**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA RESOLVES TO FORM OVERSIGHT INQUIRY TO TEST VERACITY OF ALLEGATIONSV**

After the explosive allegations of the maladministration of public funds at Eskom by the former Eskom CEO, Mr Andre de Ruyter, the Standing Committee on Public Account (SCOPA) has resolved to form an oversight inquiry to test their veracity.

There was unanimous agreement in the committee for such an undertaking. To this effect, it engaged the Parliamentary Legal Office to establish the constitutional basis and scope of such an investigation’s terms of reference. The legal office provided the committee with the broad parameters for the terms of reference for such an inquiry.

However, various developments since the committee’s decision to hold an inquiry have now occurred. There is a motion for an ad hoc committee to test the veracity of these allegations and a debate on Eskom’s rot is set for next week before Parliament rises for recess. In light of these developments, there was consensus that the committee should see what direction this motion and debate take before proceeding with its own processes, as SCOPA’s mandate is limited to financial oversight over Eskom.

The committee’s Ms Benedicta van Minnen said that the ad hoc committee would be a favourable route, given the complex nature of an inquiry that SCOPA would have to institute if it were to get to the bottom of the allegations. She was also concerned that the committee may not complete such a complex inquiry within the remaining period of its members’ parliamentary tenure, which ends in 2024.

Another committee member, Mr Robert Lees, agreed, saying: “We don’t want another TV show, we want to do real work that will send culprits to jail.”

The committee further resolved that the mooted ad hoc committee should not deter its own investigation into allegations at the utility, as long as the investigation concentrates on issues that fall within the ambit of its constitutional mandate. As such, committee members agreed that the former CEO of Eskom must be invited to make a written submission on his allegations.

Another member of the committee, Mr Bheki Hadebe, said the Eskom CEO must provide SCOPA with information on his knowledge of on the misuse of public funds at the utility and whether he received instructions from any minister, board member or official to ignore the financial prescripts governing the use of public funds. Mr de Ruyter must also divulge his knowledge of any public representatives who benefited from these acts, as well as any additional record or evidence he has of financial irregularities at Eskom.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Mkhuleko Hlengwa, maintained that whilst there is a vote and debate scheduled for the National Assembly on the establishment of an ad hoc committee, “We must not be in a default position should this committee not materialise.”

He also reiterated that the former Eskom CEO must be invited to submit a written submission on his allegations. He can then provide this submission to the ad hoc committee, if it occurs. He went on to assure the former CEO that, “He will be afforded immunity to any legal recourse/litigation emanating from his presentation while before the committee.”

He further stated that the committee should also consider inviting the Auditor-General, to determine if any misinformation or misrepresentation of facts are included in Eskom’s audit. SCOPA also wants to know if the commissioner of police has opened an investigation into the allegations. “If so, we want the case number for such a case,” Mr Hlengwa said.

SCOPA also agreed that the Minister, the board and executive personnel at Eskom should be invited to give their account of these allegations.

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