**Speech on Vote 31: Employment and Labour
By Wayne Thring MP, ACDP Deputy President**

Dark cloud hanging over our economy is not only as a result of Covid 19, but because of rampant fraud, corruption and ineptitude in the Department of Employment and Labour

“Honourable House Chairperson,

The ACDP is aware that the mandate of the Department of Employment and Labour is to play a significant role in reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality by pursuing the objectives of decent work for all.

It is the belief of the ACDP that this department has failed to execute its mandate.

On the budget side, this department reduced its budget by 7.2%, resulting in a total reduction of R262.9 million, leaving the overall budget at R3.37 billion. This against the backdrop of the SARB forecasting a 7% contraction of the economy by end of 2020, which is expected to result in the loss of 1.7 million jobs.

A report based on results of the Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (CRAM) published by 30 researchers from five South African universities last week, indicated that during the first hard lockdown period, 3 million people lost their jobs. The results from this survey revealed an 18% decline in employment between February and April 2020, from 17 million to only 14 million people employed in April 2020. This 18% decline is double the SARB projected losses for the year 2020.

Of great concern to the ACDP is the number of reports of delayed TERS payments, retrenchments by businesses who have received financial assistance, and the reports of fraud and corruption by individuals, government employees, and business individuals. Of the R40 billion set aside by UIF for the TERS scheme, only R27.9 billion has been paid out to more than 6 million people. Glitches in the TERS system has twice caused applications for the month of June to close – and has brought more hardship, pain and misery on millions of South Africans.

The fact that R5.7 million of UIF TERS funds was paid to a single individual, is an indication that fraud and corruption is still rife in the current administration. It is quite probable that this fraudulent action could only have taken place with the active involvement of UIF officials. Consequence management must follow.

The dark cloud hanging over our economy is not only as a result of Covid 19, and the massive blow to employment - with the resultant difficulties in many households- is also because of the rampant fraud, corruption and ineptitude within the department.

It is time for change, and the ACDP stands ready to be those agents of change, for an honest, clean and efficient administration, South Africa so desperately needs.”