President appoints committee to focus on alleged COVID-19 corruption

*6 August 2020 - 4:00pm*

President Cyril Ramaphosa has, following a decision taken by Cabinet at its meeting of Wednesday, 5 August 2020, appointed a Committee of Ministers to deal with allegations of corruption associated with the country’s response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Chaired by the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Ronald Lamola, the committee will look into corruption in the procurement of goods and services sourced for the purpose of containing and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The includes the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE).

To assist the committee in its assessment of COVID-19-related procurement, President Ramaphosa has requested all Ministers and Premiers to provide information on the names of companies and details of tenders and contracts that have been awarded in national departments, provincial governments and public entities during the period of the National State of Disaster.

The President has directed that these lists must be provided to the Committee of Ministers as a matter of urgency this week. The Committee will prepare a comprehensive report which the President intends to release as public information.

The Ministerial Committee comprises:

•    The Minister of Justice and Correctional Services as Chairperson
•    The Minister in The Presidency
•    The Minister of Finance
•    The Minister of Police
•    The Minister for Public Service and Administration
•    The Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

Cabinet’s decision reinforces the determination of the President, expressed in a national address on 23 July 2020, that there should be no theft, no wastage and no mismanagement of public funds as the country fights COVID-19.

The President warned that the consequences for those who broke the law – whether they are in the public or private sectors – would be severe.

The people of South Africa require nothing less than full accountability from those who have been elected and appointed to serve them, President Ramaphosa said.

The Cabinet decision will support other measures to detect corrupt activities, including the proclamation signed on 23 July 2020 authorising the Special Investigating Unit to investigate any unlawful or improper conduct in the procurement of any goods, works and services during or related to the national state of disaster in any state institution.