**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT ENCOURAGES PRASA TO PRIORITISE LONG DISTANCE SERVICE**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 22 November 2022 –** The Portfolio Committee on Transport has voiced its dissatisfaction regarding the situation which Passenger Rail Agency South Africa (PRASA) and its long distance service is in. The committee expressed its dissatisfaction with PRASA when the entity appeared before it today to brief it on the recovery of mainline train services.

The Acting Chairperson of the committee, Mr Lisa Mangcu, said it was not clear what PRASA is planning to do in filling the gap in public transport especially during this busy travelling time for many South Africans. The committee encouraged PRASA to prioritise long distance service.

Mr Mangcu said: “It looks like our people will not have the rail travelling option for December. The little service that is there is woefully inadequate and lacks quality that is needed in public transport for rail commuters.” He added that the committee found it convenient to use the vandalism of the infrastructure and Covid-19 as an excuse when in fact it seems that the agency is not coping at all.

Informing the committee on their plan to sell obsolete stock, PRASA revealed that they contemplated selling the old stock to neighbouring countries because they lacked staff and rail network for the trains.

PRASA also informed the committee that the challenge with the network was that it is operated by a different state owned company and that forces PRASA to seek access. This situation has resulted in PRASA owing that state owned company close to R2 billion. This is over and above operating losses amounting to R900 million in the current financial year.

The committee also voiced dissatisfaction with the recruitment of the new Group Chief Executive (GCEO) when in fact PRASA still spent money in legal fees in a fight involving the fired GCEO who was the current board’s appointment. “We are disappointed in what was shared with the committee especially the lack of plans to approach ferrying poor people who so rely on the rail service for festive season travelling,” said Mr Mangcu.

Regarding the challenge of other state owned entities, Mr Mangcu said the committee will meet with other parliamentary committees on public enterprises to chart a way forward regarding PRASA’s debt.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE ACTING CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, MR LISA MANGCU.**

For media enquiries or interviews with the Chairperson, please contact the committee’s Media Officer:

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