**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CALLS FOR ROBUST IMPLEMENTATION OF GBVF STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Parliament, Thursday, 26 August 2021 –**The Portfolio on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has noted with sadness the horrifying news of learner pregnancy in Gauteng, affecting girls as young as 10. This must be acknowledged for what it is, the rape of minors, and the law must take its course. Furthermore, the committee has also noted with shock the gruesome killing of the Fort Hare student Ms Nosicelo Mtebeni by her boyfriend.

The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Nonhlanhla Ncube-Ndaba, condemned in the strongest terms the impregnation of the young girls and the killing of Ms Mtebeni. “These are gruesome acts of gender-based violence and the perpetrators must be held to account.”

The committee received reports recently from the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) on its 4th quarter report for the 2020/21 financial year and 1st quarter report for the 2021/22 financial year. The CGE reported results on the implementation of its programmes focussed on gender-based-violence and femicide (GBVF).

During quarter 1 of 2021/22, CGE commissioners visited and monitored 50 police stations across the country to assess, among other things, the capacity of police stations to fight GBVF. They also visited Thuthuzela Care Centres. The CGE reported that the availability of rape kits at certain police stations still remains a problem, notwithstanding the rising levels of GBVF. In addition, the CGE monitored law courts around the country and found that many GBVF cases are delayed.

The committee told the CGE that women and children live in terror in the face of violent men and that the reported unavailability of rape kits at certain police stations is unacceptable. Meanwhile, the committee chairperson said, justice delayed is justice denied.

The committee called on the CGE to strengthen its programmes, particularly on GBV, and to ensure that all stakeholders, especially within the criminal justice system, are an effective force against GBVF. Moreover, the committee called for robust implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF, and for rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, MS NONHLANHLA NCUBE-NDABA**