**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**AD HOC COMMITTEE ON SECTION 25 NOTES ‘UNSUBSTANTIATED’ LETTER OF COMPLAINT**

**Parliament, Friday, 7 May 2021 –**The Ad Hoc Committee to Initiate and Introduce Legislation Amending Section 25 of the Constitution, tasked with drafting amendments that will see the expropriation of land without compensation, today noted with concern a letter of complaint about the integrity and conduct of the committee.

Dr Mathole Motshekga, the committee Chairperson, said the letter that was addressed to the Speaker made unsubstantiated claims. The Democratic Alliance (DA) Members, who authored the letter, refused for the letter to be discussed as it was addressed to the Speaker and claimed it was unprocedural for the Chairperson to be in possession of the letter without the Speaker referring it. Dr Motshekga said the letter was referred for his attention.

The letter refers to virtual public hearings which were held in March. The DA claims that instead of giving these civil society representatives an opportunity to freely express their views on the Bill, Dr Motshekga allowed members from the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) to heckle and hurl expletives at them. According to the letter, at one point EFF MPs (Members of Parliament) Mr Floyd Shivambu and Dr Mbuyiseni Ndlozi launched an unprovoked attack on AfriForum Deputy CEO, Ernst Roets. They labelled him a “racist”, “racist fool”, “racist boy” and “f\*\*\*\*\*\*racist”. Dr Motshekga failed to protect Mr Roets from these unwarranted attacks and instead tried to place the blame on him by saying he must take the “meeting seriously”. The DA further claimed in the letter that the oral submissions process was flawed and should not have been allowed to stand as part of the record.

Other Members of the committee said the DA’s version is not a true reflection of the events of the meeting. The ANC and EFF reminded the meeting of Mr Roets’s assertion that he does not recognise the committee or had any faith and trust in its Members. Some Members requested for him to be banned from appearing in Parliament.

Dr Motshekga agreed to the request for Members to be provided with a recording of the meeting in order to remind themselves of the proceedings. Regarding the call to have Mr Roets banned, Dr Motshekga ruled that the matter will be discussed at a later stage. “Members of the committee are also requested to raise concerns and complaints in the committee in order for other Members to have a fair chance to respond,” he said.

The committee today also received a briefing from Parliament Legal Services regarding the input that was made by various government departments during the oral submissions process.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO INITIATE AND INTRODUCE LEGISLATION AMENDING SECTION 25 OF THE CONSTITUTION, DR MATHOLE MOTSHEKGA.**