**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE CALLS FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS FROM DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ON PREVIOUS SONA PRONOUNCEMENTS**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 8 March 2023** – The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has asked the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to submit written answers on all the committee’s questions about the department’s progress in actioning pronouncements made by President Cyril Ramaphosa in previous (2020 - 2022) State of the Nation Addresses about agriculture, land reform and rural development.

The department appeared before the committee yesterday to present this report. However, the committee’s view was that the report lacked details on key developmental and transformational issues and said that the report should have included, among other things, areas where assistance has been provided and who the recipients were of this assistance, along with the date and location it was provided and verifiable evidence on what the department done.

The committee was concerned about what it termed the department’s weak monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of its programmes. It also wanted details of the department’s plans to aid black farmers to commercialise and include historically marginalised South Africans in the sector. The committee wanted the report to indicate the money spent and who has benefited from it.

The Chairperson of the committee, Inkosi Zwelivelile Mandela, gave the department a deadline of next Friday, 17 March, to submit these written answers. The answers must cover information on the R1 billion earmarked to help black farmers, poultry and sugar master plans, graduate placements, beneficiaries of the 700 000 hectares that have been set aside and how was the land acquired, and details on the blended finance scheme.

Inkosi Mandela said the committee would also like a workshop on the Land, Agriculture and Rural Development Agency (LARA) concept so that members have insights into the department’s position on the agency.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, INKOSI ZWELIVELILE MANDELA.**

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