

Budget Vote Speech by the Deputy Minister for the Public Service and Administration, Dr Chana Pilane-Majake, MP

Debate on Vote 10 – Public Service and Administration

Wednesday, 16 May 2018; 16H00; Old Assembly Chamber, Parliament, Cape Town

Honourable House Chairperson;
Minister for the Public Service and Administration;
Ministers and Deputy Ministers;
Honourable Members of the House;
Chairpersons of the Portfolio Institutions;
Directors-General and all Senior Executives;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is truly an honour and a privilege to deliver my maiden Budget Vote Speech as the Deputy Minister for the Public Service and Administration.

The primary objective of the Budget Vote is that of accounting for the past year and charting the way-forward for the new financial Year. The Honourable Minister Ayanda Dlodlo has ably addressed these two objectives in her presentation of the 2018/19 Budget Vote. Likewise, my task today is that of specifically reflecting on the work of those institutions and entities that fall within the ambit of the Ministry for Public Service and Administration, namely:

- § the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI);
- § the National School of Government (NSG) and
- § the Government Employees Housing Scheme (GEHS).

Honourable House Chairperson, it being Africa Month and just a few days to the annual celebration of Africa Day, I would like to beg the indulgence of the House to make a few remarks on this auspicious occasion that the whole continent venerates.

On the 25th of May 1963 the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was formed in Addis Ababa, in Ethiopia. Now known as the African Union (AU), the annual Africa Month and Africa Day, on the 25th of May, is set aside in order to reflect on the past, the present and the future of the African continent as part of an on-going battle against forgetting. The need to keep on fanning the memorial embers of African unity and achievements is even more crucial to us as South Africans.

It is in this context, that I would like to believe that the African Peer Review Mechanism second-generation review, which is a program aimed at strengthening governance and democracy in Africa, would provide our people, beyond government, an opportunity and platform for reflection, renewal and restoration of our shared destiny of a better life for all.

This review will be more focused in a sense that it will largely concentrate on emerging governance issues and challenges facing our country at this moment.

It will capture the voice and imagination of our people and enable all of us to collectively recommend solutions to our current challenges in order to build a better South Africa, in a better Africa.

Some of the emerging and persisting governance challenges the review will assist us to confront include, the governance of State Owned Entities (SOEs), unethical corporate plunder and theft, continued racial tensions, diversity challenges, unemployment, lower levels of investment and growth, de-industrialization, low investment and productivity in extractive industries, and support to small businesses.

In this regard, we will continue and intensify our collaboration and coordination with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Statistics South Africa, both of whom are part of the new APRM-IMC recently approved by Cabinet to drive the second-generation review.

The AU can count its contribution to the liberation of South Africa as one of its many achievements over the past 55 years. However, forging unity and creating a developmental agenda means that we also need to confront the African continent's current challenges and finding innovative solutions to these.

The hardships that our brothers and sisters from across our borders continue to face are enormous, which makes South Africa a magnet for immigrants, both living legally and illegally within our shores.

However, as one of the shining lights of Pan-Africanism, W.E.B Du Bois, notes in his seminal book, *The Soul of Black Folks*, and I quote,

“Progress in human affairs is more often a pull than a push, a surging forward of the exceptional man, and the lifting of his [weaker] brethren slowly and painfully to his vantage ground”, close quote.

Honourable House Chairperson, in our efforts to further **move the Public Service Forward**, the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) continues to unearth innovation that would ensure that the most vulnerable among us are pulled up and not pushed away.

There is a growing concern that the public service is not evolving with the times and therefore is lacking in innovation in the delivery of services. I am pleased to reassure you that we are closing this gap and new innovative measures will gain momentum in this current financial year.

Through the CPSI, we will intensify our efforts to create enabling environments for innovation to thrive and a culture of innovation within departments and especially at service delivery points. It is of critical importance to empower our teachers, doctors, nurses, police officers and frontline officials to embrace the future technology to become innovative in their own fields of expertise.

Although this behind-the-scene work of the CPSI often goes unnoticed, what does not go unnoticed is a 22% increase in theatre utilization, a 67% reduction in gender-based violence or an increase in matric pass rate from 53% to 92%. These are all results from projects advised by and supported by the CPSI but implemented by public servants and social innovators themselves across the country.

