

**MINISTRY: PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**DATE: 2 SEPTEMBER 2022**

**QUESTION NO.: 2743**

**Dr M M Gondwe (DA) to ask the Minister of Public Service and Administration:**

(1) What (a) informed the policy proposal of increasing the term of office for Heads of Department (HODs) and Directors-General (DGs) to 10 years from the existing five years, subject to performance and (b) will be the impact of the specified policy proposal on the existing performance management development system of (i) HODs and (ii) DGs;

(2) whether his department conducted a study and/or benchmarking exercise to arrive at the policy proposal; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) (a) how will the policy proposal benefit the Public Service and (b) by what date is the policy proposal likely to come into effect and/or be implemented;

(4) whether the proposed amendment of the Public Service Act, 1994, will provide for the appointment of a Head of Administration in the Office of the President to manage the career incidents of DGs; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? **NW3234E**

**REPLY:**

1. (a) (i) (ii) A decision has not yet been taken on whether the term of office for Heads of Department (HODs) should be increased or not. Research and internal consultations are ongoing. This includes recommendations from the National Development Plan (NDP, 2012) which highlights the importance of the stability of the administrative leadership of the Public Service as well as a stable political-administrative interface on the performance of State institutions and for effective service delivery. The initial intent of a 5-year contract was to ensure that there is synergy in terms of the MTEF and MTSF to improve planning and execution of budgets and strategy. Experience has shown that this practice is often not aligned, as HoDs exit the system for various reasons and new ones come in more often than not in the middle of these cycles. Incumbents in HoD posts should ideally be in a position beyond the tenure of the political head for purposes of business continuity and delivery of the mandate.

(b)(i)(ii) Noting that the PMDS policy for HoDs require annual performance contracting and assessment, it is unlikely that changes to the tenure of HoDs will impact policy changes to the PMDS. It should be noted that measures to improve the performance of HODs and the rest of the Public Service are an ongoing process. The Department is however reviewing the Performance Management and Development System for the entire Public Service, including for HODs to ensure that the administrative capacity at DG level becomes about their capability; performance and capacity to manage and deliver.

2. Yes, research was conducted. This research considered data of DGs and HoDs from 1994 in terms of the measures that contributed to long lasting contracts, institutional performance and stability. The research conducted presented the option to keep the five (5) year contracts or increase them. Further consultations held on the outcome of the research, encouraged different schools of thought in the context of the research. This gave rise to considering the tenure with the options to retain the 5-year contracts or consider longer contracts with stricter performance reviews. Benchmarking was also conducted on the tenure of HoDs around the world and the impact on service delivery and performance of both the institution and the HODs.

3. (a) The intended impact is likely to be improving the stability at the leadership level which will in turn improve the operational and service delivery output of a department. As reported in 2 above, research has shown that where there is stability at the HOD level, the operational and organisation performance increases.

(b) This is a policy position which is being considered as part of the professionalization of the Public Service, there is no date, at this stage for implementation and a decision regarding the tenure of HoDs needs to still be formalised. The work related to this is in progress and still being consulted.

4. The amendments to the Public Service Act, 1994 consider the proposals made pertaining to same and an Amendment Bill is being proposed with due regard to the functions expected from the Head of Public Service. The consideration for longer term contracts go hand in hand with the original powers to be given to a HoD and the involvement of the Head of Public Service to support the President in the management of career incidents of Heads of Departments and at Provincial level the DG of the Province supporting the relevant Premier.

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