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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1751**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 31/07/2020**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 29 OF 2020**

**Mr B B Nodada (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology:**

(1) With reference to his reply to question 1285 on 1 July 2020, given that the former Minister of Science and Technology, Mrs M T Kubayi-Ngubane, commissioned a forensic investigation into allegations against Ms Bredenkamp, (a) what were the findings of the forensic investigation and (b) how do the findings compare to the KPMG findings;

(2) (a) what are the relevant details of the involvement of a certain person (name and details furnished) in the project and (b) why was the income of the project written off on instructions of the specified person;

(3) whether any action was taken against the person and a certain other person (name furnished) for making misrepresentations to First National Bank (FNB) regarding their shareholder status in a certain company (name and details furnished) on an FNB document dated 3 July 2015; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**NW2141E**

**REPLY:**

1. The former Minister of Science and Technology, Hon. Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane did not commission another forensic investigation against Ms Bredenkamp, subsequent to the KPMG forensic investigation.

2.a) During the implementation of the project, Ms Busisiwe Ntuli was responsible for oversight at a strategic level. In April/May 2015, it was to Ms Ntuli that the main whistleblower reported allegations of financial misconduct, fraud and nepotism against Ms Bredenkamp. The whistleblower also informed Ms Ntuli that he first reported these allegations in February 2014 to Dr Elmary Buis, the Deputy Director responsible for the operations of the project and to whom Ms Bredenkamp reported. However, Dr Elmary Buis neglected to report these allegations to the department, as required by law. Subsequently, Ms Ntuli reported the matter to her supervisor and the Legal Services Unit of the department, which - following an internal scrutiny of evidence from the whistleblower - resulted in a forensic investigation.

b) At no stage of the project and during the forensic investigation did Ms Ntuli write-off any project income. There was a time during the project where Ms Ntuli and Ms Sibiya were involved in an attempt to recover funds from a company that had been supplied with mango pulp by Ms Bredenkamp, on behalf of the project. The attempt to recover the money proved very difficult because the company alleged that Ms Bredenkamp had supplied a poor-quality product and over a period had continued to supply even though the company had not been paying for initial supplies. Ms Ntuli’s and Ms Sibiya’s efforts did result in the recovery of some of the money for the pulp that the company could sell. Subsequently, the company closed down as it was cash-strapped.

3. Ms Ntuli and Ms Sibiya did not make misrepresentations at FNB, which held funds that were generated from project sales. It was following the whistleblower’s allegations and the process of instituting an investigation that Ms Ntuli and Ms Sibiya informed the bank of two matters: firstly, that the bank account belonged to a company that was opened on behalf of community members who were beneficiaries of the Nkowankowa Demonstration Centre (NDC) project, on the instruction of the department; and secondly, that one of the signatories, Ms Bredenkamp, was under investigation by the department over very serious allegations and requested that she be removed as a signatory. The bank was further informed that the department was in the process of removing Ms Bredenkamp as the care-taker shareholder. The bank informed Ms Ntuli and Ms Sibiya that they would capture the information provided on the system. This was done out of concern that Ms Bredenkamp would access funds in the bank account. Unfortunately, these fears materialized when Miss Bredenkamp went to the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) and fraudulently removed Ms Ntuli and Ms Sibiya as company directors and used the fraudulent document to claim that the company belonged to her, gained access to the bank account and appropriated funding meant for NDC beneficiaries. This, on top of project funds that Ms Bredenkamp, according to the forensic investigation, had stolen from the project through various means. A case of theft was opened against Ms Bredenkamp in relation to the FNB funds. The South African Police Services investigating officer stated that he had obtained evidence from the CIPC that showed that Ms Bredenkamp had in fact fraudulently removed Ms Ntuli and Ms Sibiya as company directors, which went against the authorization of the Director-General of the department.

Dr Elmary Buis, against whom there had been adverse findings in the forensic investigation report at the time, laid a complaint about the FNB account against Ms Ntuli and Ms Sibiya with the Human Resources Unit of the department in 2018. The complaint was investigated by an independent individual, who cleared both Ms Ntuli and Ms Sibiya. Subsequently, Dr Elmary Buis laid the same complaint with the Public Services Commission (PSC), which also cleared Ms Ntuli.