MEDIA RELEASE PSA calls for urgent measures to ease fuel-price burden on public servants

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) calls on government to take urgent and decisive measures to cushion public servants against the escalating financial pressure caused by rising fuel prices.

From 2 September 2026, the petrol price is expected to increase by R1.34 per litre and the diesel price by between R2.94 and R3.15 per litre. For public servants burdened by mounting household costs, these increases represent a further significant erosion of disposable income, place additional pressure on workers who rely on private vehicles to travel to and from work, particularly those serving in rural and poorly serviced areas.

The PSA is concerned that public servants are increasingly being forced to absorb rising fuel costs whilst salaries fail to keep pace with the escalating cost of living. Fuel increases have a multiplier effect, contributing to higher transport, food, and other household costs. Government cannot continue to expect public servants to carry this burden alone. The PSA urges government to urgently consider innovative and targeted measures to provide meaningful relief to public servants. Such measures could include reviewing the tax treatment of work-related travelling, strengthening transport allowances where appropriate, exploring targeted fuel-relief mechanisms for qualifying public servants, and accelerating affordable and reliable public-transport solutions for employees.

The PSA further calls for a comprehensive review of the current fuel-pricing and taxation framework to determine whether government can provide temporary relief when international oil-price volatility and exchange-rate movements result in extraordinary fuel price increases. Government previously demonstrated that intervention in the fuel-price structure is possible. Current circumstances therefore require political will and decisive action rather than expecting workers to absorb yet another increase. The August fuel-price adjustment demonstrated how levies can materially affect the final price paid by consumers. This underlines the need for government to review all available policy instruments that can ease pressure on workers without undermining fiscal sustainability.

The PSA is particularly concerned about the impact on lower-and middle-income public servants, who have limited capacity to absorb repeated increases in fuel, electricity, food, housing, education, and other essential costs. Public servants are at the core of the Country's public-service delivery system. They should not be placed in a position where travelling to work consumes an ever-growing proportion of their monthly income.

The PSA therefore demands that government urgently engages organised labour on practical interventions to protect public servants from the escalating cost of fuel and the broader cost-of-living crisis. This is not a call for unsustainable subsidies or reckless expenditure but a plea for innovative, targeted, and sustainable solutions that recognise the realities faced by workers. The PSA will continue to engage government through the appropriate collective-bargaining and policy structures to secure meaningful relief for public servants. Government must, however, act decisively before the financial pressure on public servants becomes unsustainable and undermines morale, productivity, and the ability of the state to attract and retain skilled employees.

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