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MEDIA RESPONSE:

TO: NEWS24: JENNI EVANS

FROM: SITA EXECUTIVE CARETAKER: LUVUYO KEYISE

DATE: 19 APRIL 2021

RE: Response To News24 About Department Of Home Affairs System Outages

The State Information Technology Agency (SITA) recognises the severity of the issue caused by Home Affairs systems being down. There may be a variety of intertwining factors, that relates to long queues or client service delivery dissatisfaction. One of the reasons could be network outages, and to this end Department of Home Affairs (DHA) offices and SITA is working to find solutions.

The DHA and SITA have established a high-level task team to address the network and system issues which have affected various services. This task team is chaired by the Deputy Director-General Institutional Planning and Support and incorporates various SITA business units; as well as 3rd party suppliers contracted directly to DHA responsible for the network and systems at Home Affairs.

The task team is mandated to co-ordinate and prioritise various activities and projects in order to stabilise and improve services to the DHA and affected citizens. The task team has identified various areas of intervention which include revisiting the architecture for the solutions deployed for the DHA.

Key activities in the above regard include:

- The identification of single points of failure on the network with a view to remediating these risks and implementing backup/ failover links. In other words, most DHA offices only have one line of data connectivity. SITA is working with the DHA to implement more than one network connection per office so that there is a backup system in place should there be an issue with the primary network. On a national level the SITA has ensured that the DHA networks now have multiple redundancy systems in place to ensure that there is a backup system in place and the national network does not go down. Managers of Home Affairs offices are able to get updates on their mobile devices to be able to track which networks are down nationally. Managers of Home Affairs offices have visibility of their systems and whether they are online or not. Usually

Directors: Mr. O Shelembe: **Acting Chairperson**; Mr. L Keyise: **Executive Caretaker**¹; Mr. M K Kgauwe: **Chief Financial Officer** ²,
Mr. A Pretorius: **Chief Financial Officer (Acting)**³
Ms. V Xaxa: **Company Secretary**

¹ Executive Director

² Executive Director currently on secondment

³ Executive Director

SITA ensures that systems that are down are back online within an hour or two, unless there is some bigger hardware or infrastructure issue (such as due to copper theft or damage to fibre lines, or power and generators blowing and damaging disks in the system, for example). We are working with the DHA to ensure that each office has a backup network so that systems do not need to be down at all, there should be no redundancy.

- The identification of key service delivery sites which have experienced network outages. These are the frontline systems which are used to process citizen applications and are managed by a number of different service providers whose systems might be down. Part of the work that we do as SITA is to advise the DHA that one of these systems are down or is about to go down and we let them know how to bring the system back online as quickly as possible.
- The identification of key service delivery sites which require higher levels of service (Platinum, Gold and Silver), which means there can be an upgrade on systems using the ICT vehicles that do exist. Certain Home Affairs offices experience more issues and outages more frequently than others and these need to be prioritised.
- All activities are jointly agreed to and prioritised in order to ensure improved service delivery to the DHA.

ENDS.