**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE URGES DEPARTMENT TO WORK WITH SPEED TO BRING UPGRADING OF LAND TENURE RIGHTS ACT BEFORE PARLIAMENT**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 20 August 2019 –** The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development today requested the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to work with haste to heed the Constitutional Court judgement of 30 October 2018 in relation to section 2 (1) of the 1991 Upgrading of Land Tenure Rights Act, which was found to be constitutionally invalid because it discriminates against women.

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandela, said: “We are mindful of the deadline imposed by the Constitutional Court and April 2020 is fast approaching. We therefore urge the department to work with speed and to meet this deadline, considering that this Bill must be processed by both Houses.”

The Upgrading of Land Tenure Rights Act provides for the transfer of land tenure to full ownership rights. However, women have no ownership rights in terms of the Act. During the apartheid era, it was almost impossible for black people to own land, but when they did, land was registered in the names of men, while women were excluded all together.

The department has been tasked with finding out how many women have had land transferred to them under this Act and registered at the Deeds Office. The department must also advise the committee when the process to start the amendment will commence.

**ISSUED BY PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, NKOSI ZWELIVELILE MANDELA.**