**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON LABOUR CALLS FOR COOPERATION OF ALL ROLE PLAYERS FOR SUCCESS OF SIU INVESTIGATIONS INTO TERS**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 16 February 2021 –** The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) briefed the Portfolio Committee on Employment and Labour today on progress regarding investigations on the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), specifically with regard to the Temporary Employment Relief Scheme (TERS).

Briefing the committee, the SIU’s Chief Executive Officer, Adv Andy Mothibi, told the committee that the scope of investigations covers the observation made by the Auditor-General. He said in order for the SIU to attend to some of the other audit findings, the SIU entered into a secondment agreement with the Department of Employment and Labour to secure further evidence in support of a motivation for a new proclamation which he said is still with the Department of Justice.

He told the committee that, to date, a total of 13 447 006 employees who were linked to 1.5 million companies received TERS payments and a total of R57.3 million was paid out by the UIF. The committee heard that fraudulent payments included payments to deceased people, prisoners, foreign nationals, people sharing same banking details and people with invalid ID numbers. Furthermore, the committee heard that fraud happened because of flawed and weak internal controls.

The committee heard that about 6 000 senior departmental officials who are alleged to have illegally benefited from the fund are on suspension on full pay. Adv Mothibi informed the committee about recovery strategies that are in place for the monies allegedly paid to the officials.

The committee highlighted its unhappiness about the limitation of the scope of the investigations and urged Adv Mothibi to ensure that the scope of investigations is broadened. To that end, Adv Mothibi assured the committee that no identified area will be left unattended.

In welcoming the briefing, the Chairperson of the committee, Ms Lindelwa Dunjwa, appreciated the report and said it empowers the committee to do its oversight work in a better and improved way. She called upon other government departments to cooperate with the SIU on this very important work. She referred to the report the committee received today as “work in progress”.

Ms Dunjwa said in as much as the committee avoids interference in these investigations, she assured the SIU about the support of the committee particularly on persuading other players to cooperate with the SIU.

She called for the acceleration of the investigations, especially because there are officials who are suspended on full pay. “Please ensure that the process is not dragged and that its outcome is credible,” added Ms Dunjwa.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR, MS LINDELWA DUNJWA.**