

MEDIA RELEASE

Medium-Term Budget Speech: PSA expects bold action by Minister of Finance to stimulate economy and enhance service delivery

DATE 23 October 2024

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), along with millions of South Africans, is keenly anticipating the Minister of Finance’s Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) on 30 October 2024 amidst an escalating struggle for citizens make ends meet.

Recent budget cuts for most government departments and entities have affected efficiency and crippled many departments that are operating on less than half of the approved structures. The PSA expects the Minister to adequately respond to a myriad of challenges, including the stagnant economy, ageing, and inadequate infrastructure, rising unemployment, crime and corruption, an unreliable electricity supply and staff shortages in government departments.

Infrastructure development is critical to resuscitate a non-growing economy. The PSA urges the Minister to show boldness to break the stagnation. Critical infrastructure such as roads, ports, railways, and buildings can enhance export capacity and support job creation.

The Department of Correctional Services suffered a budget cut of more than R11 billion over five years. The Department of Basic Education is about to let go thousands of educators despite challenges to provide learners with a quality education. The Border Management Authority has a budget shortfall of R4 billion, with 8 500 vacancies. The SA Police Service is chronically understaffed. The Department of Health is carried by Community Health Workers who are paid a mere stipend. These are some of the realities in the public service. The PSA thus expects the Minister to allocate adequate funds for the filling of public service vacancies.

The Minister is tabling the MTBPS at the time that public-sector unions are locked in salary negotiations for public servants. The PSA expects the Minister to provide a reasonable budget for public service wages, ensuring fiscal sustainability without compromising service delivery. A MTBPS that is not responsive to capacity needs and realities in the public service will be catastrophic. South Africa is faced by numerous challenges. The Minister must be alive to the country’s realities and the plight of South Africans.

END

