**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**JOINT DEFENCE COMMITTEE CALLS FOR MORE SUPPORT FOR DEFENCE FORCE SERVICE COMMISSION**

**Parliament, Friday, 05 June 2020 –**The Joint Standing Committee on Defence has commended the work the Defence Force Service Commission (DFSC) is doing in efforts to improve the conditions of service of the members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). The commendable work of the DFSC will find expression in the improved morale of the SANDF which will then ensure that the armed forces implement their mandate effectively. Despite this, the committee has called for reinforced support for the work of the commission so that further improvements can be made.

Meanwhile, while the committee is cognisant of the fact that the department is facing financial pressures due to successive budget cuts, the committee has urged the DoD (Department of Defence) to assist in the review and implementation of the approved structure of the secretariat of the DFSC, especially in relation to the grading of critical posts. “What we want to see as the committee is a win-win situation which will ultimately benefit our soldiers and ultimately the country,” the Co-Chairperson of the committee, Mr Mamagase Nchabeleng, emphasised.

Following various oversight visits to different Defence Force bases, the committee was presented with various issues by the soldiers, such as unacceptable living conditions of the soldiers, stagnation in rank, derelict infrastructure and remuneration and service benefits for SANDF members, which it (the committee) hoped the DFSC would have considered and made recommendations to the Minister. It is in this context that the relationship between the Ministry and DFSC must be improved so that the conditions of service of soldiers improve.

The committee has also called for a strengthened monitoring and evaluation capability within the commission to ensure that it can monitor the implementation of the recommendations it makes to the Minister. Furthermore, the committee has called for the DFSC to establish its own website to ensure a closer contact with members of the SANDF.

Notwithstanding that, the committee raised concerns over the seeming disregard of the recommendations made by the DFSC to the Department of Defence. The committee has, as a result, resolved to invite the Minister of Defence to improve the working relationship between the commission and the department.

The DFSC was established, with the mandate, amongst others, to make recommendations regarding the remuneration and conditions of service of members of the SANDF. “It is therefore necessary that the relationship improves if the recommendations to improve the conditions of service of the SANDF members are to make a meaningful impact on the conditions of service of the soldiers,’ said Mr Cyril Xaba, the Co-Chairperson of the committee.

The return on investment made in the establishment of the DFSC can only be felt if its recommendations are considered intently. The committee will, following its interaction with the Minister, request that the DFSC and the Ministry agree on a feedback mechanism to enable the commission to monitor the implementation of the recommendations made.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, MR CYRIL XABA AND MR MAMAGASE NCHABELENG.**