**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SOLID PLANS TO SOLVE SYSTEM DOWNTIME AT HOME AFFAIRS, BUT IMPLEMENTATION IS CRITICAL**  
**Parliament, Tuesday, 30 November 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs welcomes solid plans and solutions with timelines to resolve network downtime at the Department of Home Affairs, which has contributed to long queues and poor quality services. The committee received a presentation from the Department of Home Affairs and the State Information and Technology Agency (Sita) on progress in ensuring capacity to deliver quality services.  
   
Nonetheless, the committee highlighted the need for effective implementation of plans. "We appreciate the progress so far and the tangible joint effort between the various government stakeholders in resolving these challenges, but have underscored the need to ensure adherence to timelines and heightened focus on the implementation of targets," said Mr Mosa Chabane, the Chairperson of the committee.  
   
In line with this, the committee welcomes Sita's announcement that procurement processes of been concluded to enlist the services of a remote environmental management solution. This will ensure proactive monitoring of the environmental systems on the Sita switching centres to prevent downtimes. Furthermore, the committee welcomes the announcement that a contract has been concluded and migration completed with a new internet service provider, which will reduce the impact of outages on card payments and online verification services, among other things.   
   
Regarding power supply challenges, the committee appreciates that 176 modernised sites with the capability to run during load shedding have been procured. The committee has called for the procurement process for the remaining 292 sites to be concluded soon.  
   
The committee welcomed the progress in implementing the branch appointment booking system, as well as the plans to pilot the system in five high-volume offices. The committee advised the department to include rural offices in the pilot phase to ensure that all challenges are resolved early.  
   
The inclusion of safeguards to ensure adherence to timeframes in the implementation of the automated biometric identification system (Abis) is welcomed, as it will ensure that the service provider delivers as per the service level agreement and avoid the problems experienced with the previous service provider.  
   
The committee has reemphasised its commitment to continuous monitoring of three major areas, namely; the reduction of queues, eradication of downtime and the completion of the Abis project. It scheduled a meeting in the fourth quarter to receive a progress report.    
   
**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS, MR MOSA CHABANE.  
  
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