**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE DEMANDS A REPORT ON SUSPENDED WESTCOL PRINCIPAL**

**Parliament, Thursday, 18 June 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Higher Education Science and Technology was briefed yesterday by King Hintsa, Orbit and Westcol Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVETs) on, among other things, governance and management matters, and their readiness to save the 2020 academic year.

The committee was briefed by the colleges’ council chairpersons on governance affairs, and the principals briefed the committee on administration and academic affairs, including the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). The representatives of the colleges’ Student Representative Councils (SRCs) attended the meetings although they were not invited, and the committee afforded them an opportunity to participate.

The committee was surprised to hear that the Westcol’s principal, who is on suspension because of serious charges that include financial mismanagement and nepotism against him, is applying for retirement and the process is closer to finality. “If that is the case and the principal goes on retirement without consequences on the charges that are levelled against him, that would inadvertently promote impunity. Justice must prevail,” said the committee Chairperson, Mr Philly Mapulane.

The committee told King Hintsa TVET College’s Council Chairperson and the principal that it didn’t make sense that, according to their reports, the college was going on smoothly, yet it was, for some time, under administration, due largely to the collapse of all the pillars of life at the college.

Mr Mapulane also told the college’s council chairperson and the principal to capacitate the college’s student representative council. Mr Mapulane condemned in strongest terms the vandalism of the college’s property as the college’s SRC representative said they vandalised the college property when the college management failed to heed their requests for meetings and demands. “The college doesn’t exist for you only; it is there for future generations. The use of vandalism is unacceptable. Please stop it,” emphasised Mr Mapulane.

After it appeared that there was nothing serious at the three colleges that needed the specific oversight attention of the committee, Mr Mapulane said the committee is going to invite the department to explain more on the financial affairs of the colleges and on NSFAS. “The colleges are in the right direction,” added Mr Mapulane.

On the Auditor-General’s (AG’s) reports which the colleges also presented, the committee expressed its unhappiness about them and asked that the AG must present the reports himself to the committee. Mr Mapulane told the college representatives that, because there was no enough time for engagements after their presentations, they must write all their answers to the questions that were asked by members of the committee. The committee will create time and invite the colleges to present those answers.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING, MR PHILLY MAPULANE.**