**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WELCOMES NATIONAL GOVERNMENT’S INTERVENTIONS IN MANGAUNG AND ENOCH MGIJIMA MUNICIPALITIES**

**Parliament, Thursday, 22 September 2022 –** The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative and Traditional Affairs has welcomed progress reports on the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs’ intervention in Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality and Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality and expressed its appreciation for the progress the department is making in salvaging both municipalities.

The department briefed the committee yesterday on its interventions in both municipalities, focusing on governance, institutional capacity, finance and service delivery. According to the department, the municipalities are in disarray at all levels of governance, institutional capacity and finance. It emerged that the rot is at a political level; there is no cooperation between political parties and they are internally riddled by factionalism.

The Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality is currently under national intervention in terms of Section 139(7) of the Constitution. The committee heard that multi-sectoral teams were deployed in the municipality in an acting capacity as heads of departments and acting city manager until the positions are filled or for a six-month period, whichever comes first.

The committee also heard that Enoch Mgijima Local Municipality has been in a prolonged financial and service delivery crisis. The Eastern Cape Provincial Executive Council intervened in terms of S139(1) and S139(5) of the Constitution in September 2018. According to the report, a financial recovery plan was developed for the municipality, but the implementation thereof did not yield the desired results. The previous municipal council failed to play its oversight role.

The committee heard that municipality’s financial crisis persisted, with material breach of its obligations to provide basic services. It also failed to honour its financial commitments, a state of affairs that necessitated national government intervention. In April 2022, Cabinet resolved to intervene in the municipality in terms of section 139(7) of the Constitution.

During the engagements, the committee called for the improvements in both municipalities to be sustained, so that they can assist their citizens and become centres of excellence. The committee also called for an urgent settlement of the R1.3 billion in government debt owed to the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, as the municipality needs that money now more than ever.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Fikile Xasa, said the committee is hopeful that the interventions will succeed and that the government and Cabinet in particular, is the last line of defence of the people. “The progress you have made confirms that indeed a bigger and a powerful thing has intervened and more progress is going to be achieved,” said Mr Xasa. “We are hopeful that even the non-cooperation you are reporting of Enock Mgijima Local Municipality is going to end.”

**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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