**MEDIA RELEASE** **Rot continues in Limpopo: PSA to hold Premier accountable**

DATE 4 November 2019

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) has learnt with shock that the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has incurred irregular expenditure of more than R55 million for a tender for booking international return-flight tickets in the 2018/19-financial year.

Scopa found the prices that were paid by the Department to be unreasonable and economical. In addition, the Department failed to provide Scopa with documents related to this tender, which casts doubt over the legality of the tender. The same *modus operandi* was suspected to be used at the Office of the Premier where prices are inflated by travel agencies for undue benefit. Labour indicated at the time that some staff in the procurement unit were colluding with travel agencies to charge exorbitant fees for international travel.

The PSA in the past, called upon the Premier to lead by example, particularly when this issue was raised in his Office and cautioned him that failure to take leadership would set a bad precedence and create a free-for-all environment. The PSA's warning was not heeded, clouding the Premier's commitment to eradicate corruption. Corruption will not be eradicated by nicely-crafted speeches and slogans. It requires political will and decisive actions. The lack of consequence management in the province is alarming and was recently reiterated by the Provincial Treasury MEC, Seaparo Sekoati, when he pointed at the dangers of lack of consequence management for maladministration and wasteful expenditure.

The PSA has called on the Limpopo Government to provide working tools for employees to perform their work effectively. The Government, however, pleaded poverty when money that should have been utilised for this is going down the drain. It is worrisome that amidst moves to reduce the benefits of public-sector employees and reducing their numbers owing to a perceived high wage bill, no one is called to book to answer to billions of Rands being misappropriated.

The PSA will explore ways to make the Premier account for these irregular tenders and corrupt activities that are occurring under his watch.

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