We have further witnessed how the replication project, flowing from our Annual Public Sector Innovation Awards, is going from strength to strength.

To this end, one way of continuously building confidence amongst South Africans in their government is to ensure that public servants deliver quality frontline services by thinking out-of-the-box.

It is with this very objective in mind that the CPSI works together with district level and academic hospitals in seeking solutions to the challenges they encounter. One innovation that was successfully replicated at Bheki Mlangeni Hospital and also serving patients from neighbouring Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, is the high-volume cataract theatre that has tripled the number of cataract operations being performed.

The CPSI continues to spark the flames of innovation among more and more public servants through the use of the Multi Media Innovation Centre (MMIC). The MMIC is a virtual and safe space in which public servants interactively generate ideas to resolve service delivery challenges and unencumbered inside-the-box thinking that leads to innovation.

Honourable Members, I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to visit the mobile Multi Media Innovation Centre, which is located outside this venue.

Another out-of-the-box idea is the Limpopo Revenue Enhancement Project, the 2016 Public Sector Innovation Awards Innovator of the Year.

This initiative has increased the provincial revenue collection within two years with R719 million. Through the CPSI's sector specific workshops, this initiative has been extended to North-West and Free State provinces. It was also further replicated in other departments in Limpopo through the prize money.

Our colleagues in the education portfolio are relentlessly driving innovation through the use of Information and Communication Technology at our schools. Sadly, their efforts to produce quality outcomes from our schooling system are being undermined by small-minded criminal elements within our communities.

In 2015, the CPSI and the Innovation Hub successfully piloted the Memeza Safety Programme within the Diepsloot community, in Gauteng.

Memeza, which means "shout" in isiZulu, works through a network of alarms that are installed in households in low income residential areas.

The smart alarms are in turn linked to South African Police Service (SAPS) sector policing vehicles, police stations and community policing forums. The programme involves the active participation of 45 police stations, 2000 households and now also in 23 schools across Gauteng and the North West provinces.

Since 2015, we have witnessed drastic reductions in crime, in particular gender-based violence in those areas where the Memeza alarm system is operative and a 100% prevention of theft of ICT equipment in schools where it was installed, as it serves as a deterrent to would-be thieves. Most importantly, the connection of alarms to local police stations has positively impacted on the response time to acts of crime by reducing the rate from 48 hours to 7 minutes.

At the 2017 Public Sector Innovation Awards, for example, we recognised Mr Xolani Phakathi, a young systems developer from the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Health. Not only are Mr Phakathi's solutions saving his department millions of rand in technology consulting fees. Most importantly is that the innovations are contributing to the provision of quality health care outputs.

Honourable House Chairperson, Mr Phakathi is amongst us here today, and I would like to recognise him (May you please rise).

During the 2017 Public Sector Innovation Awards we also recognised the sterling and innovative work of Mr Scosh Mkhonto, another innovation trailblazer who is gracing the House with his presence today. Mr Mkhonto, together with his team at the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Health, has developed an in-house solution that optimises the dispatching and tracking of ambulances. This example of innovation in the Public Service saved the department some R60 million and significantly improved the response time of ambulances to emergency calls (may I ask Mr Mkhonto to rise please).

You will all agree that Messrs Phakathi and Mkhonto represent a new breed of public servants that our country would be better off when they are properly recognised and given all the support that they need.

In the 2018/2019 financial, the Centre for Public Service Innovation is intent on doubling its efforts in recognising and supporting the many innovation trailblazers that we believe are within the Public Service. Importantly, we need to provide the resources for our "in-house" innovators to thrive. The CPSI is now finalising a funding model for public sector innovation and to make it easier for government to procure innovation from our booming number of social innovators.

Furthermore, during this financial year, we will accelerate our efforts to introduce Digitalization across all government processes.

At the center of this Digitalization program is the ability of government institutions to collect, analyze and share data as well as information with the aim of improving customer experience and service delivery.

I am pleased to report that, five e-enablement services have already been identified and delivered by various Departments in the system. These include among others, but not limited to:

The e-Matric solution, which allows for re-marking of matric results as well as registration for learners wanting to finalize their matric.

