**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA NOT SATISFIED WITH SLOW PROGRESS OF WATER AND SANITATION INVESTIGATIONS**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 26 May 2020**– The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) is not satisfied with the slow progress of investigations with regard to unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure cases at the Department of Water and Sanitation and at Water Trading Entities.

The committee commends the department for the work that has been done so far in ensuring that officials who have been implicated in wrongdoing face consequences. The committee has, however, requested the department to furnish it with a detailed report which includes the full names of all implicated officials. Scopa plans on interacting with the Public Service Commission with regard to the movements of officials who either faced disciplinary action, resigned, or are dismissed as a result of misconduct, fraud or corruption within the state. This is to eliminate the possibility of hiring such officials in other departments or entities within the public sector.

The committee plans to meet with the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) and other law enforcement agencies to fully understand the progress of the investigations currently taking place in the department. The SIU was present in today’s meeting and has observed the interaction of the committee with the department in so far as the investigations are concerned.

Scopa intends to request the Auditor-General to conduct a special audit since there is evidence that the Water Boards’ financial affairs are not being run in accordance with proper accounting practices.

Scopa also intends to schedule a hearing with the department on the basis of its financial statements and annual report. The committee will schedule hearings separately with the various Water Boards, particularly the ones which have been flagged due to high amounts of irregularity, wasteful and fruitless expenditure such as Amatola Water Board and Sedibeng Water Board among others. This is to allow enough time for the committee to engage on the issues from the Water Boards.

Due to time constraints, the committee could not engage sufficiently with the department on this matter today. Therefore, it will forward questions stemming from the information presented today to the department. The committee has requested the department to respond to the questions by next week.

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