

MEDIA RELEASE                      30 years of democracy: PSA urges government to improve public-service sector

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In April 2024, South Africa is commemorating 30 years of democracy since the demise of the apartheid system. The country has made strides since the dawn of democracy and is globally competitive in education, sports, art, culture, and economic activities.

In 1994, South Africa embarked on a path of social cohesion and equality, striving to improve economic conditions, especially in support of those who were previously marginalised. The country has attracted investments to improve the lives of South Africans in efforts to create more jobs and business opportunities for citizens. Since the dawn of democracy, human rights have been protected as guaranteed by provisions of the Constitution. Additionally, South Africa has ensured basic rights for citizens such as access to basic education, water, and electricity. Progress has also been made in the building of houses, transportation infrastructure, free basic education, and economic business opportunities.

There is accountability and the rule of law is intact. The independent justice system is functioning effectively. Furthermore, there are positive achievements in workplaces with the establishment of progressive labour laws and legislation such as the *Labour Relations Act (LRA)*, the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act*, and the *Employment Equity Act*. The recognition of unions has advanced collective bargaining principles, which are on par with international trends. Freedom of association is entrenched in the *LRA* to advance bargaining processes for workers and to achieve living wages and better working conditions.

South Africa's 30 years of democracy brought about the right to vote for every citizen with government remaining accountable to the people. The international community appreciates and recognises these strides and achievements. Despite these achievements, there are still major areas of concern that need to be addressed, including poverty, inequality, and unemployment. Evident obstacles, such as corruption and crime, however, delay progress.

The PSA calls on government to ensure that the strides made in worker liberation are not lost by complacency as well as the lack of support and recognition of public servants.

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