

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA ready to commence with Public Service salary negotiations for 2023/24-financial year**

DATE                                      16 February 2023

EMBARGO                                None

ENQUIRIES                              communication@psa.co.za

---

The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 235 000 public-sector employees, has been duly mandated by its members to table wage demands for the 2023/24-financial year.

The PSA strongly condemned the unilateral implementation of a 3%-salary increase for public servants for 2022 but is also fully aware of the challenges associated with resuscitating 2022/23-salary negotiations. Government's unilateral action strained relations between unions and government. The only remaining remedy would have been for the PSA to continue with industrial action. This would, however, in view of the meagre 3% offer, have left PSA members severely financially constrained in view of the soaring cost of living.

The PSA will continue to engage with other public-sector unions to alert them that failure to commence with 2023/24-salary negotiations without delay will disadvantage public servants. Failure to commence with wage negotiations urgently will severely disadvantage public servants who are increasingly cash strapped and indebted. Public servants have not recovered from the events of 2020 where government robbed them of a salary increase. The future of the current R1 000-cash gratuity is at risk, taking into account that the employer plans to terminate this payment by 31 March 2023. The PSA cannot afford to see the R1 000-cash gratuity being taken away without any sort of replacement and recklessly further plunge members into continued, old strike action that will further deepen their financial woes owing to the no-work, no-pay principle.

The PSA, at the same time, respects other unions' position and stance not to partake in the imminent wage negotiations. The PSA, as a mandate-driven Union, is the only union that during 2022 successfully on its own embarked on industrial action to push government to increase the 2022 offer. The PSA was the only union that opted for industrial action in the interest of its members as other unions that also refused the offer, did not participate in the action. This lessened the impact of the industrial action to the advantage of government.

The interests of public servants are critical to the PSA. The PSA will thus not politicise public service salary negotiations and, under current circumstances, is therefore ready to engage in salary negotiations. Boycotting Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) processes, as the sole platform to negotiate terms and conditions of employment for public servants, including their salary increases, will not advance the cause of these employees. The PSA will continue to encourage other unions to join a progressive move, no matter how difficult, but will continue to engage in the interest of embattled public servants.



The PSA further awaits the upcoming budget speech by the Minister of Finance with anticipation as a first major test for restoring damaged trust between unions and government. The 2022 Public Sector Summit underlined the need to correct the anomaly of the Minister of Finance tabling wage-increase proposals during the budget presentation rather than at the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council where such matters should be dealt with.

END