

MEDIA RELEASE	GEMS Board requests extension to respond to unions' criticism on exorbitant increases and other demands
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) has noted correspondence from the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS), requesting an extension to respond to the memorandum of demands submitted by the PSA and other unions affiliated to Fedusa at a recent protest action.

Whilst the request by GEMS is acknowledged and its commitment to providing a comprehensive and considered response is noted, it must be emphasised that the issues raised in the memorandum of demands are not new. These concerns reflect long-standing frustrations of public servants regarding affordability, governance, benefit design, and the overall sustainability of GEMS.

The memorandum of demands was handed to GEMS in the context of a lawful mass action because previous engagements did not yield the urgent and decisive interventions required. Workers and their families continue to bear the brunt of escalating medical costs, inadequate benefits, and administrative shortcomings, all of which directly affect access to quality healthcare.

Unions recognise the importance of internal governance processes and legislative compliance. Such processes must, however, not be used to unduly delay accountability or meaningful engagement with members. Any request for an extension must therefore be accompanied by a clear commitment to engage in good faith, provide substantive responses, and outline concrete remedial actions with defined timelines.

The PSA will, in the spirit of constructive engagement, consider the request to extend the deadline for a response, based on a strict understanding that this extension is final and that GEMS will utilise this period to meaningfully address each demand raised in the memorandum. Failure to do so will leave unions with no option but to escalate the matter through all available organisational, legal, and mass mobilisation avenues. Workers have spoken clearly through the recent mass action. Their demands require urgency and decisive action. Any further delays will be viewed as a disregard for the legitimate concerns of public servants and their constitutional right to access healthcare.

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