**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**POLICE COMMITTEE CONCERNED BY STATE OF AFFAIRS AT SAPS**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 24 November 2020 –** The Portfolio Committee on Police is concerned by the state of affairs at the South African Police Service (SAPS) and has called for urgent action to halt SAPS’ continuing trend of non-adherence to governance prescripts. The committee considered the 2019/20 Annual Report of SAPS and the Civilian Secretariat for Police.

The committee’s concerns centre around the fourth consecutive qualified audit opinion that SAPS has received from the Auditor-General (AG). The lack of improvement in addressing matters of emphasis raised by the AG create a perception that good governance and the Office of the AG are being undermined. The committee has called for a refocus, especially on the concerns identified by the AG in order to improve audit findings.

A positive audit finding translates into the achievement of targets and is the platform upon which efficient service delivery is implemented. In line with this, the committee has committed to heighten oversight over the SAPS and next year it will hold additional oversight meetings.

The SAPS has for a number of years failed to rectify the issue of asset verification, as per the AG’s recommendation. While the committee welcomes SAPS’ intention to develop an asset management policy specifying how network assets should be recorded and valued, this should have been done in the 2017/18 financial year when it was first raised by the AG.

The committee is also concerned by the underachievement on set targets, especially as 99% of the budget allocation to the SAPS was spent. This raises questions about how much value for money the department is receiving.

The committee is also concerned that the target to purchase and distribute bullet-resistant vests was missed. “This is a simple issue of conditions of service for members of SAPS. The non-achievement of the target is a dereliction of duty and places the lives of police officers in danger. This must be resolved urgently,” said Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson, the Chairperson of the committee.

The committee is also concerned by the number of civil claims lawsuits facing the SAPS in the 2019/20 financial year. The R522 377 000.66 paid for lawsuits would have been better spent on fighting crime. The main contributor to the high lawsuit liability is unlawful arrests, which indicate training deficits. The committee urged the SAPS to urgently develop and implement mitigating strategies to deal with contingent liabilities.

In addition, the R859 million in fruitless expenditure could have been better utilised to fight crime. The committee recommended that the SAPS must urgently institute investigations into cases of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure in order to ensure consequence management.

Meanwhile, the committee has welcomed the Civilian Secretariat of Police’s unqualified audit opinion. Nonetheless, the committee called on the department to focus on addressing the matters of emphasis raised by the AG in order to achieve a clean audit at the end of the financial year.

The committee welcomes the 8% increase in performance of set targets, a score of 86% against the set targets at the end of the 2019/20 financial year. The committee acknowledges that the failure to achieve all the targets was due to, among other things, vacant funded posts, which resulted in a low level of spending at the end of the financial year. The committee will continue to monitor implementation of plans to enhance service delivery.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON POLICE, MS TINA JOEMAT-PETTERSSON.**

For media enquiries or interviews with the Chairpersons, please contact the committees’ Media Officer:

Name: Malatswa Molepo (Mr)

**Parliamentary Communication Services**

Tel: 021 403 8438

Cell: 081 512 7920

E-mail: mmolepo@parliament.gov.za