**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMENDS ARF FOR CLEAN AUDIT**

**Parliament, Thursday, 22 October 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperations received a briefing on the quarterly performance of the African Renaissance and International Fund (ARF), which is the only entity of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation.

The committee commended the ARF for receiving a clean audit from the last 2018/19 financial year and for consistently receiving a clean audit. The committee has called for the acceleration of the migration of the ARF to a fully-fledged and independent component from the department.

On the issue of the South African candidates for the position of Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the committee urged the department to be continually guided by the principle of gender parity and to ensure adherence to the tenets of foreign policy on gender mainstreaming.

“We noted with dismay that the Consul-General of South Africa to Los Angeles has, to date, still not been assisted to find suitable accommodation to settle and perform her duties,” said the Chairperson of the committee, Ms Tandi Mahambehlala. The committee expressed its unhappiness about this disturbing failure to provide assistance to the Consul-General.

There is a sense that she did not get the required assistance from the individual official responsible for making the relocation arrangements. “It cannot be that a person at the level of head of mission is left to fend for herself to find suitable accommodation in a place she is not familiar with. The Department must follow due process and ensure that the official concerned, who clearly neglected his/her duties, is recalled and faces consequence management processes,” Ms Mahambehlala said.

The committee felt that the Minister should not be burdened with administrative issues relating to accommodation. Ms Mahambehlala concluded that, “the department should consider re-skilling the corporate service managers in the missions abroad. They must be adequately trained for the job they are expected to do”.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION, MS TANDI MAHAMBEHLALA.**