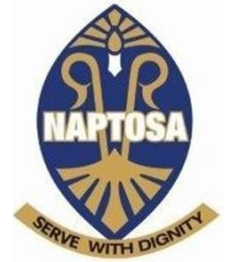


# NATIONAL NEWS FLASH

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## STATEMENT ON THE UPCOMING MTBPS – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024

The Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) will be a litmus test of government's responsiveness to the plight of battling households faced with unemployment, rising food costs and more. The few employed are carrying a disproportionate burden, often supporting large numbers of unemployed family members and friends in the face of rising living costs. Despite recent reductions in fuel prices, this relief has yet to reach the essential costs of food and public transport, which remain alarmingly high. Adding to this strain, Eskom has proposed an average price increase of 36.15% for direct customers, set to take effect from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. These escalating energy costs will place further pressure on stretched household budgets, potentially pushing many households deeper into financial hardship.

Public sector workers, including Teachers and Education Support Personnel, have faced stagnant salaries and declining purchasing power which is now equivalent to 2017 levels. Although widely publicised as a 4.7% increase, recent adjustments included a non-pensionable allowance (2023), which has not genuinely improved earnings or financial stability. For two consecutive years, the cash allowance after the zero increase of 2020, replaced meaningful increases which has left state paid workers in a far less favourable position than before. NAPTOSA urges government to recognise that without meaningful action to restore buying power, public sector professionals will continue to grow poorer, impacting their ability to provide quality education to our children and resulting in the loss of essential workers in the public space.

NAPTOSA also calls for a solution to the current austerity measures, which threaten the successful implementation of crucial educational initiatives. The much-anticipated expansion of the curriculum to support the Three-Stream Model, Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education (MTbBE), Coding and Robotics, the formal integration of Grade R, and the full implementation of the BELA Act, is at risk. These critical programs, intended to enrich learners' educational experiences and prepare them for future challenges, will require sustained and adequate funding to succeed. Provinces' inability to pay norms and standards to schools is resulting in schools deteriorating at a rapid pace.

In addition, NAPTOSA urges the allocation of increased resources towards health inspections and safety in our food systems to ensure the well-being of our children. Enhanced health inspections can prevent the consumption of unsafe foods, helping reduce unnecessary illnesses and deaths among our young people.

It is our hope that the MTBPS will address these pressing concerns and reflect a commitment to both the economic well-being of the public sector and the safety and education of our children.

**Mr BL Manuel**

**Executive Director**