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| **MEDIA STATEMENT**  **COMMITTEE CALLS ON UTHUKELA TOURISM, ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY AND DEPARTMENT OF COGTA TO PROPERLY ADDRESS PETITIONS** **Parliament, Tuesday, 10 August 2021 –** The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) has considered a petition from the uThukela Tourism, Hospitality and the associated industries sector, calling on the National Assembly (NA) to assist the sector in having all Covid-19 regulations affecting its operations lifted. The committee also had an engagement with the eThekwini metro on the petition relating to the Ward 52 matter affecting the residents of Bhambayi, Bamba, Brooks farm and Amaoti. It is now more than a year since the first meeting on 31 July 2020 and the committee is concerned that the matter has not yet been resolved to the satisfaction of the affected communities. The Speaker of the NA has previously asked the committee for a report-back on the matter. “We have not been able to present tangible progress, except to say that we have visited the area. This is not good enough. We want to report on tangible progress, not only to the satisfaction of the Office of the Speaker, but most importantly, to the satisfaction of the affected communities,” said Ms Faith Muthambi, the committee Chairperson. The committee’s meeting on this petition was on 7 April 2021 where it recommended that the eThekwini metro should investigate the concerns raised by the Steering Committee of Bhambayi and report back to this committee by 15 April 2021. The municipality did not comply, which is one of the reasons the committee has a meeting today. On the petition on uThukela Tourism, Hospitality and associated industries sector, the Deputy Director-General: National Disaster Management Centre, Dr Mmaphaka Ephraim Tau, said the problems contained in the petition cut across different sectors and proposed different options to address the problems of the petitioners. The options included an option to encourage the petitioners to approach the Director-General of the Department of Tourism to table the issues to the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure to be processed to the different relevant departments, and he said there are new norms and standards that have been approved and that perhaps will address the problems. The committee told Dr Tau that the way forward was the submission of the petition to the Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure and the consideration of the recently approved norms and standards. Ms Muthambi said: “The petition has been with the committee for a long time and Parliament is an institution of last resort and a last hope of the petitioners.” She said the committee expects  a report which will be shared with the petitioners soon. On Ward 52, Bhambayi, Brooks farm, Mamba and Amoati petition, the committee sent the eThekwini municipality back to properly attend to  the problems contained in the petition and to report to the committee in seven days. The committee reiterated that the petition has been brought before the committee for a long time and must be finalised by attending the concerns raised in the petition to the satisfaction of the petitioners. **ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MS FAITH MUTHAMBI.** For media enquiries or interviews with the Chairperson, please contact the committee’s Media Officer:Name: Sureshinee GovenderParliamentary Communication ServicesCell: 081 704 1109E-mail: sugovender@parliament.gov.za     |

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