COMMITTEE TO HAVE FOLLOW UP BRIEFING ON SENSITIVE MATTERS

The Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation will arrange a closed follow-up meeting with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (Dirco), in order to present details surrounding the suspension of the Director-General (DG).

Minister Naledi Pandor indicated that although she did not authorise communication on whether the DG’s suspension related to the committee’s recommendations, she was uncomfortable to speak publicly about the suspension of the DG. She assured the committee that once all the processes have been concluded, she will brief the committee on the matter.

The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Tandi Mahambehlala, said the committee feared a situation where its recommendations would be abused. She added: “It is important that the committee received the information it requires so that it plays its oversight role over the department. The committee will thus arrange for a closed meeting with the Minister as proposed by the Members.”

Among other matters the committee sought clarity on, include the role of the former DG, Ambassador Matjila, the R118 million project, consequence management regarding other role players currently employed at Dirco, leave approval for ambassadors, and the delegation of authority to the suspend DG.

Ms Mahambehlala asked that elaborate information be availed to the committee regarding Ambassador Matjila’s non-attendance of the committee’s visit to New York in 2019. She said: “It is puzzling that even the person who authorises leave for ambassadors was not aware that Ambassador Matjila was on leave. His absence or refusal to host the committee when it visited New York bordered on undermining Parliament and the committee.”

Committee Member, Mr Sikhumbuzo Mpanza, called for better management and communication of sensitive matters in order to avoid confusion in the future.

**By Sibongile Maputi**  
**25 February 2021**