**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE SATISFIED WITH REPORT ON PPEs PROCUREMENT**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 6 October 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Environment**,**Forestry and Fisheries was satisfied with the fact that there are no findings against the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries in the special audit report on Covid-19 procurement thus far.

The committee was informed that the department awarded 31 contracts with a total expenditure of R18.8 million for the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPEs). The committee is pleased that no findings have been issued in relation to the transactions that the department engaged in. The committee has noted a complaint to the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) and National Treasury from a Cape Town-based company that alleges that Kanga Business Management, one of the companies that supplied PPEs to the department, is dealing in their products without their knowledge.

The committee is also satisfied with the information and clarity it received in the matter relating to allegations made by a former employee of SANParks in a book that he has written. The critical issues that concerned the committee were the issues of racism, unfair labour practices and human rights abuses. Other issues of concern include the inadequate state of SANParks’ staff housing at the Kruger National Park (KNP) and failures in internal communication, particularly in the way that human resources policies and developments relating to the KNP are communicated and implemented. The committee is pleased that the SANParks investigated these matters and consequence management was instituted where allegations were found to have substance.

The committee will also follow up on areas by the author of the book that allege a deliberate effort by employees of the KNP to drive animals to neighbouring private game reserves. The committee will also look at the Memorandum of Understanding between the KNP and the private game reserves surrounding it. The committee is equally concerned with the allegation of the lowering of the KNP fence between the provincial private game parks in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. This issue concerns the committee as it affects conservation. The KNP does not allow hunting of animals whereas the private game parks allow hunting of animals in their parks. The committee plans to schedule a meeting which will include private game parks in order to be clarified on the policy and arrangements between the KNP and private game reserves.

I**SSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES, MR FIKILE XASA.**