**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA DIRECTS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO SUBMIT NATIONAL SKILLS FUND INVESTIGATION REPORT IN 10 DAYS**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 13 September 2022** – The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) has issued a firm directive to the Department of Higher Education and Training to submit the report of the investigation into the National Skills Fund (NSF) in the next 10 days.

The forensic investigation was recommended by SCOPA following disclaimed audit outcomes from the Auditor-General. The committee was expecting an update today on the investigation and to receive the report. Instead of presenting the investigation report, the department only presented a summary and argued that the report could not be shared with SCOPA due to sensitivities and peoples’ names that are mentioned. Sharing the report could compromise the department and expose it to litigation, the department claimed.

However, SCOPA was not convinced with this explanation and wanted to know if this decision was based on legal advice. “We don’t agree with the sentiment that the report cannot be revealed because it contains people’s names. Can we please get the report in the next 10 days and we will engage further after that. Once we have received the report, we will consider it accordingly. We have got a vested interest in that report because the investigation arose out of disclaimers, which were of very serious concern to us,” said SCOPA Chairperson, Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa.

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

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