Speech by H. Denner DPME 19 May

The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation plays a direct, guiding role in government's long-term planning, strategic planning and annual performance planning. This role requires providing evidence-based input on cross-cutting issues that have long term implications for development.

But chairperson, is this the case?  Does this department truly ensure that proper planning is done on all levels, that the implementation of these plans are monitored and that outcomes and those who are responsible for them are evaluated so proper steps can be taken in accordance with these outcomes?

I will get to the futile evaluation processes of government departments later, but first I want to speak to Socio-economic impact assessments signed off by this department.

Case in point, the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment done for the Employment Equity Amendment Bill, currently serving before the portfolio committee of employment and labour.

As a member of the labour portfolio committee, I am shocked at the quality of the SEIA for this amendment bill, as well as the SEIA for the COID amendment bill, which was finalised in 2015 although the bill is only now before parliament – this SEIA does not account for any changes in the last 6 years – the Compensation fund alone has had two system changes in this time.

The responsibility to ensure that evidence and knowledge-based reports are provided for both proper public participation as well as legislative processes should not be taken lightly.  Socio-economic impact assessments for legislation in South Africa falls far short from international best practice.

I dare say they are propaganda pieces, smattered with confirmation bias, without objective data comparisons or proper financial impact assessments.  These reports are not worth the paper they are written on and the Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation who sign off on these assessments should be ashamed.  It is your responsibility to ensure quality data and you are failing.

Voorsitter, daar kan geen debat daaroor wees dat daar 'n tekort aan dienslewering op alle vlakke van regering is nie. Of dit nou binnelandse sake is waar geboortesertifikate wegraak, of paspoortaansoeke wat maande duur tot werkloosheidsversekering en die ongevallekommissaris tot op grondvlak waar vullis nie verwyder word nie en slaggate op paaie letterlike mense se lewens kos.

Hospitals have become mortuaries where patients go to die even during routine procedures.  There is a lack of medicine and equipment in hospital and in most cases these necessities are somewhere forgotten in a storeroom, even during a pandemic.

Given these realities it is astounding that up until recently most government officials in departments received 100% of their annual performance bonuses based on performance assessments. How can that be?  This department should have, through its monitoring, identified these discrepancies  -  for if there is such a glaring lack of service there is obviously a lack of performance.

We also have political heads of departments, Ministers who should ensure that the people of South Africa receive services, that corruption does not happen and that there is compliance with laws and regulations.  Many ministers blame officials, like DG's for transgressions, crisis, and non-performance.

These very ministers are the ones that sign off on the performance bonuses of these officials, so if they blame them for non-performance, how do they sign off on 100% performance evaluations?

There has also been much talk about the performance agreements of ministers themselves, it seems as if these performance agreements are still not in place.  When and how will the honourable president assess his ministers based on these agreements and what will the consequences be for a minister who does not perform? And will the outcomes of these assessments be made public?

One of the reasons for the total collapse of South Africa is a lack of accountability.  Although the taxpayer pays hundreds of millions to fund deputy ministers the question remains, what is the function of a deputy minister?  In many cases ministers have still not officially delegated any responsibilities to their deputies which again leads to a lack of firstly evaluation and secondly accountability.

The problem is that certain plans fail, but because of the failure of this department the same thing is done in all departments over and over with the expectation of different results.

Planning, monitoring and evaluation should ultimately lead to and ensure accountability – in the South African government there is a sore lack of accountability – it begs the question then, has this department succeeded in its mandate? I think not.

I thank you.