**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**IEC MUST MOVE WITH SPEED TO CONFIRM ADDRESSES ON THE VOTERS ROLL**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 14 July 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs has urged the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) to move with speed to update the details of 9% of voters who may have incomplete address information or no address listed on the voters roll. This will ensure that the voters roll is in line with the 2016 Constitutional Court ruling in the Electoral Commission v Mhlope and others case.

In line with this, the committee welcomes the announcement that the IEC has plans to investigate the 1.1 million people with incomplete addresses and the 1.2 million without addresses on the voters roll. Furthermore, the committee welcomes the initiative to use geo-coding of addresses to confirm that location is within wards of registration. The committee believes that the confirmation of addresses will play a critical role in confirming that the elections are free and fair.

The committee has emphasised that the IEC must focus more of its energies on Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape, the provinces with the biggest number without addresses on the voters roll.

Generally, the committee is impressed with the IEC’s readiness to hold the 2021 local government elections. The committee welcomed the IEC’s assertion that it has made provision to procure personal protective equipment for electoral staff to protect them against any infection and ensure that voting stations do not become vectors of Covid-19.

As for voter education, the committee is cognisant of the challenges Covid-19 presents to the IEC in rolling out outreach programmes and the impact it may have on voter registration weeks. As a result, the committee has urged the IEC to look at electronic registration as a means to encourage registration and the update of addresses.

The committee remains of the view that in order to increase efficiencies in the electoral process, e-voting must be considered going forward. This is essential because the use of technology has the potential to drive down the costs of elections and increase operational efficiencies, as well as encourage greater voter participation.

Furthermore, the committee has called on the IEC to urgently implement its voter education to increase voter participation, especially in the 18-29 age group. Voter education must transcend the normal face-to-face and electronic media approach and should be multifaceted for maximum impact.

As per Section 159 of the Constitution and Section 24 (1) of the Municipal Structures Act, the committee notes that the earliest possible date for local government elections in 2021 is 4 August 2021, while the latest date is 1 November 2021.

The committee welcomes progress in relation to Voter Management Devices and urges the IEC to finalise procurement processes. The committee believes that these devices are critical to mitigate against any allegations of double voting.

The possible impact of Covid-19 on the processes of the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) was noted by the committee, especially in relation to stakeholder consultations. The committee has called for the IEC together with the Department of Cooperative Governance and the MDB to work on a strategy to ensure adherence to deadlines.

The committee has also called for a comprehensive voter plan within the context of Covid-19 to ensure that the commission is ready with a fool-proof plan to address the possibility of Covid-19 impacting on the elections.

The committee has, for its part, committed to further engagements with the IEC to assess further progress on planning.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS, ADV BONGANI BONGO.**