The Person Identification and Verification Application (PIVA) that verifies a person's identity against the Department of Home Affairs records using fingerprints was developed and was first implemented in the South African Police Service (SAPS). The PIVA is being rolled out across institutions in the justice and security cluster.

The Integrated Case Management System, which is part of the IJS and allows all the relevant JCPS Departments and entities to capture and deal with a case in a single and integrated manner.

C-Filling to ensure that employers are able to register and contribute towards their employees for the injury on duty (IOD) compensation insurance. In the event of an IOD, employers are also able to lodge a claim online.

Honourable House Chairperson, the Minister has spoken in detail about measures to ensure that the Public Service conforms to high standards of professionalism and ethics.

In this regard, we are pleased to report that since 2010, the National School of Government (NSG) has been providing accredited training programs to our employees, focusing on managing ethics as well as preventing and investigating corruption.

Up to now, **1071** employees have been trained on ethics management. Of these, 727 are from Local Government and 344 are from National and Provincial Departments. In addition to these, **4541** were trained on anti-corruption management and **507** on the investigation of corrupt activities.

To date, the NSG has trained **2792** Public Service officials on the online Code of Conduct course (called the Ethics in the Public Service course).

Honourable Members, one of the difficulties we face relate to maintaining a balance of skills and capabilities in the Public Service that is regularly upset when some of our experienced employees exit the service, especially through retirements.

Through the Rutanang Ma Africa campaign, the NSG is mitigating the loss of skills and experience by drawing retired public servants back into our programmes as facilitators and trainers.

The NSG has to date trained nearly 50 000 public servants through a combination of face-face and online programmes. We are targeting the same numbers of public servants during the 2018/2019 financial year in order to make sure that government departments have the requisite and capable human resources for meeting their current and future needs.

Honourable Members, a caring employer is not the kind with flowery policies, but the kind whose policies are indeed felt by employees. By way of illustration, let me relate to you the story of Zodwa, a 40-year old mother of three children, who has been employed as an administrator in a government department for the past 12 years.

Zodwa's current salary puts her in the middle-income range, which means that her monthly income is

“too high” to qualify for a subsidised RDP house and “too little” for a housing loan from a bank. Zodwa used to make a daily trip of some 30 kilometres between work and home which came at a huge cost in terms of finances and quality of life. However, this changed a year or so ago, when she got a 100% government facilitated home loan which made it possible for her to buy a flat in the city. Zodwa’s story is the story of thousands of government employees. It is also the story of the Government Employees Housing Scheme (GEHS). It is a story about substantially improving the quality of life of public servants like Zodwa.

The GEHS is indeed contributing towards changing the racialized property ownership patterns that are a stubborn feature of our many legacies. At its launch in July 2016, of the 954 000 employees who were receiving the government housing allowance, only 30% owned houses. These figures have since increased in a substantial manner, and include the following:

§ The number of government employees who are receiving the housing allowance for homeownership has increased to 560 thousand

§ About 390 thousand government employees who do not own homes have a portion of the housing allowance diverted and accumulated into the GEHS Individual Linked Savings Facility. And to date, nearly R4.5 billion has been accumulated by employees in this savings facility.

§ Employees are currently accessing home loans through the Government Employees Pension Fund/Public Investment Corporation and DPSSA partnership with the South African Home Loans. Over 12 thousand home loan applications were received and approximately R4 billion worth of home loans have been disbursed since the launch of the scheme in 2015.

§ The Housing Access Loan was introduced in 2017 which is a tailor made non-mortgage home loan product strictly for purposes of financing the purchase of a house, service stand, building and/or renovating of a house owned or to be owned by an employee including those who have a permission to occupy certificate. Since uptake in September 2017 126 Housing Access Loans have been approved and disbursed to the value of approximately R50million.

Honourable House Chairperson, 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of two of South Africa’s nation-builders, former President Nelson Mandela and Mama Albertina Sisulu, who are no longer with us.

I would like to remark in conclusion that the objective of this presentation would have been more than achieved, as it seeks to paint a picture of a Public Service that is attuned to the needs and aspirations of all South Africans in a professional and yet innovative manner.

However, the greatest measure would be getting a nod of affirmation from these two great Africans, wherever they may be, that the Public Service is on the right course and indeed **“Together, We Move the Public Service Forward”**.

I thank you.