

MEDIA STATEMENT

THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES MOURNS THE PASSING OF INDUSTRY VETERAN AND FORMER DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, MR PAKAMILE “PAKI” PONGWANA

19 August 2021

The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) received with shock the sad news of the passing on of an illustrious ICT industry veteran and former Deputy Director-General in the Department, Mr Pakamile “Paki” Pongwana on Thursday, 12 August 2021.

Mr Pongwana’s well documented service to the people of South Africa saw him grace the Department’s precursor, the Department of Communications (DoC) as Deputy Director-General responsible for telecommunications policy from 2001 to 2005. His gallant contribution to the development of the sector to be more inclusive and prosperous will remain his legacy to be cherished for ages.

At the DoC, he was a mandarin appointed to oversee Telkom’s initial public offering on the JSE and the New York Stock Exchange. He was also responsible for overseeing the drafting of the Electronic Communications & Transaction Act. Additionally leading the sector regulator, the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) as CEO for four years and Vodacom’s Managing Executive for Regulatory Affairs, for eight years.

Paki, as affectionally known by many, received his formal education at the University of Fort Hare in Alice, where he first enrolled for a Bachelor of Science degree in the early 80s - shortly after matriculating at St Johns College in Mthatha. His studies were however cut short by political involvement that ultimately saw him skip the country to join Umkhonto Wesizwe (MK) in exile where he received military training, rose through the ranks, and did an Advanced Communications course in Russia.

He served in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) after integration of the armed forces after the first democratic elections in 2004 where he was ranked colonel until he retired to join the Department in 2001.

His passion for education saw him obtain a BCompt (financial accounting and auditing) from Walter Sisulu University and an MBL from the Unisa School of Business Leadership after returning from exile.

The Department and sector in general will sorely miss Mr Pongwana’s wealth of knowledge, selfless service and dedication to the upliftment of his fellow man as it continues his legacy of unleashing the economic potential of the ICT sector.

To his family, friends, and sector colleagues, we wish to extend our condolences, as we honour a life well lived.

For Inquiries:

Siphiwo Nzawumbi- Departmental Spokesperson

061 491 1802