**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION EXPRESS CONCERNS OVER SACE’S CHALLENGE TO ENFORCE SANCTIONS ON EDUCATORS WHO VIOLATE ETHICAL STANDARDS**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 12 May 2020 –**A joint meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, and the Select Committee on Education and Technology, Sports, Arts and Culture has raised concerns over the challenge faced by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) to enforce sanctions against educators who are found guilty of violating ethical standards.

According to SACE’s Chief Executive officer (CEO), Ms Ella Mokgalane, investigations and disciplinary hearings will not be executed as planned, due to observation of social distance, travelling by teachers and learners as well as the unavailability of learners as witnesses due to the closure of schools. Ms Mokgalane said this will result in very slow turnaround time, rolling over many cases to the next financial year, and delay the application of justice on the part of children.

After the committees heard that the educators who are found guilty of violating ethical standards, move from province to province, they asked SACE about the existence of measures in place to ensure that the perpetrators are easily identified. Also, the committees asked SACE about the existence of measures prohibiting the readmission of these educators in the education sector.

Members of the committees and SACE officials agreed on the need to urgently include in legislation such as the Children’s Act, measures to enforce sanctions as to prohibit transgressors from re-entering the system. This follows SACE’s revelation that in many instances it is difficult to impose sanctions against those found guilty since parents don’t always allow their children to be witnesses, the use of bribery by the perpetrators to parents, and the failure of the employers to impose sanctions.

SACE was asked by the committees to explain budget allocations of R1.5 Million for publicity and communication, R3.4 million for rates, water and electricity; and also, of R800 000 for telephone services. The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, Ms Bongiwe Mbinqo-Gigaba who also Co-Chaired the joint meeting, said SACE should not be budgeting this much for services in a leased building. She instructed SACE to submit to the committees a breakdown of expenditure and to include a sample of the entity’s distribution strategy.

The committees resolved to consider the adoption of the Department of Basic Education’s budget and its strategic plan as they were presented to the joint meeting that took place on Tuesday, 5 May 2020. They took the resolution following the explanation that was made by Parliament’s Constitutional and Legal Services to the members of the committees regarding the consideration and adoption of DBE’s budget and strategic plan in view of the anticipated budget adjustments.

According to Parliamentary Legal Adviser, Advocate Andile Tetyana, Section 10(1)(c) of the Money Bills and Related Matters Act No.9 of 2009 (“the Money Bills Act”) provides as follows: that the relevant members of Cabinet must table updated strategic plans for each department, public entity or constitutional institution, which must be referred to the relevant committee for consideration and report. The meeting was told that the Appropriation Bill, the strategic plan, inclusive of the Annual Performance Plan (APP) must thus be reported on and the vote must be adopted notwithstanding that there would be an adjustment to the budget at a later stage.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, MS BONGIWE MBINQO-GIGABA, AND THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY, SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE, MR ELLECK NCHABELENG.**