**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA ENGAGES ESKOM ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) yesterday received a briefing from Eskom on progress in implementing SCOPA’s 23 recommendations after an oversight visit SCOPA made to Eskom in 2019.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa, stated that the committee has met with Eskom more than any other committee or department in this term. “We have conducted two oversight visits to Eskom, we have had 16 meetings in this term and three meetings on Eskom-related matters, totaling 21 engagements on Eskom matters,” he said.

Mr Hlengwa said this demonstrates how seriously the committee takes Eskom matters. “We need Eskom functional, effective and fulfilling its core mandate. We want to see financial viability, financial sustainability, the necessary reforms, consequence management, contract management and the meeting of deadlines. We remain fundamentally worried and concerned about the state of health of Eskom,” added Mr Hlengwa.

The Deputy Minister of the Department of Public Enterprises, Mr Phumulo Masualle, welcomed SCOPA’s focus on Eskom. “The committee is engaging Eskom for the importance of energy security for the country. It is a matter that, both at the department level and in the rest of government, is considered one of the foremost and critical matters that require resolution continuously, as it afflicts aspects of community life in all respects.”

One of the issues SCOPA has raised consistently with Eskom is the presence of the New Largo mine, which influenced the decision for the Kusile Power Station to be built in Emalahleni in Mpumalanga. Mr Bheki Hadebe, a member of the committee wanted to know where this mine is. “The determination of the location of Kusile was based on the fact that there is coal and a mine in and around the area. Therefore, you are not going to rely on trucks transporting coal.”

Mr Hadebe stated that when SCOPA visited Kusile, it did not see any mine and 700 trucks transport coal there every day. “That is why there is also this issue of mixing coal. There was a conveyer belt that was meant to be built from that mine to Kusile,” said Mr Hadebe.

Mr Hlengwa gave context to the new board on the importance of this issue. “When we were at Kusile in 2019, the commitment given was that the issues around the mine would be sorted out by January 2020. When we returned in April 2022, there was no mine and we had a long discussion about it,” said Mr Hlengwa. SCOPA keeps returning to this issue to counter the use of the 700 trucks a day that come to Kusile, damage to road infrastructure and raise the risk of inferior coal.

The Eskom Group CEO, Mr Andre de Ruyter, assured SCOPA that the mine does indeed exist. “In our presentation, we have shown an aerial photograph of the mine at Kusile. It does exist. We can arrange a visit for the committee to inspect the mine and see that it is there.”

Mr de Ruter said the mine is being developed and the conveyer belt is being built. “We are in full alignment with your sentiments that we should get trucks off the road, coal onto the conveyer, as the original intention was when Kusile was conceived. For a number of reasons, there has been procrastination on this, but we now are forging ahead on unlocking the New Largo reserves,” he said.

Mr Hlengwa welcome the proposal to visit the mine at Kusile and said SCOPA is looking at visiting the mine towards the end of November 2022.

**Faith Ndenze**