**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE CALLS ON DEPARTMENT TO REDUCE ITS DEBT AND OVERDRAFT**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 25 November 2020 –**The Select Committee on Transport, Public Service and Administration, Public Works and Infrastructure today received a briefing from the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure on its annual report.

Although the committee engaged the department on its annual report, but it expressed its dissatisfaction on the late submission of the report by the department, as that afforded it a very limited time to check the report. The committee noted from the report that the department has used 99% of its budget for the current financial year and achieved only 48% of its targets.

The department attributed its failure to achieve some of its targets to lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It reported unauthorised expenditure in respect to compensation of employees dated back to the 2007/08 – 2011/12 financial years, which was attributed to poor controls. It has assured the committee that it has tightened up its controls.

The department reported that there are currently three disciplinary cases in respect of irregular expenditure for state funerals. It said the officials that were involved have been reported to the South African Police Service (SAPS). The department has reported to the committee that it is unable to access information on the progress of the forty cases opened with the officials and has appealed for the intervention of the committee on the matter of the disciplinary hearings.

The committee also further heard that the department’s debt is high and it has not been paid by the government departments it has provided services, and is using its overdraft facility to pay service providers. The Director- General of the department told the committee that it will share that challenge with other Directors-General of other departments at the Forum for Directors-General to find a way forward.

The department also reported that the Independent Development Trust is not self-sustainable and needs to be trimmed down or absorbed into the department.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Kenny Mmoiemang, expressed his satisfaction with the responses of the department on the questions that were asked by the committee and thanked the department and its Deputy Minister, Ms Noxolo Kiviet, for responding to all the questions posed by the committee.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, MR KENNY MMOIEMANG.**