**Report of the Portfolio Committee on Public Enterprises on a petition from the residents of Jamestown, Stellenbosch, dated 19 August 2020**

The Portfolio Committee on Public Enterprises, having considered a petition from the residents of Jamestown, Stellenbosch, on 31 July 2020, reports as follows:

1. **Introduction**

The Community of Jamestown in Stellenbosch petitioned the National Assembly to intervene in ensuring that Eskom hands over the power supply and maintenance of streetlights in the Jamestown and Mountain View areas to the Stellenbosch Municipality. On 12 March 2020, the above-mentioned petition was referred to the Portfolio Committee on Public Enterprises (the Committee) for consideration and report. National Assembly Rule 347(1) determines that a member of the National Assembly must lodge a petition with the Secretary to Parliament for approval and tabling by the Speaker. The petition was lodged in the name of Dr L A Schreiber, MP. On 31 July 2020, the Committee considered the petition.

1. **Oral presentations made to the Committee**
   1. **Dr L A Schreiber (Member of the National Assembly)**

Dr Schreiber gave a background and gave reasons why the community decided to petition Parliament. He further highlighted the discussions between the Stellenbosch Municipality and Eskom. He informed the Committee that the purpose of the petition was to appeal to Eskom to fast-track the implementation of the handover of the maintenance of and power supply for the streetlights of Jamestown to the Stellenbosch Municipality. In respect of streetlight infrastructure, Eskom was responsible for infrastructure maintenance.

* 1. **Mr D Louw (Stellenbosch Municipality)**

Mr Louw informed the Committee that the municipality had received numerous complaints from the residents of Jamestown regarding streetlights that were not working, which also affected their safety. The municipality had discussed the matter with Eskom, but also sought the intervention of the National Assembly through the Committee to ensure that Eskom handed over the power supply and maintenance responsibilities of streetlights to the municipality without unnecessary delay since the municipality had the capacity to maintain the streetlights.

* 1. **Mr R Badenhorst (Ward Councillor)**

Mr Badenhorst informed the Committee that the residents had complained that streetlights were not working. The infrastructure belonged to the municipality but the supply of electricity was the responsibility of Eskom. He also pleaded with Eskom to expedite the transfer of power to the municipality to enable it to maintain the streetlights.

* 1. **Ms R Barby (Eskom)**

Ms Barby stated in response that a number of residents living in Jamestown and Mountain View, in the Stellenbosch Municipality, petitioned Parliament to have the streetlight service and maintenance handed over from Eskom to the Stellenbosch Municipality. Eskom, in the Western Cape, engaged the Stellenbosch Municipality on this matter in July 2019 and October 2019, based on a request from the municipality. Both Eskom Western Cape and the Stellenbosch Municipality agreed in principle that a pilot in Jamestown would proceed after verification of asset ownership and after an asset walk-down had been done. This was confirmed in the meeting of 4 October 2019. The effective implementation date of the pilot was agreed to be 1 April 2020. The Stellenbosch Municipality could not take over due to the impact of COVID-19 but had requested to review take-over later in 2020.

1. **Observations**

The Committee made the following observations:

* 1. There was an in-principle agreement between the parties on the transfer, and that the pilot was due for implementation on 1 April 2020.
  2. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a delay in the implementation of the transfer.
  3. There was no resistance from either party and it was perhaps premature to petition the National Assembly at that stage when the parties concerned had not reached a deadlock.

1. **Recommendations**

The Committee recommends that the Minister of Public Enterprises should ensure that Eskom reconvenes discussions with the Stellenbosch Municipality in order to expedite the transfer of power supply and maintenance of streetlights to the municipality.

Report to be considered.