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To all media houses

THE VAT FIASCO EXPOSES GNU POLICY INCOHERENCE AND LEADERSHIP WEAKNESSES.

For immediate release

The Congress of the People (COPE) applauds the withdrawal of the proposed VAT increase, a policy we steadfastly opposed for its crushing burden on South Africa's most vulnerable citizens. This reversal is a victory for the people, but it lays bare serious flaws in our government's decision-making process.

The Minister of Finance's push for a regressive tax hike, despite clear opposition, raises questions about competence and accountability. The President, as head of the executive, cannot evade responsibility for endorsing this flawed policy or appointing a Minister whose track record invites scrutiny. COPE demands a transparent investigation into the budget process to restore public trust and ensure such missteps are not repeated.


The Government of National Unity (GNU) must recognize that governance by narrow consensus is unsustainable. The budget debacle, passed with a slim majority, underscores the need for inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders, civil society, labour, and communities, not just parliamentary elites. True democracy demands that the voices of the 60% of South Africans who feel unheard shape our policies.

We urge the President and Cabinet to prioritise pro-poor policies, such as expanding social security and investing in job creation, over tax measures that deepen inequality. COPE commits to holding the GNU accountable and advocating for an economy that serves all South Africans, not just the privileged few.

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