**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEES ON COGTA RECEIVE SALGA’S STRATEGIC AND ANNUAL PERFOMANCE PLANS**

**Parliament, Wednesday 13 May 2020** – The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) and the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Water and Sanitation and Human Settlements, last night received the Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan of the South African Local Government Association (Salga) for the year 2020/21.

Members of the two committees from the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) raised several concerns, especially relating to high levels of corruption and deteriorating financial management in the local sphere of government.

The Chairperson of the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Water and Sanitation and Human Settlements, Mr China Dodovu, warned about the possible emergence of huge scandals involving the management of Covid-19 emergency funds in municipalities if Salga did not put in place monitoring systems.

“How do we ensure that there are proper checks and balances in the spending of the Covid-19 funds, and ensure that the purchasing of protective personal equipment (PPE) is done properly, because if we don’t monitor these things, it will result in a big scandal, we don’t want a “Covid-19 gate.

“It is important for Salga to develop systems to prevent such possibilities, we have already heard about councillors and officials involved in food distribution corruption, issuing permits when they are not supposed to do so – it is one thing to come here and present plans, but on the ground the situation in municipalities is deteriorating.

Committee members also questioned Salga on how was it that corruption was on the rise in the local sphere of government, when the number of councillors attending training was increasing every year?

In her response, the President of Salga, Councillor Thembi Nkadimeng, told the committees that “training does not prevent corruption”. She said the training was meant to capacitate councillors to arrive at correct decisions. “Wrongdoing is often not as a result of a lack of capacity, but a lack of desire to do the right thing,” she said.

The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Ms Faith Muthambi, said another major challenge facing municipalities was the issue of labour relations, and appealed to Salga to work with municipalities in ensuring effective labour dispute mechanisms.

She also raised a concern about “dysfunctional municipalities” and promised that the committee will continue to work hard in finding solutions in those municipalities that were struggling to achieve sound financial management and good governance.

“The problem of dysfunctional and struggling municipalities is not an issue of Salga alone, I believe we can work together to bolster sound financial management and good governance in municipalities, let us join hands to find solutions,” said Ms Muthambi.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON COGTA, MS FAITH MUTHAMBI – AND THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON COGTA, WATER AND SANITATION AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, MR CHINA DODOVU.**