

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	PSA cautiously optimistic about DPSA's new corruption unit
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<b>EMBARGO</b>	None
<b>ENQUIRIES</b>	communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the establishment of a unit in the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) to root out corruption in the Public Service with the hope that it will serve the intended purpose.

The Union that represents more than 235 000 public sector employees pointed out that it is comforting to know that there will be a body that will also investigate disciplinary matters relating to misconduct in public administration. The PSA was recently faced with various challenges when obtaining relief for members who report and seek intervention when reporting corrupt activities (despite making protected disclosures in terms of the Act), including financial mismanagement, victimisation of employees and the protection of perpetrators in the workplace. Some perpetrators are protected and the application of discipline against them is regarded as a mere formality. It is trusted that Departments will no longer apply discipline selectively and inconsistently owing to bias and favours or as a means to bully individuals.

Recently, the PSA on behalf of a member at the Department of Trade and Industry, referred such a matter to the DPSA, which indicated that it could not assist, leaving the member with no further avenue to seek justice against those who had done her wrong. Corrupt activities and irregularities are reported, but it seems that in the Public Service such disclosures are of no use.

It is also the PSA's hope, that this unit will have enough authority to ensure that public servants are no longer subjected to unfair disciplinary action instituted against them without valid grounds to settle a score or merely as an abuse of power. The PSA is aware that often chairpersons of hearings come with the sole purpose of executing a mandate to dismiss employees, without having due regard to the facts of the matter. The PSA is dealing with various cases related to ensuring that members who were unfairly dismissed are reinstated or re-employed.

The PSA will monitor the work of the new unit and hopes that its work will not infringe on the right to privacy of public servants or their family and that personal information is protected in terms of legislation. The PSA, however, pointed out that unfortunately in the past experienced that where security vetting was undertaken, personal information of employees was leaked and was unfairly used against them.

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