**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**NEED FOR IMPROVED LINES OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND DEFENCE INDUSTRY TO ENHANCE SUPPORT AND ACCENTUATE POTENTIAL**

**Parliament, Friday, 4 November 2022 –** The Joint Standing Committee on Defence has called for better coordination and improved lines of communication between government and the defence industry to enhance business opportunities and enable the industry to contribute to the growth of the South African economy.

The committee also said a healthy and productive defence industry will enhance capabilities currently available to the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and enable it to effectively implement its constitutional mandate.

The committee received a presentation from the Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Industries Association (AMD) on the industry’s challenges and opportunities. The committee was disappointed to hear that not much has changed in resolving challenges facing the industry. The committee’s concerns are based on the negative impact on the industry’s ability to participate and compete in a highly competitive international defence industry and undermines the ability of the industry to contribute meaningfully to the growth of gross domestic product.

“It is extremely disappointing that South Africa’s Aerospace and Defence Masterplan has not been meaningfully implemented. Once again, we are faced with an impressive plan on paper and implementation remains our Achilles heel. We need to resolve this urgently,” said Mr Cyril Xaba, the Co-Chairperson of the committee.

The commitment by both industry and the Minister of Defence to hold the delayed Defence Industry Lekgotla is reassuring in that it indicates stakeholders are committed to cooperation and resolving challenges to unleash the economic potential of the industry. The committee will monitor the implementation of this commitment to hold the lekgotla by March 2023.

The committee remains concerned that there is frustration with the delay in procession permits, which leads to reputational damage for South African companies. The committee has also called for clarity on the implementation of an e-application platform, which might reduce the constraints within the system.

The was general agreement on the need to review the National Conventional Arms Control Act to bring it in line with changed environment and the export outlook of the industry in recent times.

The committee has emphasised the need for collaboration to ensure that the industry and the entire defence value chain is beneficial to the country.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, MR CYRIL XABA AND MR MAMAGASE NCHABELENG**

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