**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON SECURITY AND JUSTICE ADOPTS REPORT ON ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL**

**Parliament, Friday, 25 November 2022 –** The Select Committee on Security and Justice deliberated and considered the Electoral Amendment Bill [B1B-2022] and has agreed to the Bill with proposed amendments.

The Electoral Amendment Bill seeks to, among other things, amend the Electoral Act of 1998 so as to delete a definition and insert certain definitions consequential to the expansion of the Act to include independent candidates as contesters to elections in the National Assembly and provincial legislatures.

The committee received 24 submissions from individuals and organisations. The committee considered the proposed amended clauses as presented by the Office of the Chief State Law Advisor, with the Department of Home Affairs, the Independent Electoral Commission and the Parliamentary Legal Services confirming its agreement with the proposed amendments.

The proposed amendments to Schedule 1A also further enhance the Bill by inserting “highest proportion” instead of most votes and this gives better effect to the voice of voters. The inclusion of a new paragraph, which is required in order to do a reverse forfeiture calculation, is essential to protect seats mid-term, should a vacancy arise.

Furthermore, the inclusion of a clause setting out the establishment and functioning of an Electoral Reform Consultation Panel goes a long way to address the concerns raised in public submissions, which requested the need for broader electoral reform. This panel, once established, will receive the views and opinions of all relevant stakeholders in the formulation of such reform, after the 2024 elections.

The committee, having taken into account the input from the public, has proposed amendments that will serve to equalise and create parity in relation to the signature requirement in the Bill. The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Shahidababibi Shaikh, said the proposed amendments enhance and strengthen the Bill and will go a long way in ensuring a free and fair 2024 elections by including independent candidates.

The Bill was supported by the majority of committee Members.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON SECURITY AND JUSTICE, MS SHAHIDABABIBI SHAIKH.**

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