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MEDIA STATEMENT

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BUSA COMMENT ON CURRENT INDUSTRIAL ACTION

While BUSA acknowledges the right of workers to engage in protected strike action upon exhaustion of all statutory requirements and procedures, we are deeply concerned at the trajectory that industrial action is taking in South Africa and hope that realistic settlements will emerge soon. We also trust that whatever agreements are eventually reached will be for as long a period as possible.

A situation where negotiations are pushed to deadlock in the pursuit of wage demands at twice or more than the inflation rate is resulting in violent strike action where neither life, nor limb nor private property is respected. Acts of intimidation are rife. Violence and other reprehensible acts which are criminal in nature during strike action cannot be condoned. The right to strike should be exercised without infringing on other rights and without creating a perception of lawlessness.

Government, labour and business leaders speak daily to issues of accountability. It is time for trade unions to take responsibility for the actions of their members and supporters, in ensuring that strike action is carried out peacefully. Leaders of organised Labour need to accept responsibility for the conduct of their members during strike action.





The situation also runs counter to the ambitious job creation targets that South Africa has set itself, and that we will need to achieve to help ensure the sufficient narrowing of the large income gap. It also undermines the good work that all social partners, including business and labour, have committed themselves to achieving through the New Growth Path.

In addition, the damage perpetrated by violent strikers against small business dims the growth prospects of the small business sector and is likely to only further exacerbate our unemployment problem. If the strikes are prolonged it may become necessary to lower economic growth forecasts for 2011 as a whole.

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