**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**PSA COMMITTEE REFERS THE EASE OF DOING BUSINESS BILL BACK TO THE SPONSOR**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 7 June 2021** – The Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration (PSA) today deliberated on the desirability of the Ease of Doing Business Bill, a private Member’s Bill by Member of Parliament, Mr Henro Kruger. The Bill is tagged as a Section 75 Bill and was published in the Government Gazette Number 43090 of 13 March 2021.

The Bill seeks to create capacity in government to measure, control and reduce the social-economic impact of regulatory burdens on small, medium and micro enterprises. It further seeks to ensure the consideration of multiple options by organs of state to acheive their objectives and it seeks to measure and reduce the red tape barriers and associated costs with it when conducting business in the country. The Bill proposes the establishment of an administrative unit to assit the executive, Members of Parliament, portfolio and select committees and self-regulatory bodies.

The Members of the committee deliberated on the merits of the Bill and on whether it was placed before the correct committee to process. The committee has so far held four meetings on the Bill, specifically to read the Member’s Bill. A second meeting was held to receive the oral presentation and a third meeting was held to engage with the oral and written submissions from stakeholders and the Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation and the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) Unit in the Presidency.

One of the factors that the committee discussed was that the Portfolio Committee on Small Business and Development rejected the Bill in the 5th Parliament. In this term it has been slightly tweaked to ensure the consideration of multiple options by organs of state to achieve the objectives of government policy.

The Portfolio Committee on PSA is the relevant committee that monitors and evaluates all departments through the Monitoring Performance Assessment Tool and conducts oversight on the implementation thereof towards achieving the 2030 goals and the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP).

The Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) Unit in the Presidency is responsible for assisting government departments to analyse broader socio-economic challenges, associated costs and risks and develop mitigation actions; and for ensuring alignment with the NDP by taking into consideration how policy proposals impact on and relate to transformation and inclusive economic growth.

The Bill proposes the establishment of yet another regulatory impact assessment unit in the Office of the Presidency, aimed at measuring and reducing red tape and the costs associated with red tape when conducting business in the Republic. Currently, the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) Unit in the Office of the Presidency does similar functions that the Bill seeks to achieve. The Bill encroaches on the mandate of the SEIA, National Treasury, Trade and Industry and Small Business and Development.

Further establishing the new Regulatory Impact Assessment Unit goes against the spirit of reducing the wage bill in government. There are financial implications on the implementation of the Bill which will add more pressure to ailing financial resources and the priority of the country is the fight against the coronavirus, said committee Member, Ms Mina Lesoma.

When exercising its legislative authority, Parliament is bound only by the Constitution, and must act in accordance with, and within the limits of, the Constitution. The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Tyotyo James, said in conclusion that “this Bill does not belong to this Portfolio Committee (PC) and must be taken to the relevant PC. We cannot do the work of the other PC. Mr Kruger must take this Bill to the Portfolio Committee on Small Business and Development. We are not shooting the Bill but channelling it to the relevant committee to deal with it”.

The committee is still yet to adopt the report after today’s meeting and will report to Parliament as the Bill was referred to the Portfolio Committee by the Office of the Speaker through Parliamentary Bill’s Office.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION, MR TYOTYO JAMES.**