

MEDIA RELEASE **Cuban engineer import: PSA appalled by irrational and costly programme**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is appalled by the Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS) "*Cuban engineering programme*" to employ 24 Cuban engineers at a cost of R65 million to taxpayers over two years.

The project is aimed at fixing the water challenges faced by South Africa. The decision by the Minister of Water and Sanitation to import these engineers is irrational and unreasonable as it overlooked South African engineers despite the unemployment crisis in the country. The PSA firmly believes that South Africa has ample suitably qualified engineers for the project and that Government simply did not make an effort to locate those engineers who have the necessary expertise.

It appears that the 24 Cuban engineers are not allowed to carry out any engineering work unless their qualifications are thoroughly assessed and approved, or they are supervised by a registered engineer in terms of the *Engineering Profession Act*. Cuba, unlike South Africa, is not a member of the International Engineering Alliance and therefore the Cuban engineers' qualifications are not officially or automatically recognised in South Africa. The irony of appointing the Cuban engineers is that it is widely reported that Cuba is battling to provide clean water to its own citizens.

The decision by the Minister to appoint the Cuban engineers is preposterous and against the Regulatory Framework. The PSA calls on the Minister to rescind the decision to appoint the 24 Cuban engineers with immediate effect and employ qualified South African engineers on the project. The PSA also advises the Minister to approach institutions such as the South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE) for assistance with the water shortages faced by the country. The appointment of South Africans will assist in addressing some challenges faced by the country. The resultant cost saving could further be used towards capacitating local engineers whom the DWS believes lack the necessary capacity.

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