**COMMITTEE COMMENDS NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR MAINTAINING CLEAN AUDIT OUTCOME FOR FIVE YEARS**

Parliament, Tuesday, 5 November 2019 – The Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities welcomed the clean audit outcomes by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) for its annual report and financial statements for 2018/19.

The committee commended the NYDA and indicated that it needs to maintain the clean audit outcome as it has for the past five years. However, the committee noted with concern and questioned whether the targets the NYDA sets for itself were actually too low as several were overachieved, looking at the organisation’s performance.

The Board Chairperson, Mr Sfiso Mtsweni, said in his response they don’t set low targets as these are informed by several factors but the problem with the NYDA is the budget allocation. “There’s only so much we can do based on what we have,” he said.

Notwithstanding that, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Waseem Carrim, noted that “we continue to pursue partnerships throughout the financial year and therefore we have been able to secure donor funds to enable us to do more and it was for this reason that certain targets were exceeded due to additional resources”.

On the issue of visibility in the various provinces, particularly in rural areas and townships, the committee remained concerned that NYDA offices are not accessible to all young people in rural areas and townships. In its response, the NYDA acknowledged that it is not stationed everywhere, but since the board came into office, the number of offices have increased from 15 to 40 in the various provinces and that its footprint has also increased in district municipalities.

The committee remained concerned about the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) and mental health concerns among students, and thus questioned if the NYDA had programmes and mechanisms in place to address these issues. The NYDA said in its next meeting with the committee, it will provide and present the work it is implementing around GBV and mental health as these are matters that are concerning and require attention.

The NYDA reported that no irregular expenditure was incurred during the 2018/19 financial year. However, the committee noted that the Auditor-General identified a potential conflict of interest on two procurement transactions, where an employee of the NYDA did not declare the relationship with the service provider, nor did the service provider do so. The NYDA outlined to the committee the policy in place for NYDA employees in terms of declaring any conflict of interest. The matter at hand is in the process of being dealt with and the CEO assured the committee that given the outcome of the investigation by its Internal Audit unit, the implicated official has been suspended, disciplinary charges will be pursued, and the maximum sentence to be imposed will be in line with consequence management.

In terms of governance of the board, the committee acknowledged the importance of the filling of vacancies for the board, and the matter pertaining to the temporary accounting authority will be followed up with the Minister as a matter of urgency.

ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE ACTING CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, MS FIKILE MASIKO