FOR PSA MEMBERS: **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DOA) AND DEPARTMENT OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DLRRD)**

12-08-2026

Feedback: Joint Chamber Meeting - 7 August 2026

Members were previously informed of the respective positions adopted by the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development (DLRRD) regarding the placement of officials in the Cooperative and Enterprise Development (CED) function. The DOA had indicated that it was willing to release affected CED officials to the DLRRD together with their compensation of employees (COE). However, the DOA maintained that the CED function and its associated budget should remain in the DOA. The DLRRD, on the other hand, maintained that it would receive affected officials only if the transfer included the officials' COE, the CED function, and the associated budget allocation.

The DOA subsequently indicated that it wished to consult the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and National Treasury before adopting a final position. These consultations were intended to consider the functional allocation of CED, possible alternatives for resolving the placement matter, and the process and financial implications associated with any transfer of the function and its resources. Following commitments made by the DOA, the PSA requested a follow-up Joint Special Chamber meeting to assess progress with the employer's proposed consultations and action plan. Owing to difficulties in securing the availability of both Departments, the meeting was ultimately convened on 7 August 2026.

During the meeting, organised labour expressed serious concern about the prolonged delay in finalising the placement of affected CED officials. The PSA strongly criticised the employer's failure to honour its commitment to submit a progress report by 19 July 2026. Organised labour regarded this failure, together with the repeated changes in the employer's position, as unreasonable and prejudicial to affected employees who have remained in a prolonged state of uncertainty. The DOA reported that its previously proposed plan had not been supported by its principals and that it had subsequently received a new approved mandate. In terms of this mandate:

- CED officials will remain in the DOA and will no longer be transferred to the DLRRD;
- The CED function is regarded as an integrated part of the DOA;
- The DOA considers the CED function to have been correctly allocated to it; and
- All previous proposals concerning the possible transfer of CED officials, the function and associated resources, are regarded by the DOA as having fallen away.

Following the DOA's revised position, the DLRRD submitted that there was no longer a basis for continuing with the joint Chamber process. The DLRRD maintained that CED falls in the DOA and that any outstanding matters relating to affected officials should therefore be addressed in the appropriate DOA structures. Organised labour received the revised positions of the two Departments with serious disappointment. Organised labour expressed the view that the way the process had been handled, including the failure to honour previous commitments, and the material change in the employers' positions, had undermined the consultation process and misled labour and affected employees regarding the prospects of resolving the placement matter.

The PSA reminded both Departments that the Joint Chamber process was established by the General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council (the Council) as an intervention following a request from organised labour. Accordingly, parties to the Joint Chamber cannot unilaterally dissolve the structure. Any decision to dissolve or terminate the Joint Chamber process must be referred to and determined by the Council. Organised labour rejected the proposed dissolution of the Joint Chamber. Organised labour indicated that it must first consult its members and principals before providing a comprehensive response to the revised positions adopted by the DOA and the DLRRD.

Organised labour further expressly reserved all its rights, including the right to pursue any appropriate remedies available in law, and applicable collective agreements after completing the necessary consultations. Organised labour requested both Departments to submit their revised positions, together with the reasons, in writing to the Chamber Secretariat as a matter of urgency. The Secretariat will thereafter distribute the written submissions to organised labour. Both Departments agreed to submit their respective positions in writing. The PSA will carefully assess the Departments' written submissions, consult affected members and determine an appropriate course of action.

Members will be informed of developments and steps to be taken to protect their rights and interests.

Reuben Maleka
<u>GENERAL MANAGER</u>