**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA BELIEVES ALL RESPONSIBLE STAKEHOLDERS ON ESKOM DEBT SHOULD APPEAR JOINTLY**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 4 February 2020 –**The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) believes that all relevant governmental and municipal stakeholders responsible for the escalating debt owed to Eskom should appear before it jointly. This is necessary to determine an appropriate way forward and to verify the amount of debt still outstanding, as there are differences about how much is still owed.

Today, Scopa was briefed by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, but the information provided contradicts the joint briefing in December 2019 from Eskom, the South African Local Government Association and the Inter-Ministerial Task Team on Municipal Debt to Eskom (IMTT) on the amount of debt owed. These conflicting reports pose a challenge for Scopa, as it cannot substantiate the merits of the claims made without all the responsible parties being present at the same time.

Scopa called the department for a briefing based on the information received from IMTT, which claimed that the Department of Public Works is the biggest debtor, owing Eskom R3 billion in June 2019. The department told Scopa today that this amount is incorrect and that, in fact, it owes much less than this.

Scopa is also concerned about the R2.6 billion fluctuating overdraft the department has accumulated over the past 12 years. This is in contravention of the Public Finance Management Act, which does not allow government departments to carry an overdraft over a long period of time, and could lead to an audit finding. Scopa urged the department to address this speedily. Scopa also believes that the department should ensure that all invoices from user departments are verified before payment.

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