**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SELECT COMMITTEE SATISFIED WITH BRIEFING ON WORK DEPARTMENT IS DOING ON TOURISTS SAFETY**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 12 October 2022 –** The Select Committee on Trade and Industry, Economic Development, Small Business Development, Tourism, Employment and Labour has appreciated the collaborative approach that government has adopted in relation to tourist safety, as spearheaded by the Department of Tourism.

The department briefed the committee yesterday on its plans to address the safety of tourists ahead of the December holidays. It was revealed that a number of government departments including the Police, Social Development, Justice as well as the National Prosecuting Authority, are on board to work with the Department on tourists safety.

The committee heard that over and above this approach, Provincial Tourism Sector Forums had been established and that they were efficient, especially in Mpumalanga.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Mandla Rayi, said the work done around tourist safety is commendable particularly because tourism sector is among the high earners of foreign direct investments for the economy.

“Anything that threatens the safety of tourists both local and international tourists, does not bode well with us. The committee welcomes the plan and the work the department is  doing around tourists safety.” Mr Rayi said the department needed to enhance its efforts in marketing the country as a safe destination and that the incident at Kruger was but an isolated incident.

The Department told the committee that although it was still early, it will monitor whether there had been cancellations following the incident where a German tourist was killed at the Kruger National Park on the weekend.

The committee pleaded with the department to consider whether closure of the Numbi gate at Kruger would be an option, but also consider availing a flyer with important numbers tourists could use for the duration of their stay.

The committee was also briefed on the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan and it heard that although, on a small-scale, indications were that tourism was on the recovery. The Director General of the department, Mr Victor Tharage, told the committee that recovery environment was continuously affected by changes to the macro environment and that resulted in uncertainty.

He said 21 potentially distressed high impact tourism projects were identified, 10 of them met the criteria for departmental support.

The presentation focused on tourist figures, including the numbers of international and domestic air travel, accommodation and investments. The plan is aligned to the Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Plan and it will contribute to infrastructure development, employment, green economy interventions and skills development.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR, MR MANDLA RAYI.**

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