023 –** The Standing Committee on Appropriations and the Select Committee on Appropriations are satisfied with the fruitful engagements during public hearings in a joint meeting yesterday on the Second Adjustment Appropriation Bill for the financial year 2022/23. However, some concerns were raised relating to the fact that there was only one submission for the proposed legislation.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) expressed disappointment with the Second Adjustment Appropriation Bill, which it said failed to protect workers from inflation or fight corruption. However, the union welcomed the R2.4 billion recapitalisation of the South African Post Office (SAPO), but cautioned that the allocation should not be at the expense of retrenching 4 000 employees or reducing the wages of the remaining employees by 40 per cent.

The committees supported COSATU’s call for stringent measures to be put in place to ensure that jobs are protected at SAPO in light of the recapitalisation.

Cosatu further welcomed the R5 billion recapitalisation of the Land Bank and called for management interventions to be put in place to ensure improved financial management. COSATU said the Land Bank needs to play a meaningful role in the agricultural sector to boost the economy.

The committee expressed a view that when it comes to state-owned entities (SOEs), non-performance must be dealt with decisively, as public money cannot keep pouring into their coffers without positive results. Citizens should not suffer for failures to hold SOE officials accountable.

The committee noted COSATU’s concerns that the Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRD) is not in line with inflation and administrative challenges have led to underspending of the grant. The committee believes the qualifications criteria for the SRD grant are too stringent and should be relaxed to allow more people to benefit, while at the same time fighting corruption and administrative inefficiencies.

COSATU also supported the South African Airways’ (SAA’s) turnaround strategies and called for the reemployment of former SAA employees to be prioritised. The committee agreed with the union to support a proposal that SAA workers should receive a percentage share of SAA’s equity partners.

According to COSATU, the allocation to support political parties was insufficient given the expensive nature of election campaigns. The committee said political party funding is necessary to reduce an unhealthy dependency on private donors.

The committee welcomed COSATU’s submissions and called on other organisations and businesses to become more involved in Parliament’s public participation processes on budget processing.

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

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