**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON COGTA FOLLOWS UP ON CONTINGENCY MEASURES TO DEAL WITH EFFECTS OF DISASTER**

**Parliament, Friday, 30 April 2021 –** The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) received a briefing from the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) yesterday on the effects of Tropical Storm Eloise and the recent flooding in the Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Eastern Cape, North West, Northern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces.

 The committee told the NDMC’s Dr Mmaphaka Tau that, following the classification of the tropical storm Eloise as a national disaster according to the gazettes issued on 12 and 24 February 2021, it became the committee’s responsibility to follow up on the contingency measures implemented to deal with the effects of the disaster.

The committee said the Disaster Management Amendment Act of 2015 underscores the importance of accountability in disaster management. The Act does this by providing organs of state with a comprehensive reporting system on the information required relating to the disaster. Organs of state must report on expenditure relating to disaster response and disaster recovery. In addition, actions pertaining to risk reduction and challenges related to dealing with the disaster must also be reported.

Cogta committee Chairperson Ms Faith Muthambi said: “These are empowering provisions, as they make it possible for us to hold both the NDMC and other relevant organs of state into account as far as compliance with the Act’s reporting requirements are concerned.”

Ms Muthambi added: “In our recent interaction with municipalities under the jurisdiction of the Amathole District, it was disheartening when one of the municipalities alleged that it failed to report on disaster funding because it was not furnished with a reporting template. This is a clear indication that a culture of accountability for disaster management is not yet universally institutionalised.”

The committee also told the NDMC that one of its key interests is the implementation of the amendments relating to representation of traditional leaders in national, provincial and municipal disaster management advisory forums as well as the provision relating to the analysis of the impact of disaster on gender, age, disability and cultural perspectives. Previous disaster management interventions prior to the 2015 amendments, the committee believes, tended to marginalise these key stakeholders.

“These are some of the key considerations, which we are keen to interrogate in relation to the tropical storm Eloise and the recent seasonal summer rains,” Ms Muthambi said.

The Department of Cogta was asked why it only allowed the public four days at the beginning of April for comments on amendments to the Disaster Management Act. In response, Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma said this took place at a time when Covid-19 vaccine manufacturers were putting a lot of conditions before the government.
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Ms Muthambi requested a detailed report from Dr Tau to understand the impact of the disaster in the 31 most severely affected districts.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MS FAITH MUTHAMBI.**