

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA supports Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure's cost-cutting measures on ministerial accommodation**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), as a major union representing public-sector employees, supports the newly appointed Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure's cost-cutting initiatives on ministerial accommodation expenses.

In view of South Africa's challenging financial position, the PSA believes that government must reduce excessive spending on ministerial accommodation and household resources. The refurbishment of accommodation and rental of office space for ministers are deemed wasteful expenditures, and government must tighten this budget. The PSA therefore commends the Minister for announcing that government will no longer provide new accommodation for incoming ministers. Instead, existing accommodation facilities will be utilised to save costs. It is important to note that the government has already spent more than R100 million on maintaining parliamentary accommodation, R1.4 million on upgrading kitchen facilities, R240 000 on fumigation, and a massive R50 million on procuring generators for these houses.

The PSA is extremely concerned that ministers are being treated lavishly at the expense of taxpayers. With more than 30 million South Africans living below the poverty line and reliant on social grants, government must refrain from abusing hard-earned funds to maintain such extravagant lifestyles. The PSA urges government to withdraw unnecessary perks allocated to ministers and to make them responsible for paying their own water and electricity bills for their parliamentary houses. There is also a need to reduce office accommodation for support staff in private offices for ministers.

With the country facing low economic growth and a staggering 34% unemployment rate, these excessive expenses and luxurious amenities for ministers do not instil confidence in investors. It is essential to address the inflated costs associated with ministerial accommodation, which are estimated to reach some R183 million for the incoming administration. Such expenditure burdens taxpayers and makes it difficult to ensure quality service delivery.

The PSA further urges government to review the Ministerial Handbook to curb wasteful and fruitless expenses related to ministerial accommodation. The Handbook must not be abused for self-enrichment or self-interest. Transparency and accountability are needed to ensure that taxpayers' money is used efficiently and effectively.

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