MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA warns against tax hikes to fund vaccines**

DATE 19 January 2021

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is shocked by media reports suggesting that tax hikes are amongst the measures that Government is considering towards collecting enough funds to procure COVID-19 vaccines.

The PSA, which represents some 240 000 public-sector employees, is of the view that such a consideration is unacceptable given the pressure that citizens are exposed to owing to COVID-19 pandemic. Such tax increases will place an enormous financial burden on struggling public servants, other workers, and the entire country in the face of widespread job losses and salary cuts.

It is also known that medical-aid schemes were approached to add the vaccine to their benefit structures to ensure that most citizens are covered. It is, however, clear that the consideration to raise taxes is a way of generating income, which could be misused and result in another looting scandal, similar to those experienced with the procurement of personal protective equipment and the funding of corrupt state-owned entities.

The PSA is not confident that the systems currently in place will prevent corruption as time and time again Government has dismally failed to prevent and eradicate corruption. This situation has left the most vulnerable in society without basic amenities such as running water and decent housing.

The PSA calls on Government to consider alternatives to fund COVID-19 vaccines rather than placing another severe burden on South Africa's over-burdened taxpayers.

END