

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA calls for concrete details during SONA**

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EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), is calling on President Cyril Ramaphosa to provide concrete details on his plans for the country during his State of the Nation Address (SONA), particularly on how he plans to tackle poor economic growth, increase the effectiveness of the state in dealing with corruption and crime, reduce wastage in government spending and State-Owned Enterprise(SOEs), youth unemployment and improve on service delivery to South Africans.

The PSA expects the President to give details on his announcement made during his second SONA, on 7 February 2019, on how Eskom will be unbundled and provide feedback on the progress made into his plans on Eskom and put to rest speculations on the future of Eskom. The focus should be on the immediate challenge to improve efficiencies, address technical and operational challenges and improve Eskom's' balance sheet. The Public Investment Cooperation (PIC) can no longer be expected to waste public servants pension savings on attempts to rescue Eskom and other ailing SOEs, and the National Treasury cannot continue granting unending guarantees, which put pressure on the fiscus while citizens continue to foot the bill. The PSA strongly believes that there is substantial space for savings, from fighting widespread corruption and combating structural inefficiencies in government. It is expected that practical plans be outlined on the recovery of financial losses due to corrupt activities, rather than just having commissions of inquiries going on while criminals enjoy undue public monies.

The PSA is concerned about the state of government infrastructure, despite the tragedy of the Bank of Lisbon in 2018, workplace conditions for public servants in particular, remain a death trap while public servants continue to be working in overcrowded prisons, ill-equipped hospitals, clinics, government offices and schools.

Inadequate infrastructure and the increasing incidents of violence, against teachers and learners is also deeply disturbing and requires immediate intervention. There is a need to deepen parent and community interaction with schools. The PSA calls on the President to ensure that the Department of Basic Education receives the necessary support to enable them to improve the quality of learning and discipline in the schools to provide a safe environment for teachers and the pupils, which will ensure that the youth is equipped for the future.

The PSA is also of the view that the current process embarked upon by government to grant early retirement packages to employees between 55 and 59 years will not yield the intended results. This will rather result in the erosion of skills and expertise in the Public Service.

END

