**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**BASIC EDUCATION PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE COMMENDS UMALUSI FOR THIRD CLEAN AUDIT**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 19 October 2022 –** The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education commended the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) for its third clean audit and for achieving 100% of it targets for the 2021/22 financial year.

Committee Chairperson Ms Bongiwe Mbinqo-Gigaba said Umalusi briefed the committee yesterday on its 2021/21 Annual Performance Plan (APP). All government departments and entities are expected to achieve clean audits, Ms Mbinqo-Gibaba said, however this is not always possible.

Umalusi is responsible for qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework’s general and further education and training qualifications sub-framework. Umalusi ensures that education and training providers have the capacity to deliver and assess qualifications and learning programmes, and that they do so to the standard expected of them.

The committee heard that although COVID-19 affected some Umalusi staff during this time, implementing the 2021/22 APP was not disrupted. This was possible because Umalusi put systems in place that enabled service delivery to continue during the pandemic. Thus, all 2021/22 APP targets were achieved.

Umalusi told the committee that it achieved its third unqualified audit opinion with no material findings, also known as a clean audit, because of the maintenance and improvement of its systems and controls.

The committee further heard that the organisation continuously generated revenue below its target due to the uncertainty of demand for verification and certification. The split between own generated revenue and grant/transfer from the government is consistently at a proportion of approximately 80/20, which makes it challenging to expand activities beyond current levels.

Umalusi told the committee that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) assisted with its request to retain a cash surplus of R38,5 million, which National Treasury has since approved. The surplus will be used to complete the refurbishment infrastructure project and to purchase equipment. It will also be used to cover the post-retirement medical aid and to provide for additional monitoring and evaluation of Umalusi qualifications.

Ms Mbinqo-Gigaba said Umalusi has an enormous task, particularly to ensure that the annual National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations take place in a fair and transparent environment that speaks to quality and reliable qualifications. “Umalusi should therefore be commended for keeping a clean sheet for the last three years.”

However, she also noted the concerns raised over the potential disruptions caused by load shedding and uncertainty in electricity supply to the National Senior Certificate examinations public schools are set to write between 25 October and 6 December 2022. “We note this concern and take it very serious. We do not want any child to be disadvantaged by the lack of electricity supply, especially during examinations and even preparations for such exams. We call on the authorities to work hand in hand to ensure all our learners receive a fair opportunity to make a success of the upcoming examinations.”

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, MS BONGIWE MBINQO-GIGABA.**

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