**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**AD HOC JOINT COMMITTEE ON FLOOD DISASTER RELIEF AND RECOVERY BRIEFED BY HRC ON MONITORING FLOOD RELIEF EFFORTS**

**Parliament, Monday, 12 September 2022 –** The Human Rights Commission (HRC) appeared before the Ad hoc Joint Committee on Flood Disaster Relief and Recovery today to present its findings on the progress achieved in addressing the ongoing human impacts of the recent flood disaster in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and North West.

Six months after the floods, the commission observed that there are shortages of drinking water and that sanitation remains an issue, along with the slow delivery of houses. One HRC commissioner told the committee that in some instances seven family members share a two-roomed unit with no running drinking water, nor privacy for anyone. In addition, there is no security in the temporary shelters and women, in particular, are vulnerable and at serious risk.

Furthermore, learners’ rights to education have been severely curtailed after more than 500 schools were damaged in the floods and some schools were closed temporarily. A number of learners have also lost important documents, uniforms, textbooks and other school-related items. What is more, the bodies of some of those who died in the floods have not been recovered, while unclaimed bodies lie in the mortuaries.

Members of the committee commented that the briefing focused primarily on the commission’s work in KwaZulu-Natal, but had little to say about the Eastern Cape, despite the fact that people’s lives in parts of that province, such as the residents of Port St Johns, are still severely impacted by the floods. Residents there say that nothing has been done in their area to alleviate their plight.

The Co-Chairperson of the committee, Mr Cedric Frolick, agreed that the people of Port St Johns require urgent attention to address some of their concerns and it is a matter that needs an urgent attention by the relevant departments.

The HRC said there seems to be a lack of political will to improve the plight of the afflicted. Co-chairperson of the committee Mr Jomo Nyambi, said that the ad hoc committee had made the same observation during its various oversight visits to KwaZulu-Natal. “What you have experienced is what we have also experienced as well,” Mr Nyambi said. He also decried the apparent lack of coordination among the departments directly involved in bringing relief to those affected.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE AD HOC JOINT COMMITTEE ON FLOOD RELIEF AND RECOVERY, MR CEDRIC FROLICK AND MR JOMO NYAMBI.**

For media enquiries or interviews with the Chairperson, please contact the committee’s Media Officer:

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**Parliamentary Communication Services**