

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA responds to 2026 State of the Nation Address
DATE	13 February 2026
EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) representing more than 245 000 public-sector employees, noted the commitments made by President Cyril Ramaphosa during the State of the Nation Address (SONA) on 12 February 2026.

Whilst government reported progress and points to economic growth, the PSA emphasises that such growth must translate into tangible improvements in the lives of public servants and citizens. Economic recovery cannot remain a statistical claim. It must be felt in money in the pockets of workers who continue to carry the weight of delivering essential services under increasingly difficult conditions. In recent years, public servants have endured the devastating effects of a constrained economy, rising inflation, escalating fuel and food prices, and increased living costs. Salaries have been significantly eroded, leaving many employees struggling to maintain a basic standard of living. Until meaningful financial relief is realised, the pain experienced by workers will persist.

The PSA supports government's stated commitment to the professionalisation of the public service, recognising that a capable, ethical and accountable state is fundamental to national development. Professionalisation can, however, not occur in isolation from fair and competitive remuneration. Professionalisation must go hand in hand with improved conditions of service. If government is serious about building integrity, restoring public confidence, and ensuring dignity for public servants, it must invest properly in those who serve the nation.

The PSA therefore calls on National Treasury to make adequate provision in the 2026 Budget for meaningful salary increases that restore purchasing power and recognise the critical role played by public servants in stabilising and growing the economy. As government prioritises strengthening border security and combating crime, sufficient financial and operational support must be allocated to the Border Management Authority to ensure that its mandate is effectively implemented without placing additional strain on already overstretched employees and ensure their proper remuneration.

Public servants have absorbed the shocks of economic downturns for years. They cannot continue to shoulder the burden whilst promised recovery fails to reach their households. If South Africa wants a professional, ethical and high-performing public service, competence must be rewarded, purchasing power protected, and the 2026 budget must reflect a real commitment to workers on the ground.



Public servants remain committed to serving South Africa with dedication and professionalism. However, commitment cannot replace fair compensation, and resilience cannot substitute dignity.

END

