**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE APPLAUDS THE MINISTER AND HER TEAM FOR TAKING THE DEPARTMENT FORWARD**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 9 October 2019** - The Portfolio Committee on Tourism received briefings from the Office of the Auditor-General on audit outcomes of the Department of Tourism and the South African Tourism on its financial performance for 2018/19 financial year yesterday.

Today, the committee also received a briefing from the South African Tourism on its annual performance report for the for 2018/19 financial year.

The committee expressed its satisfaction with the work of the new Minister of Tourism, Ms MmaMoloko Kubayi-Ngubane and her team of rebranding, repositioning, and renewing the department for the purposes of translating the National Development Plan into action.

The committee has applauded the 85% achievement of the department’s intended objectives. At the same time, the committee has expressed its concerns on audit outcome, a regression from unqualified to qualified.

“We are however pleased as a committee that the Minister and the team have explained the reasons for regression, we applaud them for the swift remedial action taken against those suspected and found guilty for wrong doing that resulted in fruitless, wasteful and irregular expenditure,” said the Chairperson of the committee, Mr Supra Mahumapelo.

As part of the way forward, the committee has agreed with both the AG and the department that the internal financial management systems will be strengthened, and on a monthly and quarterly basis, the department will submit reports to the committee.

The committee has expressed its concern on the poor performance of 56% by the South African Tourism Board and worrying emerging signs around fruitless, wasteful and irregular expenditure incurred. The committee has also applauded the Minister for the decisive action taken against those involved in wrong doing.

The committee supports the commitment of both the department and the South African Tourism of paying attention to tourism activities in the villages, townships and small towns. “It is our belief as the committee that tourism must assist in dealing with the challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment in these areas,” emphasised Mr Mahumapelo.

The committee has urged the Minister to ensure that other relevant departments such as the Department of Sports Arts and Culture, Small Business and others, assist in ensuring that the department achieves its intended objectives of building tourism entrepreneurs.

The committee looks forward to pursuing its twin strategic objectives of radical transformation in the tourism sector and strengthening of oversight by introducing the villages, townships and small dorpies (towns) oversight forums where the frontiers of poverty must be pushed back.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, MR SUPRA MAHUMAPELO.**