**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS MUST IMPROVE TITLE DEEDS PROGRAMME**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 21 August 2019 –**The Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation has urged the Department of Human Settlements to rapidly improve its title deeds-issuing programme, as the department underperformed significantly in this area in the first quarter.

The fifth Parliament’s legacy report suggested that the department should improve on the issuing of title deeds, as deeds are a wealth legacy that can be passed on from one generation to another. The committee is concerned that the department only issued 7 435 of the 28 796 title deeds that it had planned to issue in the first quarter. The committee recognises that the department must do a thorough verification before a deed is issued, especially for pre-1994 deeds. Nonetheless, measures must be put in place to move the process forward.

The committee welcomes the preliminary performance indicators for the first quarter, which showed that 43% of targets were achieved, 43% were partially achieved and 14% were not achieved. The committee is satisfied with the department’s assurance that it has systems in place to ensure targets are achieved as planned.

The spending of the Human Settlements Development Grant is also a matter of concern for the committee. “Northern Cape, Limpopo, Free State and to a lesser extend KwaZulu-Natal expenditure is not adequate. The provinces have not spent 77%, 52%, 52% and 11% of the transferred funds respectively,” said Ms Rosina Semenya, the Chairperson of the committee. Grant non-expenditure undermines the vision of creating sustainable and integrated human settlements that improve family life, and access to basic services and secure tenure.

The committee has called for a clear directive on the provision of business opportunities for women developers and contractors. The committee welcomes the news that the department is investigating making this a requirement in the Division of Revenue Act. This will compel provincial departments to give at least 50% of business to female developers and contractors.

The committee called on Mangaung and City of Cape Town to spend the allocated Urban Settlements Development Grant. They are currently the only metros that have not spent over 90% of allocated funds between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019.

The committee is pleased to hear that the department is paying service providers within 30 days. Small businesses are an important pillar in the economy and paying them on time is one way of ensuring that they thrive and jobs are created.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION, MS ROSINA SEMENYA.**