**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE CENTRAL TO ECONOMIC REVIVAL POST COVID-19**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 13 May 2020 –**The Chairpersons of the Portfolio Committee on Public Works and the Select Committee on Transport, Public Service and Administration, Public Works, and Infrastructure, Ms Nolitha Ntobongwana, and Mr Kenneth Mmoiemang, have called on the Department of Public Works to strengthen its monitoring and project tracking capacity for infrastructure projects.
This will be important, as infrastructure has been identified as the area where post COVID-19 economic recovery will happen.

Economic recovery and jobs creation will undoubtedly depend on the implementation of infrastructure projects on a massive scale. This calls for strong and effective monitoring within the department.

The construction and built environment sector will be central to the revival of the economy and also opening up of opportunities that will transform and benefit our country.

The joint committee virtual meeting received the annual performance plans and strategic plans of the department. The committees heard that the department has achieved a substantial amount of strategic and analytical work towards realising its broadened mandate.

The chairpersons noted the budgetary constraints and said they were concerned that the department remained challenged as it struggles to collect management fees from client departments.

Over a number of years this has led to a funding gap. The committees also raised concerns that the budgetary transfer for coordinating infrastructure across the three levels of government may be insufficient and cause the funding gap to grow.

This is a welcome move, but the new expanded mandate of the department should be complemented with a review of the White Papers, which should result in a Public Works Bill. This will strengthen the department's mandate and enable it to collect fees from client departments.

The Chairpersons welcomed that COVID-19 has necessitated departments to work even more cooperatively, and also with municipalities.

The portfolio needs to be ready for the smart city projects as a lot of modernisation and innovation will be required. In order to realise a capable state, improved capacity is required on all departmental programmes.

The chairpersons said the committees will wait for the adjusted budget and performance targets as a result of COVID-19.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, AND THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC WORKS, AND INFRASTRUCTURE CHAIRPERSONS, MS NOLITHA NTOBONGWANA AND MR KENNETH MMOIEMANG.**