



GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION CLUSTER MEDIA BRIEFING

10:00

Thursday, 25 February 2016

Ministers
Deputy Ministers
Directors-General
Members of the media
Ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for joining us today for the post-State of the Nation Address cluster briefing. We are going to outline the progress we have made thus far as the Governance and Administration Cluster and highlight our Programme of Action for the current year.

Cluster departments continue to play an important role in bringing to life the **vision** and proposals contained in the National Development Plan. This translates into the implementation of the delivery agreement which is implemented on an incremental basis to address the two outcomes:

- 1. An efficient, effective and development-oriented public service**
- 2. A responsive and accountable, effective and efficient local government.**

The year 2016 marks 20 years since former President Nelson Mandela signed the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 into law. This important framework contains our aspiration for a non-sexist, non-racial, democratic and prosperous South Africa that government strives to inculcate in society. Government calls on all South Africans to join hands in translating the rights and responsibilities enshrined in the Constitution into reality. Together, let us continue to embrace and promote constitutional rights, values and use them to move our country forward

The cluster therefore supports and echoes the call by President Zuma that South Africans from all walks of life should unite and confront the demon of racism that we saw with the start of 2016. We urge the country to get involved in dialogues as part of the efforts to achieve national unity, social cohesion and the eradication of racism. Our conversations and dialogues will culminate in Human Rights Day, on 21 March 2016, which will be commemorated as the national day against racism.

In line with our Constitution, South Africa will this year hold its 4th democratic Local Government Elections in which the electorate will choose their local leaders. These elections are important as local government is a critical sphere of government responsible for delivering services where are basic human rights and are essential components of the right to dignity enshrined in the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

In this regard, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) plays a fundamental role in support of the electoral process in the country, a task we take very seriously as government. Accordingly, we will be actively involved in ensuring the success of the voter registration weekend on 5 and 6 March 2016 as declared by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC).

Unlike with national elections, the local government elections require that you register in the ward that you reside in. Please use this opportunity to confirm that you are still registered in the ward that you reside in. We also urge all young and first-time voters to register to vote. It is by voting that citizens select the public representatives that best serve their interests.

Government urges all eligible South Africans to register during the dates designated by the IEC. South Africans who do not have the identity documents (IDs) are urged to apply now at the nearest Home Affairs offices and those that have already applied are requested to collect them.

All Home Affairs offices will be open from 08:00 to 17:00 on Saturday and Sunday, which is in line with the operating hours of the IEC for the two days, to provide for those citizens who need IDs to enable them to register to vote during the Local Government Elections later this year. Our officials are ready to deliver services to those who require IDs and temporary identification certificates.

In respect of the temporary identification certificates, these will be available on the spot. Both the green bar-coded IDs and Smart ID cards will be acceptable as legal forms of identity for purposes of voter registration and voting. To this end we have made use of the short messaging system (SMS) to keep the public informed of the status of the applications. In this context, we remained concerned about the number of uncollected IDs and Smart ID cards at our offices.

Our policy states that documents that are uncollected for a period of six months should be returned to head office where they are kept for a further six months. Should the documents not be collected after 12 months, they are destroyed. Accordingly, I have given a directive to the DHA to relax the policy on destruction of uncollected IDs and Smart ID cards for the period covering the voter registration and Local Government Elections. I therefore wish to call upon all those who have not collected their IDs and Smart ID cards to visit our offices to collect them and be able to register to vote.

The DHA continually seeks to improve services offered to our clients by introducing innovative concepts. We do this through continued systems upgrades aimed at enhancing our technological capability. We will commence with an upgrade to our Live Capture System from 26 to 28 February 2016 to introduce, amongst other things, the eChannel EFT payment function at 142 offices and banks equipped with this system. We wish to announce that due to the upgrades, certain services will be disrupted during this period.

As a result, these offices will stop taking applications using the Live Capture System at 14:00 on Friday, 26 February 2016. Previously we reported that we have launched

a pilot project with three out of the four major financial institutions – namely First National Bank, Standard Bank and Nedbank – to expand our footprint while ensuring convenient accessibility of our products by our clients.

We have since signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ABSA, bringing the total of major banks participating in the pilot to four. The aforementioned initiatives form part of our quest to revolutionise the provision at Home Affairs of services to our citizens. Each of the aforementioned banks provided us with three sites, making it 12 sites in total, for purposes of piloting the eChannel module of our live capture system.

In 2016 government will continue on the path of consolidating and improving the state of local government. These elections will see the abolition of a number of municipalities that have been deemed to be financially unviable. The number of municipalities will be reduced from the current 278 to a more manageable and service-delivery orientated 257. We believe that this will result in an improvement in service delivery at some of our most challenged municipalities.

We are presently working with various municipalities to moderate the amalgamation process. The municipal demarcation transition grant allocation is being increased to subsidise the additional administrative costs in respect of the re-demarcations. This includes increased allocations for demarcations approved in 2013 and allocations for demarcations approved in 2015.

Ladies and gentlemen, 17 months since its launch, the Back-to-Basics (B2B) programme is continuing to be implemented across all municipalities and the results are beginning to show. In this regard, the second phase of the B2B programme will focus on a 10-point plan that focuses, amongst others, on more positive community interaction with their municipalities, supporting revenue enhancement programmes and ensuring the appointment of appropriately qualified personnel to senior positions in municipalities

We intend ensuring positive community-municipality experiences by implementing ward improvement plans that address basic services, such as cutting of grass, working street lights and robots, water leaks, etc. We will also target the improvement of complaints management systems and municipal frontline offices. We will also prioritise municipalities that have been receiving disclaimers for over three years. Through this we intend moving municipalities that have been categorized as 'at risk' into the 'functioning well' group. By targeting these municipalities we believe we will break the back of the non-delivery of services.

