**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**DEFENCE COMMITTEE RESOLVES TO FURTHER ENGAGE THE SAHMS ON ITS WIDE RANGE OF CHALLENGES**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 19 August 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans have revolved to find within its third quarter programme, a suitable date on which to further engage the South African Military Health Services (SAMHS) on the wide range of challenges in the entity.

One of the key challenges highlighted during the committee’s engagement with the SAMHS today relates to the recruitment, appointment and retaining of Health Care Professionals (HCPs) and critical support personnel. Minister of Defence, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, told the committee that a task team had been established to investigate why many medical personnel opt to move from SAMHS to the Department of Health. The committee was told that doctors and specialists are often frustrated by the lack of equipment and budget which hampers them from doing their jobs. The committee will be briefed on the findings of the task team during the next engagement.

The committee is concerned about the R2 billion budget shortfall in the SAMHS. The committee has heard that the availability of resources severely threatens the quality of health services provided to military personnel, and a common perception of poor services resonates amongst not only SAMHS patients, but also the Command Cadre of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

Deputy Surgeon-General, Dr Noel Ndlovu, told the committee that many of the challenges emanate from the Military Health Services delivery model; the HR balance and management; the distribution of the healthcare facilities; the sub-optimal supply chain management; the inadequate healthcare monitoring system and tools, and the continuous budgetary constraints.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Cyril Xaba, said the issues affecting the SAMHS are severe and far-reaching. While acknowledging the work done by the current leadership to address the challenges, the committee needs a thorough briefing on what has been achieved thus far and the plans to mitigate the long-term challenges faced by the SAMHS. The committee will determine a suitable date for the SAMHS to appear before it in the tird quarter.

**ISSUED BY PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS, MR CYRIL XABA.**