**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**TOURISM COMMITTEE WELCOMES THE CREATION OF THE TOURISM EQUITY FUND**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 18 February 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Tourism today met to reflect and conclude on the issues presented by President Cyril Ramaphosa in the State of the Nation Address. The committee welcomed the creation of the Tourism Equity Fund, which will contribute towards transformation in the sector. The committee also welcomed the stepping up of measures to provide safety for tourists.  This will enhance the rebranding of South Africa and assist in the work towards the target of over 20 million tourist visitors by 2030.

The committee urges the government to continue assessing the risk associated with the possible decline of tourism and developing mechanisms for mitigation. This includes the threat posed by the corona virus. It is the committee's view that more work needs to be done to ensure that key departments work together to  strengthen tourism.

The committee looks forward to hearing from the Minister of Tourism on the details regarding tourism in rural areas, with specific focus on villages, townships and small towns (dorpies), because that is where poverty and unemployment are more pronounced. The committee will be interacting with traditional leaders, tourism chairpersons in provincial legislatures, municipalities and communities, as part of its moves to entrench tourism as an opportunity for entrepreneurship.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, MR SUPRA MAHUMAPELO.**