

21 May 2008
PC Safety

**POPCRU'S INPUT TO THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE
FOR SAFETY & SECURITY ON BUDGET PROPOSAL
FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE
SERVICES**

[21 May 2008]

Chairperson, Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee Leadership for South African Police Services Leaders of organised labour Ladies and gentlemen. It is indeed a great pleasure for me to take this rare and singular opportunity to express my gratitude and sincere appreciation to the Portfolio Committee for inviting my organisation to make presentation this morning on the budget of the SAPS.

We regard the leadership of the SAPS collectively charged with a responsibility that affords law-abiding citizens with their sense of security whilst ensuring that those who are seen to have acted outside the confines of the law are given the necessary attention that will make them fit to live in an open society. So, this is a critical component of the state that we could not miss the invitation to air our position.

May I, Honourable members, from the outset, indicate that what matters to us is not much about figures. Instead the way in which the rands and cents are broken down is the determinant factor that shall determine the department's levels of success. For this reason, our submission seeks to deal with issues on the basis of principle such that discussions would not be about how much we have but on how the department have allocated funds to various components with the view of ensuring effective and efficient service delivery. Thus pointing areas that we believe needs additional resources.

Before making that such input, a question is posed to the Portfolio Committee to ascertain – to what extent are the inputs we are making here taken into cognisance. This is raised against the background that our attendance to this very important meeting is not just for the sake of it but because we are convinced that we have a moral obligation and a social responsibility to contribute to the shaping of the budget SAPS.

We are, however, determined to make our contribution in this regard since we have revolutionary obligations to positively contribute to the operations of government at all levels. We are therefore, making this submission to this organ of state without fear of any contradiction.

We want to start by stating that the budget for the SAPS should be a road map to success and goal achievement in the fight against crime. In considering the budget for the 2008/9 financial year, critical analysis should be made on the budget utilisation for the 2007/8 financial year. How effective was that budget in the delivery of services in so far as safety and security of citizens is concerned within the ambit of the SAPS mandate. If the response to such analogy is negative, the focus should not be to simply plugging numbers into the old template. There should be re-focus on the activities of the service in a manner of prioritisation to address the failures, gaps or the shortfalls on the previous allocation. Critical question that needs to be asked in this regard is whether the budget supported the strategic plan and/ or the vision for the SAPS in the fight against crime.

We commend the SAPS for the abolishment of the Area offices which were merely post offices within the component. We fully support the deployment of the specialised units to the station/ institution level which crime takes place and need attention. The budget should focus on those areas of responsibility. We however, do not support by any means whatsoever, the creation of the super stations which will be charged to supervise other stations. The level of responsibility and spheres of governance are only three – National, Provincial and Local. In this regard, the station level. We will regard as waste of resources and skewed allocation of the budget if these unnecessary structures are created and funded. That will be the re-establishment of the Areas offices in the back door. It is however, not enough. The Head office of SAPS is till top-heavy. Conversely, we think that the Service would do much better with a lean and mean Head Office with bigger personnel where the actual work takes place so that it can be able to deliver on its mandate.

The Head Office of the department should be a policy making body. And such body does not require this bloated structure, which consumes bigger chunk of the budget. More should be done at this point in time to ensure that improved portion of the budget is removed from that level and allocated to the station level where actual activities take place at over-stretched resources.

As an organisation operating within the environment of safety and security, POPCRU has always maintained the need to strengthen the system of Community Policing Forums. It is our submission this morning that the budget we are commenting about today should prattle to these areas of providing services to the community with their assistance. These structures can and should play a positive role in the fight against crime and the budget should be geared ~~to~~ for better-quality part in that regard as we consider the following core elements of Community Policing in South Africa defined:

Service orientation: the provision of a professional policing service, responsive to community needs and accountable for addressing these needs;

Partnership: the facilitation of a co-operative, consultative process of problem-solving;

Problem-solving: the joint identification and analysis of the causes of crime and conflict and the development of innovative measures to address them;

Empowerment: the creation of joint responsibility and capacity for addressing crime; and

Accountability: the creation of a culture of accountability for addressing the needs and concerns of communities. This was outlined primarily in terms of the functions of various structures like the national and provincial secretariats, the Independent Complaints Directorate and members of the provincial legislatures responsible for safety and security.

~~These elements, no matter how~~

It is our view that the Management of the SAPS has to make sure that sufficient funds are invested in the training of those in positions of responsibility across the spectrum. We need to have sufficiently skilled and properly trained leadership to be entrusted with the responsibility of making sure that the labour relations unit functions as expected.

This measure can spare all of us the trouble of having to act as fire extinguishers that shall have to be called in from time to time because of the periodic industrial tension that raises its head from time to time. We hope that the proposed budget will look into this aspect so that we can focus on more productive activities that exclude having to attend endless meetings aimed at quelling revolt at our institutions.

While we acknowledge the remarkably significant progress that has been made in relation to transformation issues, we feel strong that the budget proposal has to be rather more vocal in terms of the principles that guide transformation agenda. A transformed SAPS ~~of~~ will be judged by one criterion above all, its effectiveness in delivering services which meets the basic needs of all citizens – safety and security of S. Africans. For this to happen, there should be budget provided specifically to tackle transformations aspects.

It is important therefore, that, we realise the need to establish more effective financial procedures that will make sure that the standards of financial accountability in the department do not leave us found wanting. All said and done, we must make sure that the department carries out its business in a manner that displays a sense of responsibility within the allocated budget. Moving for the adoption of a sound budget proposal is not enough. Let us ensure that there is proper adherence to the said budget lest all of us hang our heads in shame each time the financial records make us hang our heads in shame each time the Auditor General speaks.

Be assured that as an organisation we shall throw our weight behind all the responsible actions of the Department but shall never hesitate to raise a quarrel each time there are deviations from the budget that has been tabled and adopted.

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