**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SPORT COMMITTEE TO ACT AGAINST SEXUAL ABUSE OF YOUNG ATHLETES**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 7 December 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Sports, Arts and Culture will no longer ignore the abuse and inappropriate violation of young athletes in South Africa.

As a result, the committee has resolved to host a workshop on abuse, especially sexual abuse, against athletes. The Committee also called on sport federations to revisit their policies on sexual abuse and ensure that they place the welfare of their athletes first.

Committee Chairperson, Ms. Beauty Dlulane, said the inappropriate violation of young athletes has been ignored for too long.

On Tuesday, the committee received a briefing from Swim South Africa on the

prevalence of these matters. The committee was informed that one disciplinary matter was abandoned because an athlete had opted to pursue a criminal case.

"The time has arrived for the committee to raise awareness on the matter. Many athletes are not only violated financially by sponsors and federations. This abuse extends to inappropriate and highly unacceptable behaviour by many coaches and trainers across sporting codes."

Ms. Dlulane says "the impression must never be created that the committee could not conduct oversight on incidents of abuse."

"We condemn these in the strongest possible terms as the impact is such, that young athletes carry the scars forever. Sexual abuse and violation of young athletes by those who coach them should draw the necessary attention and condemnation from society."

Ms. Dlulane added that when it comes to sexual abuse there should never be alternative arrangements or options; people must be disciplined and referred for criminal prosecution.

Committee members unanimously supported the decision to host the workshop.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE, MS BEAUTY DLULANE.**

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