**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA WELCOMES SIU’S TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INVESTIGATIONS RELATING TO COVID-19 PROCUREMENT**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 19 August 2020** – The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) has expressed its serious concerns over allegations of corruption relating to Covid-19 procurement. The committee engaged with the head of the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), Adv Andy Mothibi, to analyse the terms of reference for Covid-19 related procurement.

The terms of reference included procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the Covid-19 pandemic, hospitals and quarantine sites, catering services (food parcels), ventilators, disinfecting equipment and motorised wheelchairs.

The committee told Adv Mothibi, who led the SIU delegation, that it is important that consequence management is followed through and that he is going to exert pressure on the SIU and other law enforcement agencies such as the NPA to move with speed and to ensure prosecutions. The committee stressed that successful prosecution must happen in order to turn the tide of corruption in government and to restore the public’s confidence in the system. Furthermore, the committee told Adv Mothibi that the investigations must lead to consequence management and the recovery of stolen resources in the end.

Presenting the terms of reference and the plan of action, Adv Mothibi assured the committee about the commitment of the SIU to the investigations. He said the SIU also share the concerns expressed by the committee and promised the committee that he will deliver the expected results within a reasonable time.

In the presentation, Adv Mothibi highlighted the number of Covid-19-related contracts each province granted to service providers and the amounts that have been used so far. Explaining the nature of the allegations on the manipulation of Supply Chain Management processes for purposes of corruption, Adv Mothibi said some service providers received payments even before they did work.

Although the committee welcomed the presentation, it expressed its unhappiness about the lack of details, specifics and timelines in the SIU’s presentation and emphasised the importance of timelines. On timelines, Adv Mothibi said the SIU would submit progress reports to the President every six weeks and he said the allegations are phased along timelines.

The committee also wanted an explanation about the role of the provincial departments of treasury and to what extent do they meet the National Treasury requirements such as instruction number 8 of 2020 that requires them to report to the National Treasury on the money spent on Covid-19. Also, the committee wanted explanation about the cooperation of the recently established Inter-Ministerial Task Team with the SIU.

The committee told Adv Mothibi that it needs results and urged him and his team to move with the necessary speed. It told him that if the opposite happens, that would suggest complicity in dealing with corruption. The committee told him that the Presidency would be invited at each and every interval to account before it on the reports.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS, MKHULEKO HLENGWA.**