

MEDIA RELEASE	Budget Vote: PSA input on Budget Vote to be delivered by Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni
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An earnest effort to professionalise the Public Service by ensuring that all Departments have sufficient staff to deliver a proper service to the country is crucial says the Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents more than 240 000 public servants. The PSA calls on the Minister of Finance, when introducing his budget, to prioritise a number of issues like the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI). This matter was not addressed at the State Of the Nation Address.

It was noted at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, that there was an urgent need from citizens for universal health care as well as a revamp of Public Hospitals and Clinics. The opportunity was lost during the allocation of funds to fight the pandemic to utilise these funds to pursue the objectives of the NHI. Not only is there a shortage in the staff capacity in the Health Care System, but it also extends to Educators, Prison Wardens, Border Management Staff Justice , NPA , SIU ,SARS and Police. Funding must be made available and the Compensation Budget in Government increased to ensure that the Minister of Public Service and Administration delivers on his key priorities to address inadequacies in the Public Service.

Without an increase in the Compensation Budget the stopping of fruitless expenditure through frivolous cases, unfair labour practices and dismissals, corruption, amongst others, Government will not be able to ensure that services continue uninterrupted. Government, as an employer has reneged on the implementation of the wage agreement last year, it resulted in a lack of trust and labour instability. The restoration of the trust relationship between the employer and labour is crucial at this stage when there is a high dependence on Government employees as frontline workers during the pandemic

Labour will not allow a similar stance to be taken this year and the Minister of Finance is urged to take this into consideration when budget allocations are made. Any labour instability will surely affect investments and the growth of the economy. Denying the importance of the role of the workforce to ensure stability and growth without causing a collapse to the economy is not only disingenuous but also reckless.

The PSA is aware of the current economic conditions of our country and the challenges facing the nation. The PSA therefore urges the Minister of Finance to carefully consider how he balances the books and ensure that the interest of the nation is addressed. Funding towards failing and corrupt institutions is not going to assist to grow the economy but rather cripple it further. There are no consequences for those accountable nor are funds returned to the public purse. Such allocations for bail-outs should be stopped as it is causing other priorities towards the public to be set aside and abandoned owing to shortages of funds. The only way is to find new sources of innovation in the economy

and the cutting down on wastefulness by reforming ailing State-Owned Entities (SOEs). Action is what is required from government.

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