**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS SCRUTINISES POLICY AND LEGAL MEANINGS OF EXPROPRIATION BILL**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 24 November 2020**– Policy and legal interpretations of the meaning of the term “expropriation”, and how such a process would be undertaken were under the close scrutiny of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works and Infrastructure today.

Appearing before the committee to brief it on the Expropriation Bill, the Minister of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Ms Patricia De Lille, made it clear that besides the powers vested in the President of the Republic of South Africa to undertake this process, relevant ministers would have a prerogative to determine how and what land would be expropriated, and for what reason.

She further added that the expropriation of land is but one way of addressing land reform. “It’s a mechanism that will be utilised when needed, but should not be perceived as the only one. There are many others that are currently in existence,” she explained.

In a bid to quell the controversy often associated with the Bill, she said expropriation of land is a prevalent practice worldwide, it should not be considered controversial. The issue of equitable compensation has, as expected, come up from the committee, and the response was that remedies for that would be determined by the courts. The need for the department to have a coherent immovable register of state land was highlighted by the committee. The committee reiterated that expropriation cannot be considered when there is no clue of how much land the state has, and that must be sorted out.

Minister De Lille told the committee that a land register has been developed and the process is almost done. She said according to the Auditor-General’s report, what needs to be addressed is the value of parcels of land. She said a determination has since been made and the department has agreed with the National Treasury that it should be allowed to utilise the municipal valuation system to determine a value of a given land.

To give effect to the constitutional dictates of a legislative process as stipulated in the Constitution, the committee has devised its own plan to facilitate public consultations to ensure that the public express its views on bill and take them into consideration before it’s enacted into law.

The public participation process will be preceded by an advertisement campaign calling for public comments on the Bill in print and on radio, which will run in December and January respectively. Thereafter, there will be public hearings across all the nine provinces – a process that seeks to consolidate public views on the Bill. This is also a process that will ultimately have a bearing on the shape and form of the final version of the Bill that will be passed by Parliament.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, MS NOLITHA NTOBONGWANA.**