**MEDIA STATEMENT: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH ACCEPTS THE DEPARTMENT’S UPDATE ON INVESTIGATIONS INTO DIGITAL VIBES CONTRACT**

**Parliament, Friday, 4 June 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Health received an update today from the Director-General (DG) of the Department of Health, Dr Sandile Buthelezi, on the investigations into the awarding of the Digital Vibes contract, processes followed, and actions taken thus far.

The Chairperson of the committee, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, informed the committee that Minister Zweli Mkhize couldn’t appear before the committee and lead the department for the briefing, due to the fact that his name is also involved in the investigations. To that end, Dr Buthelezi briefed the committee on the investigations. Dr Buthelezi informed the committee that the department appointed a number of forensic firms to investigate the Digital Vibes contract following the Auditor General’s (AG’s) identification of an irregularity on the contract.

Dr Buthelezi told the committee that the department has received the final draft of the investigations that confirmed that there is an irregularity on the Digital Vibes matter. He said the Special Investigative Unit (SIU) also had an interest on the matter. According to Dr Buthelezi, the SIU has interviewed certain people in the department and obtained certain documents, including the final draft report form the forensic firms.

Dr Buthelezi assured the committee that the department cooperates with the SIU on the investigations. He further assured the committee about the readiness of the department to implement any recommendations that will be contained in the report. He appealed to the committee for patience, stressing the importance of affording the SIU enough time to conduct thorough investigations that will deliver credible and correct findings.

In welcoming the update, Dr Dhlomo said although Minister Mkhize didn’t come, the update was not a waste of time. He said: “When we planned the meeting, we expected the Minister to lead the department for the update. We didn’t anticipate a legal advice that would stop him from updating the committee on the matter. Let us respect the legal advice that prevented him from coming here and accept what the department has provided.”

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, DR SIBONGISENI DHLOMO**