Each of us is a knowledge worker and a learning champion in this knowledge economy. We all have a role to play in turning the Public Service into a “Learning Public Service for Quality Service Delivery”. Let us pursue this ideal by using the Service Delivery Review as a facility for sharing our experiences, successes, mistakes and methodologies and for growing our own intellectual capital.

We belong, we care, we serve.

Opinions expressed in this journal are not those of government but reflect the views of individual writers.
Two major conferences in the public service calendar provide the bulk of food for thought in this edition of the Service Delivery Review (SDR) journal. These are the Public Management Conversation and the Senior Management Service (SMS) events that took place at the tail end of 2005. Though catering to two distinct audiences and differing in their subject lines, the over-arching thought processes and objectives of these two gatherings were, simply put, to “make things work”, both for South Africa and the African continent.

A delegate at one of the conferences eloquently expressed this sentiment by calling for a single-minded need to turn the continent’s nations into “African lions”. This was with specific reference to the Asian economic turnaround miracle, underpinned by the so-called “Asian Tigers” countries.

But what does it take to turn South Africa, and its continental counterparts, into a pride of African lions, occupying its rightful political, economic and social space in the global kingdom of nations?

Appropriate politics

Political, social and economic stability are the most logical prerequisites for the desired metamorphosis of the continent. From around the 1990s, a number of African countries took promising tentative steps towards multi-party democracy, with South Africa’s “miracle” transition as the cherry on top. The political landscape across the continent has taken a dramatic turn over the past twenty years or so. This new political movement, which is bolstered by the creation of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) is, arguably, only rivaled, in its intensity and significance, by the rise of post-colonial independent states over fifty years ago.

Much of this new political impetus is reflected in the range of SDR articles on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process as well as case studies on Ghana, Kenya and Mauritius. The unfolding APRM country processes are not only a demonstration of growing political confidence and maturity, they are also a bedrock for continuous political capacity building.

In his overview article, Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) head, Dr Eddy Maloka, succinctly captures both the spirit and the modus operandi of the APRM process when he says “[r]ather than being an abstract, one-size-fits all, the APRM should take as its point of departure the country’s history, [the nature of] its state and level of development, and the priorities that the country has set for itself”.

More state role

Once the political kingdom has been secured (or at least its foundations laid), then kicks in the tasks of economic and developmental reconstruction, which are much needed interventions given the dire deficits in social services for the continent’s people. It is also in the above context that the role of African states in providing political, economic and developmental impetus has been a reoccurring theme over the past few years.

Contrary to the counsel of neo-liberal advisors, the reconstruction efforts on the continent require more state involvement — minus the dictatorial excesses that defined many regimes across the continent for years. The restoration and reaffirmation of the role of the African state needs to be underpinned by concerted efforts to rebuild pre-colonial civil society-wide movements and alliances that played a critical role in the liberation movement.

Many faces of capacity

This would require the harmonisation of institutions across the continent which, in turn would be dependent on the following types of capacities, as identified by Levin:

- Ideological state capacity – active commitment to government programmes.
- Political capacity – the ability of political heads to lead and drive performance.
- Technical capacity – the intellectual and practical ability to produce practical policies.
- Implementation capacity – the skills and other resources to implement policies successfully.

In his 2005 State of the Nation Address President Thabo Mbeki questioned whether the public service has the capacity to implement government programmes. A similar question is whether the continent as a whole has the capacity to turn its economies into “African lions”? The devil, as it is often said, is in implementation.
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The Senior Management Service (SMS) conference, now in its fourth year, is becoming an important goalpost in our annual activities. It offers the opportunity to focus our attention on important challenges that we face and exchange some lessons and advice and how to overcome these. The SMS conference also offers an important platform to reconfirm the priorities of government, the implementation of which rest squarely on the shoulders of Senior Management Service.

The 2004 conference grappled with the challenges associated the notion and practical aspects of the developmental state within the specific context of the country’s two economies. The theme of the 2005 gathering is not unrelated to the 2004 theme. It carries over some of the issues raised then, but during the 2005 conference we concentrated specifically on the issue of implementation for sustainable growth and development.

More specifically we focused on what the capacity requirements are for ensuring sustainable growth and development. This is the single most important question that the executive has been grappling with at the beginning of our second decade in government: “Do we really have the capacity to implement our development programmes?”

At the January 2005 Lekgotla, and again at the July Lekgotla, Cabinet dedicated a significant part of the agenda to this question. The President in his February 2005 State of the Nation Address, elaborated on the January Lekgotla decision and expressed his concern over the “lack of all-round capacity” and “weakness in the implementation of certain national programmes.”
I would like to dwell on some of the implementation challenges that we are facing and identify some of the critical factors that I believe contribute to the existing implementation gap. Let us look, by way of example, at the issue of housing to demonstrate the gap — a gap that in fact is growing.

In the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), published in 1995, it was estimated that the housing shortage in 1990 was 3 million units, and that each year a further 200,000 would be added, resulting in a minimum of 2.8 million units being added by 2005 to the backlog of 3 million units. Our effort in delivery on the housing front resulted in 1.8 million units built since 1994, a performance record not to be sniffed at in any terms. However, posed against the backdrop of a growing demand, it translates into a situation where we are 1 million units behind in terms of meeting the growing demand, without addressing the initial identified need for 3 million units in 1990. We clearly have a problem, and this example is not the exception. It is demonstrative of our performance across the board. Capacity limitations are recognized as one of the key underlying factors of the existing discrepancies between what we intend to achieve and what we manage to do.

