**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**TOURISM COMMITTEE UNIMPRESSED WITH THE NON-ATTENDANCE OF TWO SA TOURISM INTERIM BOARD MEMBERS IN MEETING

Parliament, Wednesday, 10 May 2023** – The Portfolio Committee on Tourism has expressed a serious concern with the non-attendance of two of the three current interim Board members of the South African Tourism (SA Tourism) in a meeting to consider the 2023/24 Annual Performance Plan (APP).

The committee held its scheduled meeting at Inkosi Chief Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre in Durban, the venue where Africa’s Travel Indaba is currently taking place. A decision was taken to hold the meeting there to accommodate SA Tourism, whose Board members in turn decided not to attend the meeting. The committee felt undermined by this behavior, as the two Board members had earlier been at same the venue with the committee in another event. The two Board members said they will meet the committee at another time that suits them.

The Department of Tourism transfers 53 per cent of its budget to SA Tourism and it is therefore important for the committee to consider its APP to assess how the funds will be spent. This is even more important when considering that SA Tourism has recently been embroiled in the proposed R1billion Tottenham Hotspur sponsorship deal, which was stopped by the committee through its robust oversight over the entity.

The committee is concerned about the implications of appropriating budget to an entity whose Board does not take its work seriously. In addition, there are no executive staff members to manage the budget if appropriated, as SA Tourism has no Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Marketing Officer and Chief Strategy Officer.

The committee believes that all three interim Board members need to be present when it considers SAT’s APP because it is the same Board that will be playing an oversight role on SA Tourism’s performance, and be accountable to both the Department of Tourism and as the committee.

Furthermore, although acknowledging the Minister’s prerogative to appoint an Interim Board in terms of section 16(3)(b) of the Tourism Act, following the dissolution of the full-time Board, the committee reiterated its previous recommendation to at least have a five-member Board in order to provide effective leadership to SA Tourism.

The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Thandi Mahambehlala, said: “We are in a situation where there is no leadership stability at the SA Tourism, which requires urgent attention because the entity cannot be allowed to fail. We are going to escalate matters relating this entity to the Leader of Government Business, through the Speaker’s office.”

Meanwhile, the committee has applauded SA Tourism and the Department of Tourism for organising a successful Africa’s Travel Indaba, which is currently taking place at the Inkosi Luthuli Convention Centre in Durban.

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

For media inquiries or interviews with the Chairperson, please contact the committee’s Media Officer:
**Name: Mr Justice Molafo**
**Tel: 021 403 8444**