**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**CONFLICTING REPORTS BY MEC AND ADMINISTRATOR POINT TO HOPELESS STATE OF MALUTI-A-PHOFUNG**

**Parliament, Saturday, 13 June 2020 –**The Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Water and Sanitation and Human Settlements, has expressed unhappiness on the state of the Section 139 (1)(b) intervention at Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality, and has resolved to urgently visit the municipality to interact with the stakeholders in the municipality.

“At the centre of the committee’s preoccupation is to ensure that the municipality is functional and provides services to the people. But, as things stand, there is a level of hopelessness in finding solutions,” said Mr China Dodovu, the Chairperson of the committee. The committee raised its concern around the support the provincial executive is providing to the municipality as per section 154 of the Constitution.

Furthermore, the committee has raised concerns in relation to the ballooning Eskom debt which is now standing at R5.23 billion. Also, the overall financial position of the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality remains a major source of concern given its inability to pay and meet its financial obligations timely as contemplated in the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003.

“It is in this context that it is surprising that the provincial executive is of the view that the intervention has reached its sell-by date and must be terminated. We are of the view that the investigative bodies must rather focus on uncovering wrongdoing within the municipality,” Mr Dodovu said. The committee has also denounced the chopping and changing of the administrator within the municipality.

The committee welcomes the report that the irregular decision to increase the salaries of the Municipal Manager and Chief Financial Officer was reversed.

In relation to the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, the committee has denounced the lack of movement by the municipality to implement the financial recovery plan as per the requirements of 139 (5)(a)(c). Despite this, the committee welcomes the report that the Mangaung Metro is servicing the Eskom debt.

Meanwhile, regarding Metsimaholo Local Municipality, the committee has raised a concern over the fact that the Council failed to meet and conclude its business, thus by implication, failed to execute its executive obligations in the 2019/20 financial year. Furthermore, the committee expressed a concern over the information that the Integrated Development Plan process has not been adopted, a delay according to the committee, which will inadvertently affect the delivery of services negatively.

The committee also expressed dismay that the positions of Chief Financial Officer, Director: Organisational Development and Corporate Services, Director Economic Development and Planning, Director Technical and Infrastructure Services and Director: Social Services have been vacant for over two years.

The committee has called for the provincial executive to boost its support to the struggling municipalities as per the obligation of section 154 of the Constitution, and has committed itself to heightening its oversight on the implementation of these interventions.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, WATER, SANITATION AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, MR CHINA DODOVU.**