**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY COMMITTEE CHAIR WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT OF MANDATORY COVID-19 PLANS BY COMPANIES**

**Parliament, Thursday, 28 May 2020 –**The Chairpersons of the Portfolio Committee on Mineral Resources and Energy, Mr Sahlulele Luzipo, has welcomed the announcement by Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma that every company must have a Covid-19 plan, as well as a dedicated compliance officer in order to curb the spread of the Coronavirus at the workplace.

Minister Dlamini-Zuma further said that the plan should be known by both the employer and workers, and that it should be available when inspectors visit the workplace.

Mr Luzipo said that the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), as the industry leader, should consult with the role-players and develop safety guidelines in terms of the Mine Health and Safety Act. He encouraged the department to also consider having a dedicated health specialist, over and above the regular mine health and safety inspectors, who will specifically take lead in the inspection of compliance with Covid-19 plans.

The call for Covid-19 plans comes at the height of the recent developments in some mines, wherein over 300 workers tested positive for Covid-19.

Mr Luzipo said: “We do acknowledge that all the positive cases were brought about by compulsory screening and testing by mines, as directed by the DMRE. However, we are saying that the department should double its monitoring capacity in order to deal with non-compliance with regards to what has been announced by Minister Dlamini-Zuma.”

Furthermore, Mr Luzipo said that the Covid-19 pandemic has presented a volatile environment that requires strict and evolving guidelines. He is of the view that regular inspections could prevent compliance fatigue and complacency across the mining sector.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY, MR SAHLULELE LUZIPO**