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MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

22 FEBRUARY 2023

SIU AUTHORISED TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS OF MISMANAGEMENT OF THE ILIMA/LETSEMA SUPPORT PROGRAMME IN THE FORMER NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

President Cyril Ramaphosa has signed Proclamation R 114 of 2023 authorising the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) to investigate allegations of maladministration and corruption in the former National Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' (DAFF) project Ilima/Letsema Support Programme (Letsema), and to recover any financial losses suffered by the State. DAFF is now called Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development.

This is an amendment of Proclamation R36 of 2019. During an investigation in the affairs of DAFF under proclamation R36 of 2019, the SIU uncovered evidence relating to project Letsema which needed to be followed up but was not covered by the proclamation schedule. The SIU prepared a motivation for the proclamation to be amended to include project Letsema.

The proclamation R 114 of 2023 authorises the SIU to probe allegations of maladministration in relation to the mismanagement of project Letsema, the allocation and use of project Letsema funds; and the monitoring of projects that were funded in terms of the Letsema, and any related unauthorised, irregular, or fruitless and wasteful expenditure incurred by the former DAFF, or the State.

Furthermore, the SIU's investigation will look into the use of Letsema funds to procure or contract for goods or services by or on behalf of the former DAFF, and payments which were made in respect thereof.

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The probe will also include investigating any unlawful or improper conduct by the employees or officials of the former DAFF or applicable service providers, or any other person or entity in relation to the allegations of maladministration.

The Proclamation covers offences which took place between inception of Letsema and 17 February 2023 or after the date of publication of this Proclamation, but is relevant to, connected with, incidental or ancillary to the matters mentioned in the Schedule or involve the same persons, entities or contracts investigated.

In line with the SIU Act, SIU will refer evidence pointing to criminal conduct it uncovers during its investigations to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for further action. The SIU is empowered to institute civil action in the High Court or a Special Tribunal in its name, to correct any wrongdoing uncovered during its investigation caused by acts of corruption, fraud, or maladministration.

Fraud and corruption allegations may be reported via the following platforms:

siu@hotline.co.za / **Hotline: 0800 037 774.**

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STRIKING AGAINST CORRUPTION

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