**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CALLS FOR FINALISATION OF LAND RESTITUTION**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 17 March 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land and Rural Development today received a presentation on Project Kuyasa (Dawn of Opportunity) from the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR).

The law states that a person or community dispossessed of property after June 1913, as a result of the past unjust laws and practices, is entitled to the extent provided by an Act of Parliament, either to restitution of that property or to equitable redress (Section 25 (7)).

The CRLR provided many reasons for the challenges experienced in finalising the claims and one of the main reasons is the LAMOSA judgement of 2016 which halted all the new claims from being lodged until the claims from 1988 were finalised.

The CRLR also indicated that they are not autonomous and that impedes on their work, furthermore, they do not have the capacity to stand alone as they do not have sufficient human resources to carry out their work.

Another reason which the CRLR highlighted was that they have received 79 696 claims to date, and the backlog that has been there of the outstanding claims stands at 7743.  The department told the committee that the slow pace of land restitution is also due to a number of reasons that include the difficulty to transfer State land due to the number of protocols which must be adhered to.

The committee also heard that the business process is not standardised across the provinces and there is no electronic system available for the tracking of claims.

Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandela said: “We hope that the expropriation of land without compensation can be fast-tracked so that we can be able to deal decisively with land restitution.” There are communities who do not want monetary compensation, but want land, and such land must be developed for them.

Nkosi Mandela appealed to the Department of Agriculture, Land  Reform and Rural development to take note of the comments that were made by people attending the public hearings of the Ad hoc Committee to Initiate and Introduce Legislation Amending Section 25 of the Constitution in order to allow for the expropriation of land without compensation.

He said some people say in the public hearings that they want their land soon, and that the 1913 cut-off date must be deleted and be replaced by 1652 in the Constitution.

The department will report back to the committee after all the outstanding claims have been audited in order to come up with the actual figure of what the final land claims will cost the state.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, NKOSI ZWELIVELILE MANDELA.**