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| **MEDIA RELEASE** | **PSA: Limpopo schools far from reopening in June 2020** |
| DATE | 2 June 2020 |
| EMBARGO | None |
| ENQUIRIES | **communication@psa.co.za** |

The Public Servants Association (PSA), has learned with concern, that the Mogalakwena Municipality alerted the Limpopo Provincial Command Council (PCC), to the fact that they are unable to provide water to more than 60 schools amid plans to reopen schools on 8 June 2020. It is reported that it will cost the municipality approximately R7 Million per month, to provide 66 schools with tanks and water, which they are unable to provide due to financial challenges. Although the Limpopo Department of Education has provided a list of 524 schools without water for municipalities to assist in the provision of water, the Waterberg Districts have 91 schools whereby 66 falls under Mogalakwena.

The PCC apparently recommended that the Department of Education be responsible for the cost of internal infrastructure such as sitting, drilling, and connections of boreholes and the cost for the water provided to schools, whilst the municipality will provide human resources. The commitment of the department has not yet been secured to provide for and pay this amount per month, however, they want the parents to believe that they are ready. Other municipalities are yet to report whether they have the ability, resource wise, to provide much needed water to schools. It must be noted that even though millions of Rands can be provided, the work will not be finished within a month.

The PSA made a submission and further engaged the department, wherein we pointed out that it will take longer than 8 weeks to thoroughly prepare the schools, to ensure the safety of educators and learners. This view is supported by the Saviour Association for School Governing Bodies, which advises that the MEC for the schools consider reopening schools around August 2020, to allow the province to fully comply with safety compliance which was ignored.

The PSA has further noted that the mobile toilets are also not yet delivered to schools, schools are still waiting for their PPEs, which are critical for containment of COVID-19, hence we still reiterate that the schools should not be opened now as the Limpopo is not ready. The decision to open schools in Limpopo is reckless and not well thought of and will jeopardise the lives of learners and workers. Sadly, this call is made during National Child Protection Week, as the decision to reopen schools will clearly expose them to unsafe and unhealthy conditions thus the PSA reiterates it's call for the Department of Education to reconsider the opening of schools. Limpopo is far from ready to reopen schools.

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