**Address by Comrade RMM Lesoma, MP (ANC) during the Debate On Budget Vote 12: Public Service Commssion**

Chairperson and Honourable Members

The Public Service commission is one of the institutions of democracy that is enshrined in the constitution which must assist in the attainment of the NDP objectives and building a capable developmental state. The main task of the public commission is the maintenance of effective and efficient public administration and a high standard of professional ethics in the public service.

The PSC is vested with custodial oversight responsibilities for the Public Service and monitors, evaluates and investigates public administration practices. It also has the power to issue directions regarding compliance with personnel procedures relating to recruitment, transfers, promotions and dismissals. This institution also acts as a functionary of legislative authority that assists in carrying out oversight functions within the scope of the public service.

The PSC in addition to its role of promoting good governance and integrity in the public service and performing oversight functions also plays a developmental role that interacts with market and non-market players in order to craft programmes aimed at effecting socio-economic transforming. According to their annual program they've engaged and partnered with Civil Society Organizations such as the moral regeneration movement to hold joint programs that focus on the values and ethical challenges that confront the public service, for example in the 2019/20 period they held a seminar under the theme "Leading like Mandela, Dawn of the new era of ethical, values-based conscious leader".

The PSC also takes up campaigns that address some of the most fundamental challenges confronting our society, such as Gender Based Violence and Femicide. Given the constitutional mandate, the PSC raises ethics awareness through the promotion of Code of conduct in the public service ethical leadership dialogue and commemoration of international events such as the International Anti - Corruption Day.

**Value Driven Public Service**

The over-arching objective of the ANC is the creation of a national democratic society anchored by the principles of non-racialism, non-sexism, and democracy, this is a society that is an anti-thesis to the to the colonial apartheid society which was based on marginalization and exploitation of Africans. The Public Service must be driven by the values of a national democratic society, and therefore our interventions should not only be aimed at compliance but the advancement of these principles. The developmental state and the public service must be a microcosm of the society that we seek to create, this means that we must take responsibility and propagate these values for society and the private sectors to emulate.

The inclusion of women in the decision-making process is off paramount importance and this is something we expect the public service commission to advocate. We welcome the report of the office of the public service commission which annually reviews and submits the Gender and Disability Mainstreaming Programme of Action to the Department. The report states that as off January 2021, the representation of women in the Senior Management Service (SMS) of the office of the public service commission was 51% and at the middle management services (MMS) it was 47%. Although there is no public service-wide target for representation at the MMS, we believe that we can only attain the required target if we concentrate on building a strong cohort of middle managers with the required skills and capacity to be promoted to the SMS.

We also welcome the demonstrated commitment of the Public Service Commission to appointing B-BBEE compliant suppliers, since the last vote 55.9% of the suppliers appointed by the Public Service Commission were compliant. This is way above the adjusted indicator that was agreed upon in July 2020, from 10% to 40%. B-BBEE is an important instrument that is used by the developmental state to ensure the deradicalization of the mainstream economy and ensure the participation of new emerging players in the markets through the buying power of the state and its institutions.

**Corruption**

**Promotion of the code of conduct and accountability**

In terms of Section 195 of the Constitution, the PSC is required to promote professional ethics in the Public Service. The values and principles which must be propagated are spelled out in the dictum of Batho Pelle which is what informs the professional conduct in the public service, these values include amongst others, consultation, service standards, openness and transparency, information, and value for money. These are the values which must drive professional and ethical conduct in the public service.

One of the principles we want to emphasize is the issue of openness and transparency in the public service, it is very important that we avoid conflict of interests in the public service and those who are in the SMS be compelled to disclose financial and other interests they may be engaged in. In terms of Regulation 21(1)(a) of the Public Service Regulations, 2016, the PSC is required to scrutinise the financial disclosure forms of Members of the SMS. The purpose of the scrutiny is to assess compliance with the requirement to disclose all financial interests and also establish whether the involvement of officials in any activities of the companies could lead to conflicts of interest.

Honourable members

One of the strategic impediments to the creation of the developmental state is the challenge of corruption, as we all know the ANC in its 2017 National Congress took a hard-line stance against corruption and declared that an era of impunity was over. President Cyril Ramphosa in the State of the Nation Address for 2021 indicated the government had started the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, which lays the basis for a comprehensive and integrated society-wide response to corruption. The objectives of this strategy are to:

* Rejuvenate a national dialogue and direct energy towards practical mechanisms to reduce corruption and improve ethical practice across sectors and amongst citizens in South Africa.
* Provide a robust conceptual framework and strategic pillars to guide anti-corruption approaches across relevant sectors in the country.
* Support coordination between government, business and civil society efforts to reduce corruption and improve accountability and ethical practice.
* Provide a tool for monitoring progress towards a less corrupt society.

We welcome that, against the backdrop of the reports of Personal Protective Equipment corruption, in October 2020 the PSC hosted a virtual round table, amongst others, addressing the (a) implementation of the constitutional principle of Efficient, Effective and Economic use of resources in the procurement environment, and (b) the challenges experienced during COVID-19 within the procurement environment and the financial implications of these challenges on the fiscus.

**Budget**

We therefore welcome and support this budget, with an overall budget allocation for 2021/22 is R282.4 million, compared to R273.7 million in 2020/21. Most welcome is that the main cost drivers of the Commission are Programme 1: Administration (R136.1m) and Programme 4: Integrity and Anti-Corruption (R57.9m). This is a practical demonstration the PSC is committed to addressing the issues raised above.

The ANC moves in support of Votes 12 of the Public Service Commission.

I Thank You!