

MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA condemns slow processing of Temporary Employer/Employee Relief payments**

DATE 1 May 2020

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), one of the largest trade unions in the country, has noted with regret the slow processing of payments from the Salary Relief Fund by the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) to assist vulnerable workers who are in dire need.

The PSA is disturbed to note that most of the vulnerable workers had applied for the assistance, but that their applications have not yet been processed by the UIF. Most of these workers are now unable to provide food for their families or meet their monthly expenses. The UIF is failing to implement appropriate measures in line with the provisions of the disaster management regulations to make payments to these workers. The workers' economic and social challenges continue to deepen as a result of poor planning by the UIF. The UIF's failure to execute its obligations is forcing these workers to, amongst others, turn to loan sharks to ease their financial burden. Compliant employers are also finding the application process to be stressful and frustrating.

The Department of Employment and Labour is clearly not geared to deal with the influx of applications. The Department is, however, rendering an essential service during this crisis period for the country and needs to step up its operations to assist workers.

The PSA advises the Department to urgently amend its action plans and implement immediate measures to increase the capacity of its workforce to process these payments without further delay. The country cannot commemorate Workers' Day while vast numbers of workers do not have the financial means to support their families' basic needs.

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