MEDIA RELEASE **South African ports of entries: PSA welcomes increased staffing to alleviate pressure**

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EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the decision to increase the staff capacity at the country's busy ports of entries. The increased capacity will greatly assist over-worked officials from various Public Service departments who are rendering critical services at ports of entries.

A severe shortage of staff resulted in Immigration officers from the Department of Home Affairs, South African Revenue Service officials, the South African Police Service as well as officials from the Departments of Health and Agriculture having to cope with high volumes of travellers between South Africa and neighbouring countries during the busy festive period. The increased staff capacity will reduce long queues as the country also expects high volumes of travellers during January 2021.

The PSA, representing some 240 000 public servants including thousands of employees stationed at ports of entries, on 31 December 2020 warned the various departments about the dismal conditions at various ports of entries, including the Beitbridge border post. The PSA also highlighted the high risk of contracting COVID-19 for officials at these points in the absence of social distancing being maintained.

The PSA will continue to monitor the situation and engage the various departments regarding compliance with COVID-19 regulations and health protocols to ensure that health and safety measures are in place at the country's ports of entries to protect officials and travellers.

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