**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
   
**TOURISM COMMITTEE WELCOMES THE WAIVER BY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND SUPPORTS THE DEPARTMENT’S PROGRAMMES AIMED AT RURAL TOURISM**  
   
**Parliament, Tuesday, 12 November 2019** – The Portfolio Committee on Tourism welcomes the signing of the waiver of unabridged certificates by the Minister of Home Affairs, which allows for foreign children to enter the country without additional supporting documents, such as birth certificates and consent letters. The relaxing of the regulations, which previously impeded tourists from travelling to South Africa with their children is now welcomed, as tourism is one of the main job creators and boosts the economy. This waiver means that tourism will now be closer to achieving the target of 21 million by 2030.  
   
Today the Committee received a briefing by the Department of Tourism on the National Rural Tourism Strategy, which was developed in 2012 to unlock the potential of rural tourism and cultural heritage sites. The Chairperson of the Tourism Committee, Mr Supra Mahumapelo, said that rural nodes of tourism (destinations, cultural and heritage sites, arts and craft hubs etc) must be prioritised and the focus must be shifted to villages, townships and small towns as that’s where unemployment and poverty exists.  
   
Tourism must be innovative to work within the space of creating jobs and alleviating poverty and the committee applauds the department on its two programmes aimed at the youth - the National Youth Chefs Training Programme, which has thus far trained 2 072 young people, and the Youth in Hospitality Training Programme, in which 5783 youth have benefitted in the last nine years. However, the Committee has noted the target for the 2019/2020 year of  3900 and which would support the Department to achieve their job creation targets.  
   
The committee is concerned that the Rural Tourism Strategy focuses on developed entities, such as the Kruger National Park and other World Heritage Sites, and is silent on the support given to rural areas where people live in abject poverty.  
   
**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, MR SUPRA MAHUMAPELO.**