

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA refutes claims of overpaid and underperforming public servants**

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EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES Reuben Maleka
082 903 6808 / 082 428 5734

Claude Naiker
082 880 8950

The Public Servants Association (PSA) strongly denounces recent comments made in a *Daily Investor* article by economist, Dawie Roodt, suggesting that South African public servants are overpaid and deliver subpar services.

The PSA wishes to point out that, on the contrary, public servants endure salaries that fail to meet the basic costs of living. Many struggle to afford housing and provide quality education for their children, indicative of the financial hardships they face. Considering the prevailing economic climate and the imperative of fiscal prudence, public servants are struggling to make ends meet. Despite their vital contributions to society, their remuneration falls short of addressing their fundamental needs. A considerable number are burdened by debt, unable to afford basic consumer goods.

Teachers and nurses, often deemed the "missing middle," find themselves excluded from housing assistance programs, compounding their financial strain. Salary increments for the 2023/24-financial year failed to keep pace with inflation, exacerbating the financial pressures on public servants. Despite these realities, public servants continue to deliver exceptional services to citizens. Their dedication deserve commendation. They are the backbone of public-service institutions, pivotal in meeting the diverse needs of citizens.

The professionalisation of the public service is imperative to enhance service quality. Investing in training initiatives and capacity building are paramount to equip workers with skills necessary for world-class service delivery. Addressing the high vacancy rate in the public service is essential to alleviate the burden on existing workers and support service delivery. It is imperative that public servants' salaries are benchmarked against international standards.

The PSA maintains that public servants are undervalued and overworked. Increased budget allocation for remuneration and compensation is necessary to foster retention and job satisfaction. Salary increments are derived from collective agreements, and periodically reviewed to ensure fairness and competitiveness. These adjustments occur within the context of economic constraints, yet public servants remain significantly underpaid compared to their private sector counterparts.

It is thus deeply concerning that commentators and analysts, instead of engaging constructively in discussions about improving service delivery, choose to perpetuate a narrative that undermines the hard work and dedication of public servants. The PSA understands the country's challenges, including fiscal constraints. However, it is imperative to acknowledge the essential role played by public servants and ensure that their contributions are duly



recognized and compensated. Linking salary increases to the perceived quality of service delivery oversimplifies a complex issue and fails to address the underlying factors affecting service delivery in South Africa.

The PSA remains committed to advocating for the rights and interests of public-sector employees, including fair compensation, reflective of their invaluable contributions to society. The PSA calls all stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue aimed at addressing the challenges facing public servants and improving service delivery for the benefit of all South Africans.

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