**Media Statement**

**ACTING SECRETARY TO PARLIAMENT, MS BABY TYAWA ACCOUNTS TO PARLIAMENT'S JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF PARLIAMENT

Parliament, Friday, 14 January 2022 –** The Acting Secretary to Parliament (ASTP), Ms Baby Tyawa, briefed the Joint Standing Committee on the Financial Management of Parliament on the progress made by Parliament Management in the implementation of the 2018 Safety, Health and Environmental Audit Report and actioning of the March 2021 Fire Report recommendations.

The presentation clarified the much talked about occupational safety and health administration report, which was commissioned by Parliament administration based on the report of its Internal Audit department, and the fire report of the City of Cape Town.

The Committee met this morning to get an appraisal on Parliament's compliance with occupational health and safety regulations and on matters relating to the breach of security on the night of the recent fire incident that destroyed parts of the Parliamentary precinct on 02 January. The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure and the Management of Parliament also responded to questions relating to the incident.

Ms Tyawa told the Committee that the Audit was a Gap analysis of Parliament's practices that were to be closed to ensure compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It evaluated the occupational health and safety management control framework to ensure compliance with all the relevant regulations and policies and ensure that the institution's procedures are practical and efficient as per the requirements. The Audit had identified thirteen (13) key findings relating to the design of internal controls and provided recommendations.

Ms Tyawa assured the Committee that Parliament had developed and signed off the governance documents and is currently implementing an action plan to ensure that Parliament is compliant. "The institution developed an action plan to close the gap identified by the Audit. Risk assessments and safe work procedures for the high-risk areas were completed. Risk assessment for the medium and low-risk areas are in progress", the she reported.

"Development of safe work procedure are in progress. Health and safety awareness training for staff was conducted. Evacuation drills for the State of the Nation Address in the National Assembly building were conducted, and confirm that a fire drill was done with the NCOP before the Covid-19 outbreak", she continued.

The ASTP further responded to questions relating to the role of the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Parliamentary Protection Services (PPS) on the night of the fire incident, mainly whether they were on duty and, if so, how the alleged breach had been possible.

"On the night of the incident, members of the Parliament Protection Services were not in the precinct. They were on compulsory leave but there were staff on standby", the ASTP explained. "Informed by the Department of Labour directive on the mitigation of Covid-19 spread", she continued, "our PPS changed the working plans to reduce the numbers. The non- work on weekends and holidays has been an operational schedule from March 2020, to date, this is the second December. However, there is a standby team roster for after-hours which is communicated to all stakeholders. The standby roster extends to compulsory leave and closure period", she said.

"Members of the South African Police Services remain in charge of access control, perimeter security and monitoring of cameras at Parliament. How the alleged breach of security happened is the subject of investigation", the ASTP stated about how the alleged security breach had happened.

Ms Tyawa further told the Committee that although most of the actions have been implemented, Parliament's health and safety is also dependent on other stakeholders, such as the SAPS and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, as assigned in the Security Policy.

"As a result of this dependency, the infrastructure related risks that are on DPWI's purview have been formally brought to the attention of the department and are managed through the SLA submitted to DPWI in 2016 to ensure that both parties commit to their respective responsibilities" concluded Ms Tyawa.

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