**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS DIRECTS DEPARTEMENT TO COMPLY WITH PPE PROTOCOLS**

**Parliament, Thursday, 07 May 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs has directed the Department of Home Affairs to urgently procure the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the frontline officials to ensure that they deliver services in a safe environment. The PPEs are part of the necessary and required tools used in adhering to the Department of Health and World Health Organisation protocols in fighting COVID-19 pandemic.

Members of the committee visited various offices of Home Affairs across the country and the majority of them reported that a number of offices, especially in the Limpopo, Western Cape and Mpumalanga provinces were closed, due to the shortage of PPEs and thermometers. “It is important that the department must urgently procure those PPEs using the National Treasury Instruction No.05 of 2020/21 which sets out emergency procurement procedures in response to National State of Disaster,” said Advocate Bongani Bongo, the Chairperson of the committee.

The major preoccupation of the committee is to ensure that Home Affairs offices are open and that people get identity documents that are required to access the recently announced social assistance interventions by the state.

The committee welcomes the report that, despite the closure of some of the offices yesterday, the work of issuing death certificates to enable families to bury their loved ones was done.

Regarding the Lindela Repatriation Centre escape, the committee welcomed the swift action by the Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, in dealing with the contracted security company. Furthermore, the committee welcomes the suspension, by the private company, of the security guards that are alleged to have left early from work. The committee has committed to visit Lindela Centre to listen to the concerns alleged to be raised by detainees at the centre.

Regarding the Medium-Term Strategic Framework, the committee welcomes the commitment to the incremental establishment, and operationalisation of the Border Management Agency intended to secure the borders of the country. The committee, since its inception, highlighted the significance of the Border Management Agency (BMA) for coordination of the management of South Africa’s ports of entry, and as a tool for the security of borders.

The implementation of the Automated Biometric Information System and e-Visa regime is dependent on the department with a state-of-the-art Information Services Branch. Based on that, the committee raised concerns that the department is experiencing capacity challenges in its ICT branch.

Furthermore, the committee said the department together with the State Information Technology Agency must heighten their work towards resolving the connectivity challenges that have impacted on service delivery in the department as this will have a direct impact on the implementation of innovative Information Technology interventions.

The implementation of the E-Visa regime will be necessary when the country’s tourism sector kick-starts after the lockdown, a move which will be essential as a post-lockdown economic recovery strategy. “The end of the lockdown period presents an opportunity for the department to implement the e-visa system and contribute positively to the country’s GDP,” Adv Bongo said.

Meanwhile the committee is concerned that the operationalisation of the National Identity System was not achieved by the department due to supply chain management challenges that delay the appointing a service provider. The committee believes strongly that the department will overcome the SCM challenges that it encounters currently. According to its oversight role, the committee will monitor the implementation of this system in the MTSF period.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS, ADVOCATE BONGANI BONGO**