**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEES NOTE RESPONSES FROM DEPARTMENT ON BEITBRIDGE BORDER FENCE, EPWP BENEFICIARIES AND QUARANTINE SITES FOR COVID-19**

**Parliament, Monday, 4 May 2020 –**A joint meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works and Infrastructure, and the Select Committee on Transport, Public Service and Administration, Public Works and Infrastructure, has noted the responses of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in relation to Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) beneficiaries, quarantine sites and the Beitbridge Border Fence Erection Project.

The committees are, however, of the view that the safety of EPWP beneficiaries may require attention with regards to personal protective equipment, as vulnerable people cannot be allowed to fall ill while working. The committees are also pleased with the instruction from the Minister of DPWI, Ms Patricia de Lille, that during the Covid-19 lockdown period all EPWP beneficiaries under contract should remain as beneficiaries, and that the beneficiaries would be able to draw from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) once their contracts expire.

Another issue the committees want the department to look at, is the high costs charged by hotels for quarantine sites. They believe that private businesses should control the need to make maximum profit especially during the times of human suffering.

The Minister has informed the committees that she has requested the Auditor-General (AG) to assess whether the department complied with the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), and the National Treasury emergency procurement regulations with regards to the Beitbridge Border Fence Erection Project. The committees have been informed that the AG has requested more time to investigate the matter.

The two hours allocated time for today’s meeting with the department provided the committees with limited opportunity to exercise thorough oversight over the matters under discussion. The committees resolved to visit the Beitbridge Border Fence Erection Project site as soon as it is possible. They have requested an updated presentation from the department on the project, and on other maintenance work on land ports of entry.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, MS NOLITHA NTOBONGWANA AND THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, MR KENNETH MMOIEMANG**