**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**JOINT MEETING OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEES WANTS EFFICIENT EXECUTION OF COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS FROM DEPARTMENT AND SASSA**

**Parliament, Thursday, 23 April 2020**– A joint meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development and the Select Committee on Health and Social Services has requested that the Department of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) implement the proposed interventions efficiently.

Furthermore, the committees requested that Sassa offices be opened during the lockdown period. This will assist the public to have a point of contact and communication with regards to access to social grants and social relief measures that have been introduced by government as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The committees have urged the department to ensure that the hotline is functional and accessible to the public.

The committees welcomed the department’s decision to distribute food vouchers in addition to food parcels. This decision will ensure that the challenges that arose as a result of the alleged unfair distribution of food parcels are eliminated. The grant of R350 for the unemployed and the top-up grant for social grant beneficiaries have also been welcomed by the committees. The committees were informed that the process of when and how the R350 will be distributed will be communicated by the department.

The committees emphasised the importance of effective monitoring and evaluation to ensure that duplication, fraud and corruption will have no space to thrive as a result of this pandemic. It is also important for the department to properly define the process of distribution from the food bank to where the people who receive food parcels are.

The committees also emphasised the importance of politicians refraining from interfering in the distribution of food parcels. Chairpersons emphasised that the role of politicians is to conduct oversight over the department. The committees further emphasised the importance of concrete departmental plans for the post-Covid-19 pandemic period, as the effects of the pandemic will be felt long after it has passed.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MR MONDLI GUNGUBELE AND THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, MS MAURENCIA GILLION.**