**MEDIA STATEMENT**

# ****COMMITTEE ON COGTA CALLS ON STAKEHOLDERS TO SUPPORT LEKWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY TOWARDS CLEAN GOVERNANCE****

**Parliament, Thursday, 13 October 202 –** The Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs engaged with various government stakeholders on the state of Lekwa Local Municipality that falls under the Gert Sibande District Municipality. The committee engaged with the stakeholders at Standerton Town Hall yesterday as part of its oversight programme in Mpumalanga.

The stakeholders included Gert Sibande District Municipality, Provincial Treasury, Auditor-General, South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COHSTA) on the dysfunctionality of the Lekwa Local Municipality.

Lekwa Local Municipality is one of the 64 municipalities that have been identified as dysfunctional by the Department of Cooperative Governance’s State of Local Government Report to Cabinet. The committee has resolved to have a special attention to these municipalities by, among other things, conducting intensive oversight on them and inviting them to appear before it on updates on their turnaround strategies.

The committee is aware that Lekwa Local Municipality is under a new administration that took over 10 months ago from the one that rendered the municipality dysfunctional. The committee calls on the Gert Sibande District Municipality, Provincial Treasury, COHSTA and SALGA to guide the new administration on how it can turnaround the current state of the municipality into a functional and healthy one as it has inherited it in this problem.
The committee has noted that Lekwa Local Municipality is one of the three municipalities that are under Section 139 (7) intervention, which is being implemented for the first time in the country. It is crucial that all government stakeholders take responsibility in ensuring that this 139 (7) yields the desired results so that the ordinary citizens who rely on the municipality receive the services they require. The committee has also called on the leadership of the municipality to steer the municipality towards a clean audit outcome.
The committee also conducted a site visit at the Rooikoppen sewer phase 6 project.

The committee was impressed with the progress that has been made on the project and as there is an impression that it may be completed before the anticipated time. Furthermore, the committee was informed by the municipality that the project is 50 percent towards completion although it has only spent 32 percent from its budget. The expected time of completion is November 2023, but the municipality accelerates the project in order to complete it by June 2023.

The committee is also impressed with the fact that the project has created employment for the people of the Lekwa Local Municipality.  It has told the municipality that it is going to keep a close eye on the progress of this project in an effort to assist the municipality to achieve its goal.

Today the committee will hold a public meeting in the Lekwa Local Municipality to afford the people an opportunity to express their views on a wide range of issues that include service delivery and infrastructure.

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

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