**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
   
**COMMITTEE ON COGTA WANTS ANSWERS ON HOW THE COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAMME IS RUN**  
   
**Parliament, Friday, 23 April 2021 –** The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) yesterday received a briefing from the Department of Cooperative Governance and the Municipal Insfrastructure Support Agent on their Annual Performance Plans (APPs). Thereafter the committe received a progress report on the Community Work Programme (CWP).  
   
The department’s APP talked to many of the issues that the committee has been dealing with, which include the District Development Model, Municipal Infrastructure Grant expenditure, the implementation of Section 139 of the Constitution, municipal financial viability, the functionality of Municipal Public Accounts Committees and hazards that can lead to disasters. With regard to Section 139, the committee noted that the department has a definite deadline for tabling the Monitoring and Intervention Bill by 31 March 2022. This Bill has been on the department’s APPs since the Fourth Administration and is now long overdue.  
   
The committee noted the undertakings and commitments by the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA). One of these related to supporting 44 districts to reduce infrastructure backlogs and to improve performance in respect of their Municipal Infrastructure Grant Programmes. One of the issues that came up in meetings over the last two months is the support provided by MISA, in particular the limited role played by MISA in some districts due to capacity constraints. During the committee’s engagement with the Lejweleputswa District on 9 March 2021, the committee learnt that there were only four MISA engineers available for the whole of the Free State province. Consequently, the support MISA provided to the district was insufficient. The APP therefore needs to be realistic in terms of the envisaged support to the 44 districts and give due consideration to MISA’s capacity constraints.  
   
The committee expressed its dissatisfaction with the department for not providing a comprehensive report on the Community Work Programme as the committee addressed issues in August 2019 and is still waiting for a full and proper response from the department. The committee queried the CWP model on whether it was a remodel and whether it has been approved by the Minister and Cabinet or if there are any new ideas to improve it. The committee requested clarity on the strategic and operational principles of the new CWP model presented.  
   
One of the issues was the suspense account where approximately R35 million was unprocessed in quarter 4. The committee requested information on which NPOs (non-profit organisations) did not  submit invoices as per the Service Level Agreements for the 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial years. The department is required to submit a report on all the NPOs which were and are still not submitting invoices. The department has to provide the information on the value of the amounts not accounted for.  
   
The committee posed the following questions to the department: “What is the total number of CWP beneficiaries on Persal? How much has been paid to deceased beneficiaries still on the payroll and what steps are being made to recover these monies?” The committee requested a spreadsheet comprising the details of the names and profiles of the non-profit organisations and the implementing agents for the CWP programme, and the commission paid to them. Of major concern to the committee was the type of informal training meted out to CWP beneficiaries and if that training was sufficient to skill them to be employable beyond the programme.  
   
The committee has requested the department to provide information on the five forensic investigations and the reports by MNS Attorneys. What are the costs of those reports and furthermore, what action plans have been put in place on the reccommendations emanating out of these reports? The committee wanted to know the cost-benefit analysis of the programme.  
   
The committee has also requested the department to submit a list of agrarian projects in the country, where they are, how many, cost of the projects, who are the beneficiaries and what is the return on investment. The committee also wanted to know what is the strategic relationship between itself and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development.  
   
The Chairperson requested a report on all departmental assets and a detailed strategy for this current audit.  
   
The committee has given the department until Tuesday, 27 April 2021, to respond to all its questions in full.  
   
**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MS FAITH MUTHAMBI.**