**MEDIA STATEMENT: COMMITTEES ON TOURISM WELCOME POST-COVID-19 TOURISM RECOVERY PLANS**

**Parliament, Monday, 4 May 2020** – The Portfolio Committee on Tourism, and the Select Committee on Trade and Industry, Economic Development, Small Business Development, Tourism, Employment and Labour today received a briefing from the Minister of Tourism on the impact of Covid -19 pandemic on the Tourism Industry, and the mitigating measures initiated by the department.

The committees heard that coronavirus affects everyone and knows no race, gender, rural or urban community. They heard that the pandemic has had a devastating effect on the tourism industry and has crippled both tourism business owners and employees alike with job losses and loss of revenue.

The committees heard that the consequences of the lockdown regulations that stipulated the closure of non-essential businesses to flatten the curve of the virus had a crippling effect on the tourism industry.

Both committees welcomed the Tourism Relief Fund which provides a once-off capped grant assistance to Small Micro and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMMEs) in the tourism value chain to ensure their sustainability during, and after the implementation of government measures to curb the spread of Covid-19.

The Minister of Tourism, Ms Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane said that, whilst the department received in the excess of 11 000 applications, 4000 entities will be assisted with R50 000 each from this fund.

The committees saluted Minister Kubayi-Ngbane for defending the Tourism Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Codes of Good Practices which is in line with the B-BBEE Amendment Act No.46 of 2013.

They welcomed the court judgement which they said is in line with the objectives of economic transformation.

The committees said the disbursement of funds will ensure equitable spatial distribution amongst all the nine provinces, and ensure that villages, townships and small dorpies are not left with less than their equitable share.

They lauded and appreciated the contribution of the tourism sector of R30 million for the use of the three hotels in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town that are going to be used as quarantine facilities.

The department also called on tourism establishments to avail their facilities to be used as quarantine sites.

The committees called upon the Department of Tourism to liaise with other relevant government departments for synergy and synchronicity of all efforts to ease the burden carried by the tourism industry.

Considering the Risk-Adjusted Approach, the sector may remain closed for a long time as traveling remains banned.

The committees noted that the department has embarked on a widespread consultation with international stakeholders from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, G20 countries, continental stakeholders through the African Union as well as local stakeholders to develop, and implement a comprehensive National Tourism Recovery Plan to support the industry to recover from the losses caused by the covid-19 pandemic.

The committees welcomed the reprioritisation of the budget for covid-19.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, AND SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR.**