**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**TOURISM COMMITTEE ENGAGES WITH NATIONAL HOUSE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE TOURISM IN VILLAGES**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 3 March 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Tourism today met with the National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) to discuss the state of tourism in villages and small towns.

This meeting was called by the Portfolio Committee on Tourism, which identified the potential of villages to use tourism to develop their local economy and thus contribute to the GDP of the country. The triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment can be addressed in villages by creating jobs and entrepreneurships through tourism initiatives such as cultural tourism promoting accommodation (homestays), tours to historical sites such as battle sites, storytelling, arts, crafts, and indigenous food. Such initiatives provide opportunities for local unemployed people to become employable.

The Portfolio Committee on Tourism will be working with the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to discuss ways of unlocking grants and funding for the development of tourist hubs in villages as currently funding goes to towns and cities and villages are left out. The CoGTA committee will be called on to ensure that villages get their equitable share through the allocation of funding to municipalities.

The NHTL is in agreement that the development of tourism in villages can work and is ready to collaborate, however, it has identified that some government departments work in silos and this has to cease in order for tourism to be successful and instrumental in the development of communities in villages.  The NHTL has called for a combined approach of all government departments such as the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development, CoGTA and the Department of Tourism to ensure that once land is handed over to a community as part of land restitution, the Department of Tourism then takes over to ensure that the community is sufficiently capacitated and resourced to develop and sustain the project.

More importantly, a call to the Department of CoGTA will be made to ensure that the National Development Plan and municipal Integrated Development Plans ensure that the development of roads, water, electricity and sanitation are in place.

The Tourism Committee will ignite the profiling of all villages in South Africa to be uploaded on Google Maps and will ensure that the Department of Tourism prioritises the development of village tourism in this financial year, said the Chairperson of the Tourism Committee, Mr Supra Mahumapelo.

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