**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA SUSPENDS ITS INQUIRY INTO ESKOM**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 7 April 2021 –** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) has today agreed to suspend its inquiry into multiple allegations of racism and financial mismanagement against the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Eskom, to allow the Eskom-initiated inquiry into related matters to run its course.

The committee was requested by the Minister of Public Enterprises to suspend its inquiry to avoid parallel inquiries. In agreeing to suspend its inquiry, the committee has reiterated its commitment to its inquiry and that its suspension of its inquiry should not be misconstrued to mean the abdication of its responsibility.

The committee is satisfied that the terms of reference and scope of the Eskom inquiry cover all the material aspects of the allegations. The onus is now on Eskom and the Special Counsel to conduct an inquiry that is beyond reproach.

The committee has agreed to give Eskom three months (90 days) within which to carry on with their inquiry. The committee believes that running a parallel inquiry would be tantamount to wasteful expenditure, and therefore the outcomes of the Eskom inquiry will be assessed by the committee at a later stage to allow the committee to make appropriate recommendations.

Notwithstanding that, the committee agreed that its ordinary oversight processes will continue and it will, in accordance with its constitutional mandate, proceed to conduct oversight in respect of issues relating to deviations, expansions and matters raised by the SIU.

The committee will further invite the Chairperson of the Eskom board to explain to the committee the reasons behind the delay in their decision to institute an  inquiry as the committee is of the view that the Eskom inquiry has been triggered by the committee’s stated intention to investigate the allegations.

The committee believes that there are serious problems at Eskom and that the alleged breakdown in the relationship  between Eskom’s CEO and the Chief Procurement Officer impacts negatively on the power utility in general, and on sound financial management in particular. The committee said the load shedding which is an outcome of those serious and deep problems started in 2008, and there is no hope that it will end soon if issues remain unresolved.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS, MR MKHULEKO HLENGWA.**