

MEDIA RELEASE	SONA: PSA welcomes steps to root out corroding corruption
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes comprehensive steps announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa in the 2019 State of the Nation Address to combat and address corruption that has eroding all levels of society.

The Union that represents more than 240 000 public-sector employees, also welcomed plans to support investment, stimulate economic growth, job creation, infra-structure development and the reforming of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), warned that such initiatives should be transparent and involve relevant stakeholders to ensure that trust and integrity are restored.

The PSA expressed support for Mr Ramaphosa's statement that poverty, unemployment and inequality will not be eliminated unless state capture and corruption are eradicated. "The PSA has on a continuous basis raised alarms about corruption and state capture. Had such warnings been heeded, such activities could have been addressed much quicker. The PSA has also already stated that where evidence of criminal activity emerges and there is a basis to prosecute, such action must be swift. The PSA therefore welcomes the announced establishment of an investigating directorate to deal with serious corruption and associated offences and recover assets linked to the proceeds of corruption," said PSA General Manager, Ivan Fredericks.

"The introduction by the National School of Government of compulsory courses on ethics, anti-corruption, and supply chain management, will serve to improve the capabilities of public servants. Legislation to strengthen the outlawing of public servants doing business with the state, if fairly and consistently applied, should also assist in restoring trust in the embattled public service. President Ramaphosa's confirmation of the dire situation of several SOEs owing to mismanagement and corruption and the paralysing eroding effects of state capture on vital public institutions provides a measure of hope that plans to address these matters could yield speedy results. The success of the turn-around plan for Eskom, in particular, will be closely watched by the PSA," said Mr Fredericks.

The announcement by the President regarding the migration of responsibility for early-childhood development centres from Social Development to Basic Education and a two-year of compulsory ECD phase for children before they enter Grade 1, was met with by caution by the PSA.

“Urgent attention will have to be given to ensuring that a sufficient number of trained educators are ready to deal with this. The same applies for the National Health Insurance to ensure that the promised level of quality health-care service is delivered,” said Mr Fredericks.

As far as announcements about the provision of housing is concerned, Mr Fredericks said: “Unfortunately, many public servants also find themselves unable to access housing. The PSA calls on the President not to overlook the needs of this sector of society in finding a suitable model.”

Regarding progress in examining the size and structure of the state, the PSA indicated that it was crucial for labour to be part of this process. “South Africa as a young democracy is at a cross-road. If we are to achieve the goal set by President Ramaphosa of strengthening the capacity of the state to address the needs of the people, concerted efforts, devoid of any other motives and by all parties are needed,” said Mr Fredericks.

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