MEDIA RELEASE	**COVID-19: PSA concerned about Limpopo's readiness to during lockdown period**
DATE	26 March 2020
EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is concerned about the state of readiness in Limpopo to respond during the COVID-19 lockdown. Although the infection rate is still low, the reality is that the departments that are expected to be at the forefront of the containment of the virus are far from ready.

The PSA conducted basic assessments for compliance at institutions that will be offering critical services during the lockdown period and found none of them to be compliant with the Regulatory Framework governing the management of COVID -19. Although the Department of Health scaled down on the provision of services to ensure that only services of emergency nature are offered, Health facilities in Limpopo are not ready in that basic personal protective equipment (PPE) is not provided. Clinics and hospitals have problems with water supply and the Department has done nothing to address this, despite numerous calls by the PSA. Basic PPE is not available, particularly at clinics in high-risk rural areas. Some offices at Department of Home Affairs, Public Works and Department of Social Development also did not provide the PPE.

The Limpopo Provincial Government is exposing workers who are expected to be at the frontline of crisis management and the PSA calls for urgent measures to address this situation. The PSA is further also concerned that the personal circumstances of employees have not been considered. Employees living in rural areas may not have access to transport. Employers cannot then subject these employees to disciplinary action should they fail to come to work when the employer failed to consider and mitigate their circumstances. The lack of clarity on the way forward is of great concern as employees have not received a determination on the need to report for duty.

Members of the public who fail to comply with the COVID-19 Regulations will face jail sentence of six months and/or fines. Employers' non-compliance in respect of the health and safety of their employees should be met with similar stringent measures. The PSA further calls upon the Department of Employment and Labour to make unannounced visits to institutions to ensure compliance. The PSA also calls upon the MECs and Provincial Head to urgently address non-compliance. The PSA will monitor the situation closely to ensure that employees' rights are protected.

END