**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE CALLS FOR CAPACITATING OF MINE WORKERS AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 28 July 2020** – The Select Committee on Land Reform, Environment, Mineral Resources and Energy was briefed by the Mine Health and Safety Council on the implementation of Covid-19-related safety regulations at mines, and on the Department of Mineral Resources' response to non-compliance by mines.

The committee expressed its concern about the job losses in the mining sector as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The committee was of the view that the Mine Health and Safety Council, together with the Department of Mineral Resources, needs to look into the re-skilling, capacitating and training of mine workers.

The council said a committee has been established that will look into the re-skilling of mine workers. The council indicated that it is still early stages on the matter but a plan is in place to address the capacitating of mine workers.

Regarding compliance of the mining companies in the provinces, the council and the department informed the committee that they have issued 161 section 54 instructions (this means a part of the mine or the entire mine has been stopped from operating) and also issued section 55 instructions (which are lesser transgressions). The department and the council informed the committee that they are continuously doing this in terms of the Mine Safety Act.

The committee expressed concern about the safety of women in mining and questioned how this issue is being addressed. The council said concerning the safety of women in mining, conducive personal protective equipment is being provided, an advisory committee has been established to deal with issues that affect women, such as sexual harassment. The advisory committee will advise the council, which then advises the Minister. The council informed the committee that initiatives have been done and put in place for the past five years.

Committee Chairperson, Ms Tebogo Modise, acknowledged the work done by the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Mr Gwede Mantashe, in mitigating and managing Covid-19. “We wish the Minister a speedy recovery in hospital, his hard work has led him to be compromised and be infected with the virus,” said Ms Modise

Ms Modise called on the department to have female representation at top management as presenters before the committee was dominated by males.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON LAND REFORM, ENVIRONMENT, MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY, MS TEBOGO MODISE.**