**COMMITTEE APPROVES CONVENTION ESTABLISHING THE SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY OBSERVATORY**

Parliament, Wednesday, 9 October 2019 – The Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology approves the Convention Establishing the Square Kilometre Array Observatory.

The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) is an international, mega-science project to build the world’s largest and most sensitive radio telescope, and will be co-located in Africa and Australia, with the African component comprising South Africa (core region), Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia.

It is envisaged that the Square Kilometre Array will act as a catalyst for science, technology and engineering business opportunities, jobs and innovation, with the potential to put Africa on the map as a world Big Data and analytics hub.

“The adoption by the committee of the this Convention Establishing Square Kilometre Array Observatory represents a signification development in the process of formal ratification by Parliament of this important international protocol that will facilitate the biggest scientific collaboration the world has ever seen, and will further help to attract foreign direct investment into our country,” said Mr Philly Mapulane, the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology.

The Square Kilometre Array Observatory is the inter-governmental organisation (IGO), established under international law, that will be responsible for constructing and operating the Square Kilometre Array Radio Telescope. The Square Kilometre Array Observatory will be unique in that it will be the first science-focused IGO, which will comprise membership from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australasia and Europe.

The purpose of the Square Kilometre Array Observatory will be to facilitate and promote a global collaboration in radio astronomy, with a view to the delivery of transformational science.

ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, MR PHILLY MAPULANE.