

MEDIA RELEASE **Industrial action looms as Government proposes 0% increase for public servants**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 235 000 public-sector employees, has issued Government with a stern warning that the 0%-wage increase offer for the 2021/22-financial year will not be accepted by the Union's members.

The PSA, as one of the largest parties at the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council, together with labour has tabled its wage demand on 1 March 2021 with a view to conclude a collective agreement, ensuring that public servants receive a wage increase for the 2021/22-financial year. The PSCBC constitution provides for a sound process to be followed to conclude a wage agreement and the PSA will follow this process meticulously.

It must be borne in mind that public servants should have received their salary increases with effect from 1 April 2021. Negotiations resumed on 15 April 2021 where the employer responded to labour's demands. The response was utterly disappointing and an insult to labour as it only responded positively to some issues, which have no direct short-term financial benefit for employees. The offer for the cost-of-living adjustment for the 2021/22-financial year was a 0% increase. The rest of the substantive demands by labour was also rejected.

Labour, in turn, rejected the employer's counteroffer to he demands as it appears to be a proposal for a downward variation of current benefits. Labour demanded that the employer should revise its offer to prevent the dispute process being invoked. The employer is due to respond with a revised offer on 23 April 2021.

The PSA wants to make it clear that this process may eventually result in wide-spread industrial action as public servants can no longer pay the price for the country's economic woes fuelled by rampant fraud, corruption and mismanagement.

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