

MEDIA RELEASE

Working hours: PSA notes Home Affairs Portfolio Committee's willingness to re-engage unions on working hours

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) has noted the presentation by the acting Director-General of the Department of Home Affairs, Mr Thulani Mavuso, to the Portfolio Committee of Home Affairs on efforts to improve service delivery.

The PSA as representative Union of the majority of employees in the Department of Home Affairs also notes the statement and the direction given by the Portfolio Committee to re-engage labour in the Bargaining Chamber on the Department's working hours. This is nothing new as the PSA has continuously advised the Department that any efforts to improve service to the general public by changing the working must be discussed at the appropriate forum, the Departmental Bargaining Chamber with due consideration of the Constitutional Court judgment made against the Department on working hours during 2017.

The PSA indicated that it has always welcomed constructive engagement to find a solution to challenges, but arrogance previously demonstrated and engagement without substance or sincerity to address challenges will not be condoned. This includes exploring the various options and a commitment by the Department and the Treasury to make funding available to address challenges instead of passing the burden to staff.

Labour must also be engaged on the introduction of new technology, training and changes in work processes as it is common cause that such interventions have an impact on the workforce. The Department should regard labour as a social partner with an interest in contributing to the improvement of economic development of the country whilst also ensuring an improvement in service delivery to citizens.

The PSA supports the direction that more offices should be opened to relieve pressure on the existing staff establishment. This should also be suitable office accommodation that complies with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to avoid the repeat of the Bank of Lisbon tragedy. The PSA, in fact, calls on the Department to conduct an audit and address the occupational health and safety concerns of the existing buildings that are not aesthetically driven to deal with thousands of people. These measures will assist in addressing capacity issues and improving service delivery.

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