**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**CORRECTION: COMMITTEES ON TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SUPPORT THE INITIATIVE BY SOUTH AFRICA AND INDIA FOR A TEMPORARY TRIPS WAIVER**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 1 June 2021 –** The Portfolio Committee on Trade, Industry and Competition and the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation were briefed today on the proposal for a temporary Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver for Covid-19 vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The committees pledged their unwavering support for the initiative by South Africa and India for a temporary TRIPS waiver. The waiver would fall under permissible exceptions under the Marrakesh Agreement. It allows developing and least developed countries to access medicines and other medical interventions at more affordable prices, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Trade and Industry Committee Chairperson, Mr Duma Nkosi, said: “If  approved, the waiver would allow South Africa and developing countries to ramp up production and diversify supply of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics and provide more affordable doses for less wealthy countries. This is a step in the right direction to ensure the health and well-being of poorer nations.”

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Tandi Mahambehlala, said that all efforts to prevent, treat and contain Covid-19, must be based on the bedrock of human rights principles of international solidarity, cooperation and assistance. She said: “Intellectual  property rights should not override ‘States’ obligations to protect and fulfill the right to health to all without discrimination.”

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR DUMA NKOSI, AND THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION, MS TANDI MAHAMBEHLALA**