**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEES ON ENVIRONMENT WELCOME THE DEPARTMENT’S STRATEGIC, ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLANS AND BUDGET**

**Parliament, Friday, 15 May 2020 –**A joint meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Environment**,**Forestry and Fisheries, and the Select Committee on Land Reform, Environment, Mineral Resources and Energy has welcomed the strategic, annual performance plans and budget of the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries.

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries appeared today before the joint meeting of the committees to present its strategic and annual plans, and budget for the 2020/2021 financial year.

The committees expressed a concern over the issue of filling key strategic positions on an acting basis within the department. According to the department there are four vacant positions of the Deputy Directors-General in the department which are currently filled on an acting basis. The positions are for: Climate Change, Air Quality and Sustainable Development, Chemicals and Waste Management, Forestry and Fisheries. The committees have noted, however, the Minister’s commitment to fill those positions as soon as possible.

The department couldn’t answer all the questions that were asked by the members of the committees in the meeting, it was requested to respond to all the unanswered questions in writing by 18 May 2020.

The committees appreciated the update they received from the department on its activities during this lockdown period, and on how it operates under the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES, MR FIKILE XASA AND THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON LAND REFORM, ENVIRONMENT, MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY, MS TEBOGO MODISE.**