**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WANTS DEPARTMENT TO REQUEST EXTENSION ON COURT ORDER ON FOSTER CARE BACKLOG**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 2 September 2020**– The Portfolio Committee on Social Development has agreed with legal advice that the Department of Social Department should approach the North Gauteng High Court to request for an extension on the current court deadline of 26 November 2020 to submit a comprehensive legal solution to foster care backlogs.

Following the challenges relating to the tabling of the Children’s Amendment Bill to Parliament, which resulted in the Bill to be referred to the committee in August 2020, the committee sought legal advice from Parliamentary Legal Services and from the department’s legal services on how it should proceed with processing the Bill.

The committee’s main concern was for it and the Select Committee on Health and Social Services to finalise the Bill before the court’s deadline. The committee agreed with legal advice suggesting that the department should seek an extension of the court deadline. This will give the committee sufficient time to continue processing the Bill in its entirety and manage the potential risk of possible further litigation.

The committee is aware that the benefits of going this route mean that the extension of the court order will provide an interim mechanism for management of foster care orders that are due to lapse. It also means that the Social Assistance Amendment Bill, which the committee passed in March 2020, is part of the legal solution the court ordered to be developed.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE ACTING CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MR DIKGANG STOCK.**