**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**TOURISM COMMITTEES WELCOMES PRESENTATION FROM NEW MINISTER ON DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN TOURIS**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 3 May 2023 –** The Portfolio Committee on Tourism has welcomed the briefing it received yesterday from the Minister of Tourism, Ms Patricia de Lille, on developments at South African Tourism (SAT), particularly at the South African Tourism Board, and the future of the Department of Tourism’s deal with Tottenham Hotspur FC, among other things.

In welcoming the new Minister and her delegation, the committee Chairperson, Ms Tandi Mahambehlala, told Ms de Lille that the committee will work hand in glove with her; accountability from the department will be the order of the day, Ms Mahambehlala said. The committee invited the Minister to account and clarify a wide range of issues that the committee had heard about in the media.

The Minister told the committee that she had dissolved the SAT board and appointed a three-person interim board to facilitate the appointment of the new board. Furthermore, an advertisement calling for applications from people with an interest in being appointed to the board has been placed in some of the weekly newspapers. The Minister also reported that the Tottenham Hotspur FC deal has been scrapped with immediate effect.

The committee welcomed the dissolution of the board, which it said added no value to SAT. Explaining why she only appointed three people to serve on the interim board, Ms de Lille said that legislation allows her to appoint one or more people. She therefore decided that SAT needed just three people with a sound understanding of financial administration, governance and tourism. The geographic location and gender of interim board members was not taken into consideration.

The committee told the Minister that two of the three people on the interim committee, Mr Tim Harris and Mr Zwelibanzi Mntambo, have questionable reputations and they must be replaced. The committee also told the Minister to lift the moratorium she has put in place at SAT, especially on the filling of some executive posts, as the Auditor-General recommended that appointments be made in these posts immediately.

Ms Mahambehlala also told the Minister to leave Brand South Africa and SAT as independent entities under the Department of Tourism. She also called for the information and system agency to be established under the department.

The department also briefed the committee on its annual performance plan for the 2023/24 financial year. Members of the committee told the DG that there is a disjuncture between what is included in the plans on paper and the situation on the ground. The committee also said that domestic tourism is not contributing as much as it should to the economy, a situation the committee attributed to poor leadership within the department.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, MS TANDI MAHAMBEHLALA.**

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