**Media Statement**

**Multi-Party Women’s Caucus Calls for Translation of Plans Against GBV into Implementation**

**Parliament, Thursday, 26 November 2020 –**The Multi-Party Women’s Caucus (MPWC) had a fruitful and constructive engagement with several stakeholders that deal with Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases.

The committee received briefings on integration of criminal justice information systems; effective  functioning of sexual offences courts and Thuthuzela Care Centres; measures in place (including training of personnel) to ensure victim responsive services and the effective investigation and prosecution of reported GBV cases; Status report on the DNA case backlogs and availability of testing kits at police stations.

Presentations were made by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), South African Police Services (SAPS), Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJCD) and the South African Judicial Education Institute (SAJEI). The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Nkhensani Kate Bilankulu, expressed the appreciation of the committee on the presentations.

She said: “The committee appreciates the efforts made by these departments and organisations as it is clear about their success from their plans. It was important for us to be updated on these matters as too many times we hear of instances where victims of GBV suffer secondary trauma due to ineffective and insensitive public servants.”

The committee heard that since June 2020, SAJEI held several training and information sessions on sexual offences and court regulations, judicial management of sexual offences and court rolls, GBV and gender stereotypes, GBV during Covid-19 as well as stereotyping in the court environment and sexual violence.

The NPA informed the committee that the national lockdown had a negative impact on the finalisation of GBV cases. It reported that challenges that were experienced during the first levels of the lockdown included the unavailability of court personnel, witnesses and the absence of the alleged perpetrators at court. However, since October 132 cases were finalised, and according to NPA report the number has been increasing compared to August where only 67 cases were finalised. The committee was told that there was an increase of 97% in the performance of the courts on GBV cases. On the DNA backlog, the committee heard that there are still challenges, but it was assured that the backlog is receiving positive attention. The SAPS informed the committee that sufficient rape kits have been procured to ensure that no GBV victim will be turned away due to unavailability of rape kits especially during the upcoming festive season.

Ms Bilankulu commended the plans presented to the committee by the relevant role-players, but emphasized the importance of the translation of those plans into implementation. She called on them to ensure that they provide necessary support to the GBV victims on a sustainable basis. She said the committee will closely monitor the implementation of the plans as the scourge of the GBV in the country has become another vicious pandemic.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE MULTI-PARTY WOMEN’S CAUCUS, MS NKHENSANI KATE BILANKULU.**