

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA condemns intended lavish spending of Department of Economic Development and Tourism on SAMA Awards**

DATE 16 October 2023

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) is deeply concerned about recent reports regarding the Department of Economic Development and Tourism's irresponsible intention to spend over R25 million on hosting the SAMA Awards in KwaZulu-Natal.

The PSA, as an organisation dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights and interests of public-sector employees, cannot stand idly whilst taxpayers' money is irresponsibly spent on unnecessary extravagances. These funds would be better utilised in boosting human capital and providing the necessary resources for public servants to deliver efficient services to the public.

Whilst the Department continues to shower funds on outreach programs, there has been a complete disregard of pressing issues that plague government departments, including in KwaZulu-Natal. These include understaffing, a lack of safety and security for employees, shortages of essential tools of trade, low morale amongst staff members, a distressing level of bullying and harassment, increasing grievances and litigation against departments, delays in the completion of infrastructure projects following devastating floods in KwaZulu-Natal, and numerous other issues that demand immediate attention.

The alleged more than R25 million for the SAMA Awards is unconscionable, especially when this money could be redirected to address critical issues such as the shortage of nurses, doctors, and administrators at healthcare facilities, education, and other departments to significantly improve service delivery to communities. Shockingly, there are public servants who lack basic resources such as email addresses, access to the internet, and IT equipment. Infrastructure is collapsing in many departments, whilst others do not have basic amenities such as electricity and water.

The PSA urges the Premier and MEC of Finance in the KwaZulu-Natal to curtail this reckless spending as public funds should be used to enhance service delivery and not for unnecessary displays of opulence.

END