**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARS PUBLIC PROTECTOR NEEDS R110 MILLION**

**Parliament, Friday, 18 October 2019 –**The Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services today engaged with the office of the Public Protector (PPSA) on its’ 2018/19 Annual Report and commended the office on the unqualified audit it received from the Auditor-General.

The committee heard that the office performed at 72% of its target, which is a 22% improvement on the targets reach in the 2017/18 financial year.

Committee Chairperson Mr Bulelani Magwanishe said this is a good sign. “Before, you also indicated you are technically insolvent. Now we have passed that. There has been serious improvement. Your office must be commended.”

The committee further heard that additional funding required, to the baseline allocation, for the PPSA to be able fulfil its mandate over the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period is R110.9 million.

It also emerged that the office of the PPSA does not have security services in 18 of its 19 offices across the country, with only the Head Office having security services. According to the PPSA’s presentation, there have been several night-time break-ins and robberies of staff when they our working late. “These pose threats to PPSA staff members, clients, assets and documents. Security in our offices is therefore key and important and requires immediate funding. The funding requested amounts to R19.4 million over the MTEF,” said Adv Busisiwe Mkhwebane, Public Protector.

During the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years, 33 positions became vacant due to resignations. Due to         budget constraints, PPSA could not fill these positions. The number of critical positions PPSA requests funding for will amount to R49.7 million over the MTEF.

The committee heard that Parliament's attention should be drawn to the fact that some organs of state still look the other way when the office of the PP points them to their administrative lapses. “This is in spite of the instructive Constitutional Court decision, which clarified once and for all that my remedial action is binding, unless set aside by a court of law. This leaves a lot of the complainants, in whose favour we have made findings and taken appropriate remedial action, in limbo. Moreover, owing to insufficient resources, my office cannot afford to have the remedial action we have taken enforced through the courts. As far as the affected parties are concerned, this renders this office somewhat toothless,” said Adv Busisiwe Mkhwebane.

The committee also heard that it was for this reason that, at the end of the period under review, a list of nearly 40 organs of state were published, which have either ignored PPSA reports in their entirety or implemented only part of the remedial action. Unfortunately, in some cases, this only served to harden attitudes and invited more litigation.

It further emerged that the office’s accumulated deficit was reduced at the end of 2018/19 to R3.5 million after the institution reported a surplus.

Mr Magwanishe also expressed the committee’s thanks and gratitude to outgoing Deputy Public Protector, Adv Kevin Malunga. His term is coming to an end in December 2019. “We want to thank you for seven years of service to the South African public. We are grateful you have spent so much time in the service of your people.”

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, MR BULELANI MAGWANISHE.**