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PRESS STATEMENT – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PLANACT WELCOMES THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO WATER AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL CRISIS

Johannesburg - Planact welcomes the parliamentary inquiry into the financial crisis ravaging the Department of Water and Sanitation. Results from the Planact supported, community-led social audits conducted on the provision of water and sanitation in informal settlements have revealed that although local government is making efforts to cater for previously disadvantaged communities, outsourced services have proven to be costly, appalling and undignified.

Social audit findings show that some municipalities have spent about half a million Rand per month on the provision of water by trucks, while in some cases the service rendered did not match the tender specifications. In an extreme case, fifty families were forced to share one chemical toilet that is not frequently disludged as per the tender specification. Moreover, there seems to be insignificant monitoring of outsourced services by municipalities leading to poor quality of water and sanitation services.

One resident from Homeseekers Informal Settlement, Wattville in the City of Ekurhuleni said, *“We want a permanent solution. We were told that these portable toilets will be a temporary service but it has been going on for too long. Something must be done to give us flushing toilets because it will be cheaper than these tenders.”*

With thousands of South Africans still using chemical toilets, which are meant to be an emergency temporary service, Planact is concerned that these outsourced services cannot be sustainable especially since the Department of Water and Sanitation is cash strapped. We hope that the outcomes of the inquiry will ensure that what appears to be wasteful expenditure by municipalities is curbed and that

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Issued by Planact, a civic empowerment organisation based in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, established in 1985 to promote participatory governance in a democratic South Africa.

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