

MEDIA RELEASE PSA demands answers on new approach to rein in “bloated wage bill”

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 245 000 public-sector employees, is eagerly awaiting the Minister of Finance's clear outline of Treasury's new approach to address the perceived issue of a bloated public service.

This matter is widely discussed on social-media platforms and the PSA has been inundated with enquiries regarding the specifics of this plan. While the allocation of R 114.4 billion to adjust the salaries of public servants in critical departments and professions, such as education, health, police, defence, and correctional service is certainly appreciated, it has raised concern and uncertainty amongst other public servants who are equally essential for fulfilling government's mandate and ensuring efficient service delivery.

The PSA has requested the Minister to detail his plan for ensuring fairness in the consideration of salary increases and ensuring that all public servants are treated equitably. The PSA also urged the Minister to unveil his strategy for preventing any form of segregation based on profession, as such a move will present challenges, including a loss of skilled and experienced employees by departments deemed less significant. Such an initiative also contradicts the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and will ultimately jeopardise service delivery.

The claim of “bloated” public services was refuted by the former Minister of Public Service and Administration during a presentation at the Public Service Summit. The PSA has provided proposals to address the fiscal crisis and implores government to consider these solutions rather than discriminating against a significant portion of public servants. The PSA believes that cost-containment measures and the request that provincial governments to accommodate salary increases are not sustainable and will impair service delivery, and severely impact the effective functioning of provinces.

In addition, the freezing of posts will have a profound impact on the well-being of public servants who are already overburdened owing to staff shortages. This overburdening may lead to burnout, resulting in increased sick leave and placing an even heavier burden on those employees who are left to provide services to the public.

In view of the urgency of the matter, the PSA had requested clarity on the Minister's plan to segregate salary increases based on professions, as this has the potential to create a volatile environment in the recognised bargaining council.

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