

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA calls for urgent action to address South Africa's water crisis**

DATE    22 November 2024

EMBARGO                                      None

ENQUIRIES                                    communication@psa.co.za

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The President of the Public Servants Association (PSA) regards South Africa's deepening water crisis as a national emergency requiring urgent and strategic intervention.

Water, essential to life and a cornerstone of economic growth, is under severe threat owing to climate change, aging infrastructure, and governance failures. South Africa, one of the driest countries globally, faces below-average rainfall and increasing dependence on water imports from Lesotho to meet the growing demand. Alarming, nearly half of all piped water is lost to leaks, theft, and illegal connections, costing the economy billions of rands annually. In addition to the economic impact, unsafe boreholes, and declining water quality expose communities to life-threatening waterborne diseases such as cholera. Failure to address this crisis will result in dire consequences, including food insecurity, deteriorating public health, environmental degradation, and widespread social unrest.

In order to avert a national disaster, the PSA calls for the following immediate and long-term solutions:

**National water infrastructure overhaul:** Investment is required in modernising and maintaining water treatment plants, pipelines, and storage facilities to reduce water loss and improve reliability.

**Integrated resource management:** A national water-sharing framework must be developed to ensure equitable distribution and prioritise electricity reliability to support water distribution systems.

**Public-Private Partnerships:** Resources and expertise must be leveraged from both sectors to address critical infrastructure repairs and reduce wastage.

**Public awareness campaigns:** Initiatives must be launched to encourage water-saving measures, such as rainwater harvesting, and promote community-driven conservation efforts.

**Desalination and alternative water sources:** Investment must be made in desalination plants and wastewater recycling to supplement existing water supplies and reduce reliance on unpredictable rainfall.

The PSA urges government, the private sector, and civil society to work collaboratively on sustainable and innovative solutions. Cape Town's success in averting its "Day Zero" crisis through effective water management, conservation measures, and public engagement offers valuable lessons that can be implemented nationwide. Water is life. Every drop counts. Collective action today will ensure a sustainable water future for all South Africans.

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