**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE URGES DEPARTMENT TO PRIORITISE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 9 October 2019** – The Portfolio Committee on Social Development has urged the Department of Social Development to prioritise programmes that seek to deal with gender-based violence. As a country, South Africa is plagued by the scourge of gender-based violence and it is crucial for the department to attend to this matter.

The committee was today briefed by the department, the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) and the National Development Agency (NDA) on their annual reports. The committee is pleased to learn that the department is running a gender-based violence command centre that is assisting victims that require help.

The command centre, which currently employs 44 social workers, provides online counselling and uses technology to geo-map where the violence is happening, and also ensures that the different services that deal with such cases receive reliable and accurate information. The committee has committed itself to conduct an oversight visit to the command centre to see how this service is working.

Due to the serious issues raised by the Auditor-General on the Sassa and NDA regarding challenges of leadership, vacancy rate in key positions and internal controls, the committee has requested the department to provide a detailed action plan that entails all the issues raised by the Auditor-General, particularly when it comes to the Memorandum of Understanding between Sassa and South African Post Office (Sapo) on social grants payments. The committee has requested the department to table the action plan before the committee in the next meeting.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MR MONDLI GUNGUBELE.**