**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**ENSURE SRD GRANT BENEFICIARIES MEET ELIGIBILITY MEANS TEST, COMMITTEE CHAIR**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 17 March 2021**– The Portfolio Committee on Social Development today received a briefing from the Office of the Auditor-General regarding Special Reports 1 and 2, relating to the Covid-19 grants.

The committee heard that about 67 000 Social Relief and Distress (SRD) grant payments should be subjected to investigations as they may have been paid to undeserving beneficiaries.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Mondli Gungubele, said double-dipping, particularly by people employed in the public service, is unacceptable and should be eliminated.

“The SRD grant is intended for the most vulnerable of our society, who had no form of income. The attitude of getting government funding at all cost has a potential to undermine the good work the department and Sassa are doing.

“This is a huge number to have undeservingly received the R350 grant and the committee therefore asks that the department spares no effort in getting to the bottom of this challenge and that if there is a need to recover the money, such should be done.”

The SRD grant was started around the outbreak of Covid-19 in April last year, and its intention was to lessen the impact of lockdown on unemployed, distressed and vulnerable persons.

The committee also heard that although 146 936 food parcels had been distributed as part of the Covid-19 relief response, the procurement process was affected by poor planning.

Mr Gungubele said the committee will fulfil its oversight function in order to make sure that the implementation of projects reaches the people that government interventions intend reaching. The committee noted the Quarter 3 performance targets that had not been met.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MR MONDLI GUNGUBELE.**