

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA calls for radical job creation and industrial transformation in North West
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EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is outraged by the latest unemployment statistics, which confirm that North West remains the worst affected province in South Africa for joblessness.

The *Second Quarter Labour Force Survey* by Statistics South Africa puts the official unemployment rate at 40.1%, whilst the expanded rate has reached a staggering 54.7%. More than 1.5 million people are without work. The province's labour absorption rate is the lowest in the country at 31.6%, with a participation rate of just 52.7%. These statistics represent lives destroyed by poverty, hunger, and hopelessness. Marginal quarterly and annual reductions in unemployment are meaningless in the face of a crisis of this magnitude.

The North West Provincial Government has failed to provide a credible, measurable, and time-bound plan to reverse this catastrophe. The North West economy is gutted across critical sectors. Mining companies continue retrenchments owing to declining commodity prices, mechanisation, and failure to invest in beneficiation plants. Agriculture struggles under drought, limited irrigation, and seasonal instability, leaving rural communities destitute. Manufacturing in several towns has collapsed owing to high electricity costs, load shedding, and limited access to national and export markets. Tourism, a potential growth driver, suffers from poor infrastructure, crime, and a lack of provincial promotion. In the public service, thousands of funded posts in education, health, and municipalities remain unfilled, further eroding service delivery and economic development.

The PSA demands immediate, radical action. The Premier must declare all vacant funded posts across provincial departments, municipalities, and public entities within 30 days, and ensure these are advertised and filled within six months. Priority must be given to unemployed graduates and local residents to combat youth unemployment. The private sector must also disclose vacancies and sign local hiring agreements, particularly in mining, agriculture, and manufacturing. An aggressive investment and industrialisation strategy is required. Idle industrial parks in Mahikeng, Brits, and Rustenburg must be revived to host agro-processing plants, renewable energy projects, and mining beneficiation industries. Mining companies must meet legally enforceable social and labour plan targets for local employment. Agriculture must be supported with irrigation schemes, mechanisation subsidies, and market access for small-scale farmers. Tourism infrastructure, particularly roads to heritage and wildlife attractions, must be upgraded, complemented by safety patrols and marketing campaigns to attract visitors.

The PSA rejects the Premier's silence and reliance on ceremonial ribbon cuttings, roadshows, and political speeches as solutions. North West is in an economic emergency and requires the same urgency as a declared disaster. The PSA urges the Premier to convene a North West Jobs and Industrialisation Summit within 60 days, bringing together organised labour, the private sector, civil society, and development finance institutions to adopt binding resolutions with measurable outcomes.

Should the Premier fail to act, he must step aside for leadership prepared to confront this crisis head-on. The people of North West cannot continue to suffer under a government that chooses inaction over solutions.

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