



Newsflash 8 of 2020 (27 February 2020)

Dear members

Please see below, a communication from NAPTOSA President, Mr Nkosiphendule Ntantala and Executive Director, Mr Basil Manuel. The communication is titled *"NAPTOSA statement on budget vote speech by Minister Tito Mboweni: 26 February 2020"*.

GAYLIN BOWLES, PROVINCIAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NATIONAL OFFICE STATEMENT

NAPTOSA STATEMENT ON BUDGET VOTE SPEECH BY MINISTER TITO MBOWENI: 26 FEBRUARY 2020

"Prop up the SAA and let public servants bear the brunt" – this is the message our union derived from Minister Mboweni's Budget Vote Speech 2020, said Mr. Nkosiphendule Ntantala, President of the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa. It means very little to acknowledge that public servants do crucial work, often under trying circumstances, but in the same breath to announce that the wage bill is to be reduced by R37,8b in a single financial year and by R160b over the medium term budget framework period.

What NAPTOSA finds utterly disturbing is that the Public Sector wage bill issue now seems to have evolved into a Public Service only wage bill issue, with Public Servants having to pick up the tab for the whole Public Sector. In his speech, the Minister only referred to the tabling of an agenda item on this matter in the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council. Where are the wage bill reduction measures in the Local Government Sector and the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) who, together with the Public Service, make up the Public Sector wage bill? Did we not recently see an above inflation increase granted to employees in the SAA while the organisation survives on government bailouts? "Try and explain this to public servants who you are now targeting Minister", said Mr. Ntantala.

Collective bargaining is a two-way street and when parties conclude an agreement it is accepted that they will honour such agreement. If the State as employer, who acted within a mandate of National Treasury when concluding the 2018 wage agreement, now wants to tamper with the agreement in the final year of implementation, the trust relationship between the unions and the employer will be severely compromised. NAPTOSA says, "Hands off the 2018 public service wage agreement."

As for the remainder of the Budget Vote Speech, it was sufficiently vague, not to illicit much comment from a union perspective. We will wait and see what the economists and political commentators make of it.

NAPTOSA welcomes the fact that there will be some real tax relief for individuals. Clever of the Minister to use a teacher as an example to illustrate the point – only to refer to the wage bill reduction later, by which that very teacher may find such tax relief wiped out. Whilst education will still receive the largest slice of the budget, the baseline spending reduction on education infrastructure does not escape notice. It will undoubtedly have a slowing effect on infrastructure improvements in the sector.

NAPTOSA has always been a proponent of curbing wasteful expenditure, of fighting corruption and of enhancing youth employment. We therefore fully support the Minister's announcements regarding these areas and hope to finally see movement on the prosecution of corruption cases.

The announced fuel levy increase is unfortunate, because of the already heavy burden carried by members in respect of transport costs. But like public servant wages, this is obviously seen as another soft target.

In closing, we can only hope that government will stick to its commitment, as espoused by the Minister, to make the stable supply of electricity their number one priority and task, and that this will not prove to be another pipe dream, said Mr Ntantala.

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Let us serve education and each other with dignity

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