**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**BASIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE POSTPONES PUBLIC HEARINGS ON BELA BILL**

**Parliament, Thursday, 23 March 2023**- The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education has agreed to a request made by one of its committee members, Ms Elizabeth Sukers, to postpone public hearings in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng on the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill.

The difficult decision was taken to safeguard the integrity of the hearings and any public submissions made there and to give Parliament’s divisions supporting the public hearings enough time to iron out some challenges identified in preparing for the hearings.

“We took this decision primarily because of the need to ensure that our processes are thorough and adequate for this important legislation. Also, we value the public participation process and the inputs made during these hearings. This to us is a critical pillar of law-making and hence the need to iron out identified deficiencies, which include adequate public mobilisation and procurement of transport for participants,” said Ms Bongiwe Mbinqo-Gigaba, the Chairperson of the committee.

This decision does not reflect on the hearings already undertaken, which the committee views as successful. The only challenge encountered was during the last hearings in Mpumalanga. The committee has therefore undertaken to hold one last hearing in Mpumalanga.

The committee is hopeful that in due course it will resume hearings once all necessary processes have been completed.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, MS BONGIWE MBINQO-GIGABA**

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