**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ASSURES SOUTH AFRICANS ABOUT A MEANINGFUL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS TO BE UNDERTAKEN**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 1 March 2022 –**The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs conducted the first of the two-day virtual public participation process and seeks to assure South Africans that a meaningful public participation process will be undertaken to ensure that the amendments to the Electoral Bill represent the will and aspirations of South Africans.

There were various questions raised by presenters over the public participation process around the Bill which the committee seeks to address. Firstly, the Constitution in Sections 59(1)(a), 72(1)(a) and 118(1)(a)9 compels Parliament to undertake meaningful public participation, an obligation the committee hopes to meet with the adopted public hearings programmes.

Secondly, in response to this constitutional obligation, the legislative sector adopted a public participation model that has, at its centre, the inclusion of views of South Africans in the implementation of its mandate. The committee is therefore convinced that these first two virtual public hearings which catered for civil society and individuals and the scheduled nationwide public hearings process, are intended to meet the obligation of a meaningful public participation.

Also, in preparation for the public hearings in the provinces, Parliamentary staff within the Public Education Unit are already in the provinces to engage and educate the public about the impending public participation process. These officials are carrying out their responsibility working together with the municipalities, traditional authorities and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that South African citizens are reached. The committee will also utilise all the communication and media platforms available to it to inform, educate and engage the public.

Meanwhile, there is a wrong perception that inadequate consideration was given to the Electoral Laws Second Amendment Bill [B34 – 2020], a Private Members Bill sponsored by Mr Mosiuoa Lekota who is a Member of Parliament. This is incorrect as due regard was given to the Bill and the outcome was that the Bill was undesirable. “We must be assured that the committee will not do a half-baked job in considering any matter before it,” said Mr Mosa Chabane, the Chairperson of the committee.

Despite this, the committee welcomes various views given by organisations and individuals on the Bill. Furthermore, the committee is convinced that those contributions will add value to the Bill and strengthen it, and that in the final analysis, strengthen our democratic dispensation.

Some of the issues highlighted by the presenters include the issue of accountability which can be enhanced by independent candidates, also the filling of vacancies that might arise in case of independent candidates; questions around the proposed 200 seats set aside for independent candidates; discarding of votes as well as the payment of deposit by independent candidates for contesting elections.

The committee will tomorrow continue with virtual public hearings from individuals and interested organisations. The committee will receive presentations from, among others, Council for the Advancement of South African Constitution, New Nation Movement, Abatsha Force of Change, Independent Candidate Association and Inclusive Society Institute.

**Details of the Hearings (Day 2)**
Date: Wednesday, 02 Wednesday 2022
Time: 08:30
Venue: Virtual Platform

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS, MR MOSA CHABANE.**

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