**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CALLS FOR A SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 14 October 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Social Development has expressed its heartfelt condolences to the Department of Social Development and its entities for the officials who passed away due to Covid-19-related illnesses.

The committee welcomed the department’s gender-based violence (GBV) interventions, particularly the establishment of Khuseleka One Stop centres and the interventions it considered in its efforts to curb alcohol abuse. The committee emphasised the importance of communication between the government and its citizens as it is a fundamental tool to establish harmony between government and its people.

Members of the committee were particularly interested in issues of food security, the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant applications and payments, as well as the issue of abuse of alcohol and drugs, which manifests itself through the deepening scourge of GBV. The committee has encouraged the department to collaborate with others to find ways of curbing alcohol abuse.

The committee has also expressed its appreciation to the 43 recipients of the SRD Grant who notified the department that they are now employed and are no longer eligible for the grant. The committee commends the integrity they demonstrated.

The committee has asked the department to conduct a scientific post-Covid-19 analysis and look at the picture it displays. The department should also look at how it will respond to the new normal once the worst of the pandemic has passed. Generally, the committee has noted an improvement in the manner in which the department conducts its work.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MR MONDLI GUNGUBELE.**