



NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE BARGAINING FORUM BULLETIN ON THE CONCLUDED WAGE NEGOTIATIONS

FEBRUARY 2025

The union convened its National Public Service Bargaining Forum on Tuesday 18th February 2025. This was in line with the resolution of the December 2024 Central Executive Committee that directed the union to ensure that we conclude the wage negotiations before end of February 2025 and that all provinces must convene membership meetings to provide regular updates to members.

The previous bargaining forum convened in January 2025 directed provinces and regions to convene membership meetings, culminating to regional and provincial bargaining forums, to consult our members about the final offer by government as presented at the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council.

The bargaining forum received reports from provinces on the mandates from members. After deliberations the meeting accepted agreement on process matters that must be concluded within the agreed time-lines.

On the substantive demands or the Cost of Living Adjustment [COLA] agreement, the mandate was clear that the union will not support the multi-term agreement as it seeks to lock workers into terms that are uncertain and in our view the offer on the two outer years of 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 is ambiguous. Secondly, we view the offer of the employer as misleading because it is dependent on government savings through the proposed early-retirement plan.

The principle position of the union since the commencement of these wage negotiations has always been CPI plus real increase in order to keep up with the high cost of living. The fact that the employer tabled CPI for the two outer years did not sit well with our members given what happened 2020 when the employer refused to implement the last leg of PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2018.

The bargaining forum noted and welcome the positive adjustment of the allowances although it is not what we expected. These includes the increase on housing allowance, review of PSCBC Resolution 07 of 2015 which will allow dismissed employees to access the full value of their savings from the individual linked saving facility, the increase on danger allowance, special danger allowance and a commitment from government to ensure the establishment of the Government Employees Housing Scheme institutional design, not later than June 2025.

However, we remain concern that Government Employees Medical Scheme [GEMS] subsidy increase of MPI plus 0.5% adjustment will be eroded by the high increment



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that GEMS has effected.

The bargaining forum also received an update on GEMS and a government report on Voluntary Severance Packages.

On GEMS, the bargaining forum agreed that the national union should continue fighting for the withdrawal or reversal of the 13.4% member contribution increase that was implemented by GEMS in 2025. In doing so, the position of the union is that GEMS must call an urgent or special Annual General Meeting in this regard to reverse this decision as our members are already suffering from this exorbitant increase. The union will work with the COSATU JMC in the discussions with the Board of Trustees about the future of GEMS as a long term intervention.

On Government Voluntary Severance Packages, the bargaining forum rejected the proposal made by the employer in the council to introduce the voluntary severance packages for employees who are 55 years and above. The union will continue to call for filling of all funded vacant posts in the public service. Our view is that the VSP is part of government's austerity measures and fiscal consolidation and thus ought to be rejected on the basis of PSCBC Resolution 01 of 2007 and Resolution 01 of 2012 which the employer has dismally failed to comply with. The union will campaign to denounce this voluntary severance packages and encourage members not to take up this ill-conceived voluntary severance packages proposed by the employer. The union insists that this voluntary severance packages will weaken the state and its ability to provide quality services to a growing population of the country.

All provinces are directed to convene membership meetings to fully explain our position on the wage negotiations outcomes and all the matters discussed by our national bargaining forum. In this regard members are encouraged to attend these meetings in numbers.

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