**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA URGES SIU AND NPA TO PRIORITISE CASES EMERGING FROM MUNICIPALITIES**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 16 October 2019 –**The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) has urged the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) to prioritise cases emerging from municipalities.

From the interactions that the committee has had with the 13 municipalities that have had adverse or disclaimed audit outcomes in three consecutive years, it is clear that governance, financial management and contract management have collapsed and there is massive looting at municipalities. For this reason, a special focus directed at municipalities is needed. The country needs functional municipalities and therefore consequence management is key at that level of government.

The committee is pleased to learn that the SIU has committed to establish local government anti-corruption forums to support the anti-corruption initiatives at local government level. The committee hopes that these forums will be established speedily in order to assist the process of cleaning up the rot at municipalities.

Scopa is also concerned with the pace of investigation of cases that have been referred by the SIU to the NPA. The committee has been made aware that of the 293 cases referred to the NPA by the SIU, only 144 are under investigation. 11 of these are before the courts and nine of which have been finalised by the courts.

Scopa is aware of the funding challenges experienced by these two institutions. The SIU and the NPA are in a dire need of funding, as these are the institutions that assist the country to recover monies lost to corruption. It is imperative that resources be made available to these institutions so that they carry out their work effectively.

One of the cases before the NPA is the fraud case of former President Nelson Mandela’s memorial. Scopa awaits the detailed report from the NPA to submit to the committee by the end of November on the progress of this case.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF SCOPA, MR MKHULEKO HLENGWA.**