**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SCOPA CALLS FOR COMPETENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS TO THE NEW PRASA BOARD**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 24 November 2020**– The Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) has told the Minister of Transport and the new Board of Passenger Rail South Africa (Prasa) that the majority of South Africans depend on Prasa for transportation to work, to school, and to all other countless sites that are very important for their lives.

The committee said, given Prasa’s role in the South African economy, Prasa is the only entity that really deserves the support of the government in the event of financial crisis. In welcoming the new board, the committee assured it about its support and told it that its support is conditional and depends only on a competent and effective board that will ensure an effective Prasa in the end. It added that the “chaos and nonsensical disruption” at Prasa must come to an end, Prasa must be beefed up and historical matters must be dealt with.

The Department of Transport and Prasa Board appeared before the committee virtually today to brief the committee on the current state of affairs at Prasa. The Minister of Transport, Mr Fikile Mbalula, the department’s Director-General and the new Chairperson of the Board, Mr Leonard Ramatlakane, briefed the committee.

The committee wanted answers from the department and the board on a range of matters that included the lost records of governance at Prasa, security of the rail infrastructure, appointment of the Werksmans Law Firm, and the stoppage of the continuation of vandalism of the infrastructure.

Members of the committee told Minister Mbalula and Mr Ramatlakane that continued vandalism of infrastructure would stop if it was happening at somebody’s home, why is it not stopped? The department assured the committee about the security strategies that are in place to fight theft and vandalism of the rail infrastructure. The strategies, according to the department, will include joint operations of the security company that is going to be contracted with the South African Police Service.

A report on investigations that were undertaken by the Werksmans Law Firm at Prasa, and that were not completed, will be part of the briefing that the committee will receive from the Special Investigative Unit on its investigations at Prasa. However, the committee told the department that particular matter must be explained in writing.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS, MR MKHULEKO HLENGWA.**