**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE REPRIMANDS CHAIR OF MUT COUNCIL AND CALLS FOR INTERVENTION**

**Parliament, Friday, 12 February 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology today was briefed by Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) on governance-related issues.

The committee is concerned about the state of governance and management at MUT. The committee has previously invited MUT twice and on both occasions the university council requested a postponement pending the finalisation and tabling of a forensic investigation report into counter-allegations made by both the Chairperson of its council, Mr Morailane Morailane, and the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Duma Malaza, who is currently on suspension.

The committee invited the university, led by the council, and Dr Malaza, to look at governance and management challenges at the institution. However, the committee was shocked to receive a letter from the council objecting to their participation in a meeting where Dr Malaza was present. The committee was gravely concerned that Mr Morailane wanted to dictate the agenda of the meeting, and who should be invited to it.

The committee reprimanded the Chairperson of council and frowned upon the attitude he displayed in the meeting. It had to remind him that he accounts to Parliament as the representative institution of the people of South Africa. The committee also made it clear that it was not going to venture into any terrain that was part of the disciplinary case against Dr Malaza, but that it wanted to know how MUT got to this point in order to assist the university to be the kind of institution that is of benefit to the students.

The committee is concerned that there have been several interventions by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology and by the university itself, through placing the institution under administration, appointing independent assessors and forensic investigations. However, these have not yielded the desired outcomes. The committee also received remarks from workers and students, and both the Nehawu representative of the workers of MUT and the Student Represantative Council President raised concerns over the lack of decision-making on issues affecting workers and students.

The issues raised by both the MUT Council and management, Dr Malaza, workers and students indicate challenges that require an indepth process that will ascetain whether there is merit in them or not. The committee has noted that it will afford the Minister and the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology an opportunity to consider the forensic report, including progress reports on the implementation of other previous investigations, such as the independent assessors’ recommendations. Thereafter, the committee will request a meeting with the Minister on the next level of intervention.

The committee was unanimous that the Minister must consider invoking section 49B (1) of the Higher Education Act of 1997, as amended, to place the university under administration. The committee also resolved that the university must report to it on a quarterly basis to monitor progress in bringing the institution to a point of stability in order for it to execute its academic mission.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, MR PHILLY MAPULANE.**