**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE PLEASED WITH FOLLOW-UP ENGAGEMENT WITH TUT**

**Parliament, Thursday, 3 June 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology held a follow-up briefing yesterday with the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) on the three matters that were not adequately presented and responded to at the meeting of 24 February 2021.

The three outstanding matters included the dragging disciplinary cases, in particular, the case of Dr Moraka, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Student Affairs and Extracurricular Development, who was on suspension for two years, abandoned infrastructure development projects and the Report of the Independent Assessor into the review of Tshwane University of Technology Enterprise Holdings (TUTEH).

The committee was pleased with the comprehensive presentations and responses provided by the University Council, management and the Chief Executive Officer of TUTEH, Mr Nick Motsatse.

The finalisation of a disciplinary case of Dr Moraka through an agreed settlement was commended by the committee. “We are very pleased that the matter was finally brought to finality. We were gravely concerned that the senior executive was suspended for two years, sitting at home receiving a salary from the institution without providing a service, which must have been very frustrating not only for him but also for the university. At the same time, the university was paying a salary to an incumbent who was acting in the position of the suspended DVC,” said the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Mr Philly Mapulane.

The committee welcomed the presentation and a commitment by the Council on the Report of the Independent Assessor on TUTEH review. Notwithstanding few areas of contestation regarding the findings and recommendations of the Independent Assessor, by both the University Council and the TUTEH CEO, in particular the lack of benchmarking with other universities and the fact that there was no basis to establish TUTEH as an external entity, Mr Philly Mapulane said: “The committee welcomes the posture of the council, that it was not dismissive in its response to the findings and recommendations of the Independent Assessor.”

The committee welcomes the council’s commitment to review and strengthen the governance of TUTEH and to further investigate the alleged irregular appointments and undue financial benefit or ‘double-dipping’ by some university officials, as well as the conflict of interest. In this regard the committee resolved that the University Council must provide quarterly progress reports on this matter, with the first report expected after its July 2021 meeting.”

Mr Mapulane said “the committee is not opposed to the establishment of enterprises or private companies to generate a third stream income to support the provision of quality higher education and research. The Post School Education and Training Sector has experienced a declining funding for subsidies by government. Similarly, income from the second stream, that is, tuition fees, is also declining as it has become difficult for many self-funded students to pay fees owning to the difficult economic situation in the country. Universities are sitting with a student debt estimated at R14 billion. We support institutions in their endeavours to generate third-stream funding to augment the budget shortfall. However, we urge institutions to ensure that there is proper governance structures and accountability of these enterprises”.

The committee does not have adequate information and knowledge of this area, hence it has resolved to meet, at its earliest convenience, with the Department of Higher Education and Training and Universities South Africa (USAf) to get an insight into the establishment of enterprises to generate third-stream income. The committee will receive a quarterly update from the University regarding the implementation of the Independent Assessor’s Review Recommendations.

Regarding an update on the abandoned infrastructure, the committee noted the progress made by the institution at the following TUT campuses: Garankuwa Campus; Soshanguve South and North Campuses; Pretoria Arts Campus; Emalahleni Campus; Mbombela Campus and Pretoria West Campus. The committee is gravely concerned about the variation orders, which increased the costs of recovering and completing the projects that were previously abandoned by the contractors. Unforeseen or contingency costs should have included in the budget during the design phase of the projects to avert variations.

The committee has directed the university to institute an independent assessment audit to determine value for money, whether the variation orders or additional costs were warranted or not and consequence management against all the contractors who abandoned the projects and those that did shoddy work. The committee recommended that the university should blacklist all the contractors involved in the abandoned projects to ensure that they do not resurface at other universities. The committee expects to receive a report of the assessment audit by the University Council.

The committee was unanimous in its view that the ongoing engagements with the university must be brought to an end and that the University Council must be given space to exercise its duty of governing the university in line with the statutes and the Act, and that the committee will continue to exercise its oversight function by receiving the quarterly reports as resolved in the meeting.

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