**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA WANTS INVESTIGATION INTO DIRECTIVE FROM MINISTER DE LILLE ON BEIT BRIDGE FENCE**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 25 August 2020**– The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) wants the National Treasury to investigate the role played by the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Ms Patricia de Lille, when she issued the directive on the erection of the Beit Bridge fence.

The report Scopa received from National Treasury today indicated problems with the conditions set by the Minister in the directive. It contains conditions requiring the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure’s chief financial officer (CFO) to be advised on the costs in order to secure the provisions for the emergency variation order. It also required the CFO to put emergency mechanisms in place for weekly payment of the contractor for work undertaken.

The National Treasury raised concerns with the advising on costs, as costs are determined based on defining the needs after a site visit and then the bills of quantities. Another concern is that the inclusion of the variation order means that there is a contractual agreement with the current supplier. In addition, Treasury is concerned about the request for weekly payments, as payment should be made on services rendered and against the bills of quantities.

Scopa wants National Treasury to perform an in-depth investigation on the Minister’s involvement with the state Accountant-General. Scopa has requested the National Treasury to submit the report within the next 14 days.

Scopa welcomes the presentation from the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) on the investigations and recommendations on this matter. The committee will observe due process and has asked the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure to submit the full report to the committee by Friday, 28 August 2020, to allow members of the committee time to familiarise themselves with the contents of the report before they undertake an oversight visit to the Beit Bridge fence.

The committee is concerned with the Auditor-General’s slow pace of work on the matter and will deliberate on how to proceed. Scopa is expecting the department to apply consequence management to all those implicated in this project. Scopa wants to see disciplinary action that inspires confidence that disciplinary processes were properly followed.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF SCOPA, MR MKHULEKO HLENGWA.**