**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA ADJOURNS HEARING WITH SABC DUE TO LACK OF DESIGNATED ACCOUNTING AUTHORITY**

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) was compelled again yesterday to adjourn its hearing with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) due to the absence of an accounting authority. The committee had planned to hold a hearing with the SABC on its annual report and financial statements for the 2021/22 financial year, as well as on investigations and irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

The committee was assured when it arranged this hearing with the SABC that the Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO), Mr Madoda Mxakwe, was the designated accounting authority. However, the committee and the Deputy Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Mr Philly Mapulane, learnt during the hearing that the GCEO had not accepted the designation. Thus, the public broadcaster is currently without an accounting authority.

Mr Mapulane was of the view that the GCEO had been designated as the accounting authority. “The process was finalised last month to designate the GCEO as the accounting authority as provided for by the PFMA [Public Finance Management Act]. Treasury has finalised that process because it is Treasury that is supposed to do that. As we speak now that designation has happened.”

The GCEO admitted that he received a letter to that effect on 23 February 2023. “Immediately, when I received that, there was a paragraph that concerned me, which is paragraph 4. That paragraph reads as follows: ‘Taking note of the temporary nature of this appointment, you are advised not to enter into any new or major financial commitments which are of significant or long-term nature’,” he explained.

The GCEO informed SCOPA that he had accepted the authority on the condition that paragraph was removed. “There have been engagements between myself and the department and that has not been removed,” he said.

SCOPA member Mr Bheki Hadebe said SCOPA held the hearing yesterday because it had postponed the previous meeting and it had advised the SABC and the Deputy Minister to use the provision in the PFMA, section 49, which stipulates that when a public entity does not have a Board, its chief executive officer or other person in charge is the accounting authority. “We have relied on that provision. We are here on the basis that we do have an accounting authority,” he said.

On 23 November 2022, SCOPA had to adjourn its hearing with the SABC due to the absence of an accounting authority. To date, the SABC has been without an accounting authority since October 2022.

SCOPA Chairperson, Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa said the GCEO was very categorical in stating that he is not the accounting authority at the SABC. “In the absence of an accounting authority we cannot proceed,” he said. Mr Hlengwa informed Deputy Minister Mapulane that SCOPA wants the department to submit a progress report on the matter by Friday, 3 March 2023, so that the committee can determine how it will take the matter forward.

**Faith Ndenze**
**2 March 2022**