**Report of the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture on a petition received from Mr TW Mhlongo, MP, on behalf of some 31 000 signatories, calling on the Assembly to investigate the commissioning by the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture of a flag at an estimated cost of R22 million, dated 11 October 2022.**

The Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture (the Committee) considered the petition of Mr TW Mhlongo, Member of Parliament, on behalf of some 31 000 signatories. The petition calls on the [National] Assembly to investigate the commissioning by the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture of a flag at an estimated cost of R22 million. Having been briefed by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) and having received input from the Auditor-General of South Africa, the Committee recommends that the petitioner’s request not be granted.

**The committee wishes to make the following observations:**

The national Monumental Flag Project had initially been approved and budgeted for and included in the DSAC Annual Performance Plans for the 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years, all having been presented to the Committee.

In 2020, the DSAC commissioned a feasibility study on the Monumental Flag. This study was undertaken during the 2020/21 financial year. The appointed service provider was paid the full tendered amount of R1 749 150.

The Feasibility Study Report was presented by DSAC to the Technical Working Group on 17 August 2021 and by the Social Protection, Community and Human Development (SPCHD) Cluster on 08 September 2021, where it was approved. The report was then presented to and approved by Cabinet on 10 February 2020.

The Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) tested the procurement process undertaken by the DSAC and found no irregularities.

The capital cost for this construction of the South African Monumental Flag was estimated at R22 million over the medium-term expenditure framework, which included R5 million budgeted in 2022/23 for the site-specific geotechnical studies including the Environmental Impact Assessment and other tests and applications that will be required prior to construction; and R17 million allocated for the installation of the flag in 2023/24.

Following the public outcry, the Minister in consultation with the President took a decision to discontinue the project. The DSAC indicated that it is undertaking appropriate administrative procedures to formalise this decision.

**The committee wishes to make the following recommendation:**

The National Monumental Flag Project, initially approved by Cabinet and presented to Parliament, has been halted by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture in accordance with the President’s announcement. Additionally, the AGSA tested the tender process during the 2020/21 audit and did not identify any irregularities or non-compliance in the commissioning of a feasibility study.

In light of this, and noting the objection of the Democratic Alliance, the Committee is of the view that no further investigation is warranted.

**Conclusion**

Having deliberated on the matter, the Committee concluded that the petitioner’s request should not proceed. Therefore, communication will be made to the Member to relate the decision of the Committee to the signatories.

Report to be considered.