



MEDIA RELEASE **KwaZulu-Natal floods: PSA concerned about inaction by corporates**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) has noted with concern the failure by major corporates and businesses to provide much-needed assistance to victims of the recent flood disaster in KwaZulu-Natal.

Reported infrastructural damage is estimated at more than R10 billion, including to 630 schools, 12 000 houses, 84 hospitals and clinics, police stations, courts, and roads, with more than 400 deaths. In addition, thousands of people in the province have been displaced and are without accommodation, food, and clothes. Many learners are not able to attend school, which will further impact on their progress amidst an already compromised education infrastructure.

Major corporates and businesses enjoy the use of public servants' pension money through the Public Investment Corporation (PIC), whilst the rightful owners are forced to stay in unsuitable and unsafe areas as they cannot afford proper housing. These bodies continue to profit whilst public servants must perform their duties amidst crumbling and unsafe infrastructure. Their children are subjected to overcrowded schools, which lack proper sanitation facilities, whilst business owners make vast profits and rarely plough back into communities.

Should disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic and floods in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape not propel corporates to play their role in advancing the cause of humanity and nation building, nothing will. Corporates and businesses will, however, continue to benefit from such disasters when bulk purchases are made from them for building materials, food, clothes, and other basic commodities.

The PSA calls on the PIC and government to fast-track legislative amendments to allow public servants access to decent housing, using their own money, as most of them are deemed to be earning too much to qualify for RDP houses but do not earn enough to obtain bank funding. The PIC should further set it as a requirement that those who benefit from using public servants' pension money, must implement programmes such as awarding bursaries to public servants' children as they also do not qualify for NSFAS assistance.

The fact that public servants have not received a salary increase in 2020 should also move the PIC to seriously consider a vehicle to assist public servants in obtaining affordable housing.

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