

MEDIA RELEASE **Public Service salaries: PSA appalled by government's delaying tactics**

DATE 4 July 2020

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES Claude Naicker
082 880 8950

The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents more than 240 000 public servants, is shocked by a request from the State Attorney for an extension to reply to the PSA's affidavit on the Public Service wage dispute.

Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 1/2018 made provision for a three-year agreement on salary adjustments and improvements to conditions of service for public servants. The Department of Public Service and Administration is bound by the agreement but has failed to implement the last leg of the agreement whereby public servants were due for a salary increase with effect from 1 April 2020.

The PSA instructed its lawyers to approach the Labour Court to enforce the agreement. The PSA can confirm that it only received an answering affidavit from the Minister of Public Service and Administration on the eve of 1 July 2020. The affidavit merely indicates that the employer is basing its defense on unaffordability to implement the agreement. Yet, amid the crisis government is facing to balance the budget, wastage and corruption continue unabated. Only 20 out of 257 municipalities have received a clean audit with R32 billion being lost to irregular expenditure, fraud, and corruption.

The PSA is outraged to see the Union's persistent calls on government to hold accountable those who have mismanaged state funds and looting falling on deaf ears. To date, no action has been taken to recover these funds and return it to state coffers for service delivery. The PSA cannot allow that its members sacrifice and endure hardships whilst money is still being looted for self-enrichment.

On 29 June 2020, the PSA's attorneys received a letter from the State Attorney, requesting for an extension until 17 July 2020 to file an answering affidavit on behalf of the Minister of Finance. The reasons cited relates to public finance and macro-economic issues that must be consulted. The State Attorney's request is a clear indication that government is not concerned about the financial well-being of public servants who are also at the frontline in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. This delaying tactic of government is completely insensitive to public servants who ensure service delivery during the pandemic. It is thus unfortunate and completely misplaced for government to use the pandemic to substantiate its plea of poverty.

The PSA agreed to the extension until 17 July 2020 as it is of the opinion that the Court will grant the request. The PSA, however, cannot condone government's behavior and considers the extension as unreasonable.

END

