

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	<b>PSA opposes downsizing and post-freezes as hindering nation's developmental goals</b>
<b>DATE</b>	21 September 2023
<b>EMBARGO</b>	None
<b>ENQUIRIES</b>	communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 240 000 public-sector employees, is disappointed with recent government announcements on proposed cost-containment measures.

Government announcements underscore the need to make the public service a “career of choice” and undermine the call for the improvement of interdepartmental coordination and intergovernmental relations, strengthening of local government capacity through skills development, and the need for accountability and strong oversight in departments and state-owned enterprises. It further undermines the need for a professional, autonomous, and insulated public service.

The PSA opposes downsizing and post-freezes as these hinder the nation's developmental goals. Corruption and inefficiencies must be addressed, not the size of the public service. Government's fiscal mismanagement through corruption necessitates efforts to recover lost resources and reduce wasteful expenditure. The country's challenges require collaboration between government and labour for greater accountability and stricter consequence management. Punishing and retrenching public servants will not solve the problems. The PSA further rejects the idea that reducing ministries means retrenching public servants. Instead, reconfiguring government can save billions without job losses. In this regard, the PSA supports streamlining ministerial expenses, including security, housing, and travel costs. The PSA further regards establishing a Ministry of Electricity alongside the Ministry of Energy as being counterproductive.

The PSA urges alignment with National Development goals and efficient management of state-owned enterprises (SoEs). Mergers and acquisitions of departments must be done responsibly and fairly to avoid disrupting service delivery and job losses. Efficient departmental reconfigurations are crucial without causing worker disillusionment. The future of SoEs should be discussed within the context of a developmental state. There must be harmony between national developmental aspirations and the type of state institutions needed to realise full potential as a nation. Such a conversation can, however, not ignore the fact that the viability of some SoEs is questionable owing to mismanagement and corruption.

Entities such as Transnet and Eskom are drivers of economic growth. No government can pursue a development agenda without a viable electricity supplier. Transportation of goods, commodities, and labour, requires a reliable rail network, which is Transnet's responsibility. The PSA believes that any conversation on which entities to retain, close or privatise must be scientific with greater alignment with the developmental agenda.

The former Director-General of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), Themba Maseko's, warning about the complexity of departmental mergers emphasizes the need for careful consideration. The PSA urges government to find efficient ways to reconfigure departments, whilst maintaining service delivery and workers' morale.

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