**FUNDING CHALLENGES SHOULD NOT BE DETERRENT TO EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 2 July 2019 –** The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs has urged the Department of Home Affairs, and the Electoral Commission of South Africa to find innovative ways to mitigate against funding pressures that the department and its entities are currently facing.

The committee highlighted that funding challenges are a current reality for all departments, but this challenge presents an opportunity to innovate and find workable solutions to ensure effective service delivery. The committee is cognisant that diminishing revenue as compared to increasing demands for services are putting unavoidable pressures on the department and its entities. Today, the department and its entities briefed the committee on its Annual Performance Plan.

“The committee welcomes plans to reposition the Department of Home Affairs as a modern, secure and professional department. The committee also values the intention to strengthen Public Private Partnerships with banks to expand the footprint of the department as this will ensure service delivery is taken to the doorsteps of South Africans,” said Chairperson of the Committee Advocate Bongani Bongo.

The strengthening of Intergovernmental Relations with other key government departments such as the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) and the Department of Public Works should focus on improving the end user experience. The department must ultimately reach a level of service delivery acceptable to all. The committee will in its oversight place focus on ensuring that the department offers quality services which include reduction of down time of IT systems and overall improvement of quality of services.

The digitisation and modernisation of Home Affairs is also critical in enhancing the security of the national identity system. The credibility of the national identity system is central in ensuring security of the country. The Committee has also called for the strengthening of programmes to combat fraud and corruption within the department which have the potential to expose the national population register to external threats.

With regard to the Electoral Commission of South Africa, the committee notes and welcomes plans to improve the electoral process using the recent national and provincial elections as a baseline. The plans to replace the outdated Zip-Zip machines with new online voter registration technology, the updating of the voters roll as per the Constitutional Court ruling as well as increased voter education.

The committee welcomes the announcement by the IEC that they will conduct public hearings from August 2019 to conclude the regulations which are necessary to implement the Political Party Funding Act as ascended into law by the President. The committee emphasised the need to conclude the regulation process to ensure that the act is implemented.

In relation to the Government Printing Works the committee called for government wide utilisation of GPW as the main printer to eliminate wastage especially within the current financial challenges. The committee commended the good work that the Government Printing Works continues to do and has urged the Minister to explore processes to assess the feasibility of using GPW as the major printer for all government departments.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS, ADV BONGANI BONGO**