**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT RECEIVES ORAL SUBMISSIONS FROM STAKEHOLDERS ON CLIMATE CHANGE BILL**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 7 September 2022 –** The Portfolio Committee on Environment, Forestry and Fisheries received oral submissions from stakeholders today on the Climate Change Bill. Stakeholders included the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the South African Human Rights Commission, the University of the Witwatersrand’s School of Governance, Amabhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism and the Centre for Environmental Rights.

In welcoming the presenters’ submissions, the committee Chairperson, Ms Faith Muthambi, said climate change is transforming lives in alarming and unimaginable ways. The climate-change related droughts, heat waves and the recent catastrophic floods in KwaZulu-Natal touched all South Africans.

“You could not possibly see those pictures and the devastation without a deep sense of pain and compassion arising from within you. Climate change is making livelihood resources scarcer, whether water, arable land, food or energy, and this could lead to a breakdown in established codes of conduct, and even to outright conflict among people who have lived side-by-side for years,” said Ms Muthambi.

“Our increasingly unstable climate is no longer seen as primarily an environmental or economic issue, as our climate has evolved in the recent past to a larger threat and sharper in outline. We must therefore focus more clearly on the benefits of early action, which for us, as South Africans, is long overdue. This is why the Climate Change Bill before us recognises in its preamble that climate change will contribute to increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events; will affect, amongst other things, human health, access to food and water, biodiversity, habitats and ecosystems, the coast and coastal infrastructure and human settlements.”

The committee is now at a stage of holding its first meeting on the Bill in Parliament by asking six stakeholders who had made submissions on the Bill, to make oral presentations of their submissions to the committee. The committee received 13 200 submissions from individuals and organisations in response to its advert soliciting inputs from South Africans on the Climate Change Bill.

Ms Muthambi said climate change mitigation and adaptation are beyond the capacity of government. It requires organised formations, businesses and all members of society to play an active role in moving the country to a greener and more inclusive economy and society. She said discussions on the subject are complex and need a careful and balanced approach to mitigate unintended consequences.

The committee thanked the stakeholders for their input and their passion for building a sustainably secure, prosperous and just South Africa. “We are still going to have more of these discussions to get clear and realistic answers. These inputs are valuable and will be part of our ongoing discussions on the Bill,” said Ms Muthambi.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES, MS FAITH MUTHAMBI.**

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