**MEDIA STATEMENT:**
**SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION CALLS FOR TRANSLATION OF SA ICGEB COMPONENT INTO QUALITATIVE TRANSFORMATION**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 26 May 2020 –**The Select Committee on Education and Technology, Sports, Arts and Culture was today briefed by the Department of Science and Innovation on the Science and Technology Laws Amendment Billand on the agreement between the Government of South Africa and the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) on the establishment of an International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) component in South Africa.

The department presented the Science and Technology Laws Amendment Bill to the committee highlighting, among other things, the objectives of the Bill and its proposed amendments to the Bill. The committee welcomed the presentation and agreed to convene another meeting where it will discuss the process it is going to follow in dealing with the Bill. Furthermore, the committee agreed that, meanwhile, an invitation for public comment on the Bill must be made as the principle of public participation demands.

On the presentation on the establishment of the ICGEG in South Africa which the committee also welcomed, the Chairperson of the committee, Mr Elleck Nchabeleng, said he was hearing about this important and strategic resource for the first time. He said its location at the University of Cape Town shouldn’t imply monopoly to it by only Capetownians. “The centre should be communicated widely in the country to ensure that the objective behind its existence is achieved,” emphasised Mr Nchabeleng.

Furthermore, Mr Nchabeleng asked the department to explain its communication strategies for the centre. Also, members of the committee asked the department to unpack the agreement in simple terms and urged it to highlight its benefits to South Africans. Members said those benefits must include targets regarding the number of doctoral degrees, especially with regard to female students. The officials of the department responded to all the questions of the committee.

After the committee was satisfied with the answers the department provided on all the questions it asked, it unanimously adopted the report and will recommend the approval of the agreement by the House. Mr Nchabeleng expressed the optimism of the committee on the agreement. “We are looking forward to the fruits of the agreement, and above all, to ensure that the agreement sharpens the competitive edge of South Africa in the world,” said Mr Nchabeleng.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY, SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE, MR ELLECK NCHABELENG.**