**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA WARNS ABOUT ABUSE OF DEVIATIONS AND EXPANSIONS POLICY**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 29 June 2021**– The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa), Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa, has warned about possible abuse of the “deviations and expansions” policy to dodge due and thorough procurement processes in the public sector.

Today Scopa held a hearing with Eskom about deviations and expansion of contracts at the entity, and raised concerns that these should not be the norm or used for short cuts in procurement.

“We take exception on the issue of deviations and expansions which has become a norm at Eskom, this must be the last resort and applied in exceptional circumstances when every necessary option has been tried”

“There is a concerning trend we have been observing on the abuse of this process to circumvent due and thorough processes,” said Mr Hlengwa.

The Scopa Chairperson said the presence of deviations and expansions in law and statutes did not make this practice a norm, and warned officials against creating self-made crisis and emergencies in order to resort to deviations and expansions.

“We need to be convinced that the there was no other recourse than to apply to the National Treasury for deviations,” the Chairperson said.

The committee will schedule more engagement with Eskom to continue deliberations on the subject of deviations and expansions, and has also appreciated cooperation from the National Treasury and the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) to provide more details.

Scopa also received from the Eskom board an investigation report into allegations of racism, breach of process and nepotism against Mr Andre de Ruyter, the Group Chief Executive Officer, and the report found that the allegations could not be substantiated.

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