**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COGTA COMMITTEE CONCERNED BY DELAYS IN FINALISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASES**

**Parliament, Friday, 25 March 2022** – The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) was today briefed by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (the Hawks) on corruption and Covid-19 related cases in local government.

Following the briefing of 3 March 2020 on forensic investigations in municipalities from the Hawks, the NPA, the SIU and the Department of Cooperative Governance, the committee resolved to convene quarterly meetings with law enforcement agencies to deliberate on progress relating to general investigations in local government. This was prompted by observation of undue delays in finalising corruption cases.

The committee has noted that at local government level, the impact of corruption on service delivery is quite serious. The committee has also noted that poor monitoring of these cases has contributed significantly to delays in finalising them. Therefore, convening quarterly meetings to monitor progress is a mechanism to ensure accountability for the delays.

The committee's interaction with the SIU today revealed a gap in terms of its existing power, as the SIU is unable to ensure that its reports are acted upon by the organs of state involved. A good example of this is municipal councils that have sat with SIU reports for years without any repercussions. The committee believes that the SIU should consider lobbying for amendments to the SIU Act, to provide it with powers to compel institutions to consider and act on its reports within specific, reasonable timeframes.

The committee is unhappy with the generic overview of corruption cases it received from the Hawks, which leaves the committee in the dark on the progress achieved in the cases the Hawks previously reported it was investigating. The committee has requested the Hawks to provide a detailed report on the corruption cases, without compromising them, including figures quantifying their cumulative monetary value. This will assist the committee to understand the financial impact of this corruption on the fiscus and to determine whether the value of the restraint, preservations, confiscations and forfeiture orders and recoveries are commensurate with the amounts lost.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS, MR FIKILE XASA.**

For media enquiries or interviews with the Chairperson, please contact the committee's Media Officer:
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