**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
  
**COMMITTEE ON COGTA CALLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF TRADITIONAL AND KHOI-SAN ACT**  
  
**Parliament, Wednesday, 18 November 2020** – The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) has called for the implementation of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act, which was adopted by both Houses of Parliament and sent to the President for assent into law some time ago.  
   
The Deputy Minister of the department, Mr Obed Bapela, told the committee that the Bill was signed by the President into law. However, according to Mr Bapela the President could not write a letter for the commencement of the implementation of the Act because there were certain non-governmental organisations who opposed the Act on grounds of a lack of public participation in the Traditional and Khoi-San Bill.  
   
The National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) appeared before the committee yesterday for a discussion on its work. The Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa) which was represented by its Secretary General, Inkosi Zolani Mkhiva, was also present and afforded an opportunity to make a presentation on any issue it wanted to raise to the committee.  
  
  
The Chairperson of the NHTL, Nkosi Sipho Mahlangu, told the committee that the NHTL is unable to carry out its mandate because it lacks resources. He said the NHTL is not properly budgeted for by the Department of Traditional Affairs, and for as long as that problem persists, the institution will struggle and look like an “orphan in a polygamous family” in its country of creation.  
   
Both Contralesa and the NHTL told the committee that the mandate of the NHTL is not just constitutional, but is organic and originates from creation. They said capacitation of the institution is not a matter of request and begging for help, but a matter of must. Nkosi Mkhiva said the institution does not exist by accident, and that its leadership should be part of the processions of national ceremonies, such as the State of the Nation Address.  
   
They called for the government to pay qualitative attention to rural communities because, they argued, if attention is poor, nothing will be done for rural and traditional communities. They said the infrastructure in the rural communities is crumbling in front of the eyes of the government. Nkosi Mkhiva said: “The government must apply rapid electrification strategies that were applied by the first administration in 1994 for the electrification of the villages to deal with the rural infrastructure and service delivery to the villages.”  
   
The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Faith Muthambi, wanted an explanation from the NHTL on its lack of involvement in the correction of section 25 of the Constitution, particularly on appropriation of the land. “I don’t see your involvement in the hearings that are brought to the communities by Parliament’s Ad Hoc Committee on amendment of section 25 of the Constitution and what is your contribution in that very important process?” asked Ms Muthambi.  
  
  
The NHTL was unable to respond on its non-involvement in the rewriting of section 25 of the Constitution and also didn’t provide information on financial performance for the 2019/20 financial year. The committee has asked it to make a detailed presentation on both issues in the committee meeting scheduled to take place on 27 November where the committee will receive a briefing on the Community Work Programme, which is run by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.  
   
**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MS FAITH MUTHAMBI.**