**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COGTA SELECT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS INTERVENTIONS IN AMAHLATHI AND RICHMOND LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 20 August 2019 –**The Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs has today resolved to recommend to the National Council of Provinces that it approves the interventions instituted by provincial executives of the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, as per Section 139 (1)(b) and (5) of the Constitution, on Amahlathi Local Municipality and Richmond Local Municipality respectively.

The committee visited the two municipalities last week and the observations made confirmed the need for the interventions. The committee is of the view that the interventions are necessary to bring much-needed stability to those municipalities to address declining service delivery levels.

Some of the challenges that contributed to the committee’s recommendation to approve the intervention are deteriorating financial management in both municipalities that has led to the non-payment of creditors; the ballooning of unauthorised, irregular and fruitless and wasteful expenditure, which increased by 501% year-on-year in Richmond; as well as the need to bring stability and curb service delivery protests within the municipalities.

“Local government is at the coalface of service delivery and it is untenable to have municipalities that are unable to perform their constitutional functions. We need viable and working municipalities that deliver services to the people,” said Mr China Dodovu, the Chairperson of the committee.

The committee raised a concern that instability within these municipalities has impaired the abilities of both municipalities to spend the Municipal Infrastructure Grant, which is essential to eradicating infrastructure challenges, especially in rural municipalities. The committee is of the view that the interventions will add the impetus necessary to implement infrastructure programmes.

Regarding skills transfer and human resource development, the committee resolved that as part of the intervention, both provincial executives must ensure that skills transfer occurs, to ensure that when the interventions are lifted the municipalities are in an improved position.

The committee has called on both provincial MECs to speedily conclude any investigation currently underway into the roots of the challenges facing the municipalities. People who are found to be directly responsible for the challenges must face the full might of the law.

It was also resolved that the committee, in conjunction with committee from the provincial legislatures, will do continuous visits to these municipalities to assess the impact. “It is upon us as legislators to properly monitor the extent to which these interventions are making a difference in the lives of the people,” Mr Dodovu said.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS**