**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA RECEIVES SIU UPDATE ON PPE PROCUREMENT INVESTIGATIONS**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 1 September 2021**– The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) was today briefed by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) on progress in the ongoing investigations into the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for Covid-19 and the Digital Vibes contract.

The head of the SIU, Advocate Andy Mothibi, told Scopa that the investigations are still a work in progress and wants to see findings acted upon. The SIU committed to continue to update the committee on the investigations.

In welcoming the SIU report, Scopa Chairperson Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa commended the thorough work achieved. “We appreciate the work of the SIU in investigating these matters. We are satisfied with the progress report. We also appreciate the collaboration with SAPS, Hawks and NPA. We don’t want to have these cases prosecuted 10 years later. We want to see logical legal conclusion of these matters,” Mr Hlengwa said.

He described corruption as tragic and “a crime against humanity perpetrated by people who have been entrusted with responsibility to improve the lives of others”. The Chairperson noted the unfortunate fact that the state spent R350 million investigating corruption in PPE procurement, which could have been put to better use if people had done the right thing.

Scopa also recommended that the witness protection programme be enhanced, warning that potential whistle-blowers will be discouraged from volunteering information about corruption if their safety is not guaranteed.

The SIU assured Scopa that it takes the safety of witnesses very seriously, as cases stand or fall based on the evidence presented by witnesses.

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