Address by (MP) Cde Nomadewuka Nancy Sihlwayi on the Budget Vote Debate of the Department of Water and Sanitation

23 July 2020

**Introduction**

In the words of Isithwalandwe/Seaparankwe, Baba Andrew Mlangeni, may his soul Rest in Peace:

“*People around the world want peace, to live in harmony, to have dignity, to enjoy the respect of their human rights… This is the better life that Nelson Mandela together with the ANC envisioned for the people of South Africa”.*

This is the better life that the Department of Water and Sanitation continues to champion, in light of the global pandemic of COVID-19.

**Department of Water and Sanitation Interventions**

Following the outbreak and subsequent announcements made by the President, National Treasury approved the use of R306 million from the Department of Water and Sanitation 2019/2020 Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) for the implementation of the COVID-19 interventions.

We don’t understand why some political parties are opposed to the District Development Model because it is evident from the COVID-19 experience that the formulation of District Development Model arrived at the right time because we have seen the smooth and seamless collaboration between various stakeholders between COGTA, the Department, NGOs and Local Municipalities on their joint efforts to distribute water tanks to our communities. We know why the DA cry against the district delivery model Anything that brings structures of government together for better performance dismantle their old apartheid constitutional measures of separate development.

The ANC wishes to commend the Department on its efforts aimed ensuring water security by embarking on the following interventions in the Eastern Cape:

* Butterworth in Mquma LM has been prioritized as Xilinxa Dam is at its lowest levels over the past four years; and
* There is an initiative of raising the dam wall and bulk pipeline from Tsomo to Ngqamakwe, this is in collaboration with Amathole District. Amathole DM is the hardest hit by drought and putting more strain on efforts made to deal with COVID-19.

The ANC welcomes the intervention by the Department on the dispersion of water tanks and tankers across all provinces, particularly in rural, far-reaching and water-scarce areas. We note, with concern, the high level of theft and vandalism of this water infrastructure which has limited the provision of water and has negatively affected communities. As the ANC, we call on these communities to work with Government to root out these elements of anarchy that seek to reverse the gains that have been made in recent months to improve the lives of our people.

As the ANC, we note that water tankering, in the long-term is unsustainable and thus welcome the reallocated funds of R1.498 billion to be used to implement bulk linkage projects to replace the need for water tinkering.

The ANC also welcomes the numerous calls made by the Minister on Municipalities to suspend cutting water supply for the duration of the lockdown as Government has called on citizens to practice hygiene by washing their hands on a regular basis.

**Conclusion**

In the words of President Ramaphosa in his Monday newsletters to the nation:

“*We will weather this storm. We will restore our country to health and to prosperity. We shall overcome”.*

As the ANC, we are confident that indeed, we shall overcome this and that the adjusted budget will assist towards restoring South Africa to health and prosperity.