Another important element of the plan is the Revenue Enhancement Programme which aims to improve the finance viability of municipalities. There are a number of factors constraining the ability of municipalities to collect outstanding monies owed to them. This includes the monies owed by national and provincial government departments, businesses and residents, which run into millions of rand. Also included in this is revenue lost through systems failures, such as leaking water pipes and commercial losses such as electricity theft. We intend addressing these challenges through a number of interventions.

Ladies and gentlemen, the implementation of the Government Employees Housing Scheme (GEHS) commenced on 27 May 2015 following the signing of the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council Resolution 7 of 2015. The agreement is to establish the GEHS with the goal of increasing home ownership and asset security among public-service employees.

While the implementation of the GEHS is incremental, our priorities for 2016 include:

1. enhancing the capacity of the GEHS Office within the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) to manage and operate the scheme while a dedicated government component is being established.
2. implementing the housing allowance of R1 200 and the saving facility for employees to accumulate the housing allowance towards home ownership.
3. starting the enrolment and profiling of employees for housing access.
4. implementing the housing finance service funded by the Government Employees Pension Fund and Public Investment Corporation to provide affordable housing loans.
5. implementing partnerships with public and private sector role players.

As of 12 February 2016, a total of 87 000 employees have already enrolled and received the new housing allowance backdated to 1 July 2015. It is anticipated that by the end of March 2016, over 400 000 employees would have enrolled for the homeowners allowance. The balance of employees will have an opportunity to enrol when the GEHS website is launched during March 2016.

Ladies and gentlemen, with government being one of the largest employers in the country with over 1.3 million public servants, we believe that the productivity of the Public Service, contributes directly to the economic development of a country.

In assessing whether employees are productive as measured by amongst others, the efficient, effective and economical use of public resources, the DPSA has developed a productivity assessment instrument initially focusing on operational productivity measures which directly impact on employee productivity. The instrument will enable managers to identify and remove blockages to effectiveness and efficiency in the service delivery value chain.

To date the productivity assessment instrument has been applied in three departments – Department of Basic Education in Mpumalanga, Department of Health in North West, and the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs in Limpopo.

Since the assessment was successfully concluded in the above departments from the 2016/17 financial year and going forward, the productivity assessment will be applied to more departments and support provided to departments to institutionalize the assessments as part their assessment and monitoring systems and practices.

Ladies and gentlemen, in a continuous effort to contribute to the employment of our country's young people, government has set an annual target to appoint 20 000 youths into internship, learnership and Artisan Development programmes within the Public Service. During the Medium Term Strategic Framework period from 2015 to

2018, government departments will recruit a minimum of 80 000 unemployed youth and graduates into internship, learnership and apprenticeship programmes.

During the 2014/15 financial year, a total of 44 739 interns, learners and artisan trainees were recruited into the Public Service. Of the 44 739 young people recruited, 6 416 have been employed with 5 644 being permanently employed and 772 employed on contracts. The aim is to strengthen the State's capacity with technical and specialists professional skills.

Ladies and gentlemen, government continues to fight corruption and promote professional ethics in the Public Service. As part of this drive, the DPSA has introduced various measures to strengthen the implementation Financial Disclosure Framework as contained in the Public Service Regulations of 2001.

The Public Service Regulations of 2001 will be amended to extend the Financial Disclosure Framework to other categories of employees in the Public Service as research has shown that the rise of corruption may also be prevalent amongst the lower level employees as well who work in areas such as supply chain management.

In 2016/17, the DPSA, working together with the Public Service Commission, will be verifying the information disclosed based on information received from the Deeds Office, E-Natis and the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission, and request departments to take necessary steps to correct, where evident.

We are also in the process of finalising regulations for the Public Administration Management Act, 2014 (Act 11 of 2014). It is envisaged that these regulations will be released for public comment by the end of this financial year.

In the past year the Centre for Public Service Innovation has continued to facilitate the replication of innovative solutions unearthed through the Public Sector Innovation Awards programme. In particular, a replication workshop was held with all Gauteng Hospital CEOs where they were exposed to health sector innovations. One such is Saving Blood Saving Lives, an Edendale Hospital project, which ensures efficient use of blood and blood products and eliminates wastage. Since 2013 the hospital has saved R6,14 million and has the potential to save hospitals around R80 000 per month. Hospitals such as Bertha Gxokwa have already started replication of this project.

Furthermore, in partnership with the Limpopo Department of Health, the CPSI is replicating the Dietetics Outreach Programme into crèches and pre-school facilities to assess, support and guide these facilities on appropriate dietary requirements for vulnerable children to reduce malnutrition and the number of malnourished children admitted to health facilities.

Ladies and gentlemen, as at December 2015, a total of 1 060 unemployed youth graduates have been trained through the Breaking Barriers to Entry programme. The National School of Government (NSG) is reviewing its training delivery strategy aiming at using current and former public servants as facilitators. This model will enable the delivery of high-volume mandatory training programmes in government.

The NSG will continue with the full scale rollout of the Compulsory Induction Programme, targeting about 30 000 new public servants to be trained. The NSG also intends training another 20 000 existing public servants in leadership and management development as well as administration (including good governance and service-delivery improvement).

Ladies and gentleman, in conclusion, it is important to emphasise that our communities will continue to be at the heart of our service delivery. Let us work together to ensure that we change the lives of the people for the better through improved and accelerated service delivery.

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