**MEDIA STATEMENT: JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE CONCERNED ABOUT DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE’S PERFORMANCE**

 **Parliament, Tuesday, 13 October 2020 –** The Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services has expressed grave concern at the “declining performance” of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

The multiparty committee spoke with one voice, calling the department’s performance “dismal”. The committee resolved that it will consider requesting the assistance of the Public Service Commission to address the department’s non-performance and systematic challenges in an effort to improve the situation. Committee Chairperson Mr Bulelani Magwanishe said: “Most of you [senior officials attending the meeting] have been with the department for many years and could not turn it around. It is clear that outside assistance is needed.”

The department briefed the committee today on its fourth-quarter performance for 2019-20 and its first-quarter performance for 2020-21. The department has a vacancy rate of 23.4% at senior management level.

The committee further noted that the department cannot complain about proposed budget cuts and then continue to miss targets and under-spend on its budget. The department reported approximately R1.2 billion in irregular expenditure and under-spent by R757 million. “We cannot in good conscious support that you should not have budget cuts when you are not able to spend the money that is given to you,” said Mr Magwanishe.

The committee went so far as to say that the department needs a rescue plan rather than a turnaround plan. Members also noted that targets were lowered last year as a result of poor performance and are now being lowered even further, as it is still unable to meet targets. Some committee members said no rescue plan will work due to the absence of permanent, reliable and credible leadership in the department.

“The department must remember that for us these are not just numbers and targets, but rather the lives of the people we represent. You have many entities in your stable that have been improving year on year and some have had consistent clean audits for close to two decades. Why are you requesting help? We need a serious intervention as this committee does not intend to leave a legacy of supporting a declining performance in the department and be party to your failure,” said Mr Magwanishe.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, MR** **BULELANI MAGWANISHE.**