MEDIA RELEASE	**KZN relief funds: PSA calls for establishment of multi-disciplinary team to protect funds**
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EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), whilst welcoming the allocation of some R1 billion by the Department of Human Settlements to assist in the wake of devastating flooding in KwaZulu-Natal as well as large financial donations from various sectors to assist the province, is concerned about the management of these funds.

Huge projects of this nature have previously produced undue “overnight millionaires” and the PSA is thus concerned about the capacity and integrity of those entrusted to manage the public purse. Recent examples of such corruption include the COVID-19 corruption scandal, the Limpopo shack scandal, the water and sanitation scandal, and the mismanagement of the Road Accident Fund. All these instances demonstrate that poor management of funds results in corruption and maladministration.

The damage to infrastructure will necessitate the awarding of multiple tenders, which could open ample opportunities for corrupt individuals to collude with service providers and manipulate procurement processes. It is reported that 124 schools, 58 healthcare facilities, and some 10 000 homes were damaged. Assessment of damage to road infrastructure is still underway.

The PSA thus calls for the establishment of multi-disciplinary team, inclusive of government, business, civic organisations, and labour to ensure due diligence in the spending and allocation of these disaster funds. The Office of the Auditor-General, National Treasury, and the Public Protector must play an active role, as corruption has occurred under their watch owing to the passive role they previously played in the spending of government money. History has illustrated that all megaprojects are followed by investigations and commissions, which are further unnecessary wastes of money. A proactive approach will assist in eliminating stealing, maladministration, and corruption from the onset. The spending of these funds should be subjected to public scrutiny whereby the recipients of tenders and all beneficiaries must be published on the website of government departments to allow for proper verification and accountability.

In addition, the PSA urges government to employ more people to ensure an effective rebuilding process, as both national and provincial departments are currently not adequately capacitated to execute this project owing to austerity measures. Funding alone will not have the desired impact if human resources are lacking.

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