As easy it is to give a label to many of our problems, capacity is not a simple concept. It is multi-dimensional, as well as dynamic and should be considered in its entirety if we want to appreciate completely the ramifications of the short supply of capacity and want to identify the aspects requiring intervention in order to overcome implementation gaps. One would like adopt a broad view of capacity, acknowledging both its internal and external dimensions. Internal dimensions include:

- Enabling legal and policy frameworks;
- Budget and other resource support;
- Institutional capacity such as structures, systems and processes, leadership and management, communications and organizational culture;
- Human resource, and finally, but not least important;
- Coordination and cooperation capacity.

The external dimension of capacity relates to the interdependence of modern day government on external actors and stakeholders. For example, it is generally recognized that consultative efforts and processes inclusive of stakeholders improve the chance of policy, programme and project decisions being seen through to their full consequences. To design and manage such participatory processes does not come naturally but requires substantial competencies, including conflict management and constituency building. In addition, government officials must be able to mobilize externally controlled resources and ensure that these become available to government through effective public-private and public-community partnerships.

Although the main dimension of capacity may be fairly standard, reforms within modern government, demands by citizens, the economy, the global context as well as changes within the context government operates in, bring about perpetual change that demand regular review of particular capacity requirements. For example, according to the Construction Industry Development Board, (CIDB), South Africa currently does not have enough engineers and artisans needed to support the large private sector capital projects as well as governmental infrastructure projects. This will become more critical towards the 2010 World Cup soccer event. The situation is aggravated by the international demand for professionals, illustrated by the emigration of more than 1400 engineers between 1996 and 2004. Although the training of professionals is increasing steadily, numbers are, according to the CIDB, not adequate to meet the demand.

Radical corrective action and capacity building on a large scale is required urgently. The executive will keep this issue on the agenda and systematically chip away at it. During the past Lekgotla we have focused on the housing sector. The Governance and Administration cluster has already been tasked to focus on other key sectors in the near future. At the January 2006 Lekgotla we addressed capacity challenges in Education, Health, Justice and Trade and Industry. This will be a continuous programme until we are satisfied that all sec-

**Letter from Tshwane**

Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi

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tors have addressed their capacity constraints.

As important as the issue of capacity might be for delivery, it is not nearly the only issue that impacts negatively on implementation. An overview of the implementation literature undertaken in 1996 identified at least 14 recurring themes that point to typical factors that give rise to the implementation gap. These include among others capacity issues already referred to, but also issues of coordination and integration, notably poor inter-governmental relations, the complexity that joint action brings to the implementation process and the absence of goal consensus between the different role players.

In implementation, making the necessary connections is of critical importance. The ability to see how every initiative is affected and in turn affects other initiatives is critical. Other themes that frequently lead to poor implementation are the issues of bureaucratic loyalty and commitment to the causes by all those involved. These are known under the labels of administrative control, bureaucratic leakage, and the disposition of actors. The theory suggests implementers of policy, especially when they feel little ownership of particular policies, have the ability to sabotage the best intentions of policy makers. The reduced control over the implementers of policy creates opportunities for the sabotage of those policies by the bureaucracy. In a system where the managerial mandate has been extended at the cost of political oversight and where decentralization is the prevailing battle cry, we open the door wide and invite this dynamic into our implementation equation. In the process, we do not engage adequately with the requirements of what kind of control remains necessary and what innovative forms can these take in the face of the new organizational context.

There is a very logical explanation for the caveat. It is senior managers who fought hardest for their perceived interest of being as remote as possible from political decision-makers and whose agenda is best served by the prevailing arms length arrangement. At the same time it is they who are supposed to provide policy support to the executive and thus have to come up with suggestions to overcome the very loose administrative control arrangement that currently prevails and threatens implementation. However, it could be argued that it is not in their interest to do so, and I have not seen senior managers falling over one another to come up with solutions in terms of this matter.

I want to tie this issue to the matter of “professionalism” and “professional ethics” of our senior bureaucrats. Much has been written about the behavioral patterns associated with professionalism in public sector employment. In conversations with career public servants, reference is often made to the need to preserve and protect this “professionalism”. In a way many public sector reform initiatives over generations had at their core the issue of protection for “professionals” from political influence.

The most recent reform initiatives that speak to this political-administrative interface have been those falling under the rubric of neo-economic institutionalism or managerialism, as it is more generally known. In the name of managerial autonomy and the protection of implementation agencies against political interference, attempts have been made to introduce stark, yet unrealistic, divisions between the policy role of political office holders and the implementation responsibilities of appointed mangers. They have specific spin-offs for countries that pursue a developmental agenda.

Some of the characteristics associated with the public sector professional are: being substantially proficient in the specific field or activity, acting in the public interest, supportive of the process of informed decision-making by all officials, law abiding, loyalty to the state, obedience to superiors, pride in one’s work, avoidance of conflict of interests, proper use of official positions, rejection of political nepotism, exemplariness in conduct, sobriety, circumspection in personal financial matters, reliability, incorruptibility, honesty, dedication to duty and probity. This is not my list, but taken from the literature on ethics of public administration.

Although professional ethics demand demarcation between the role of the professional administrator/manager and the political office-holder, close functional proximity and dynamic interaction between them prevents a tight watershed arrangement. It is appropriate and necessary for the manager and public administrator to be fully familiar with the political programme of government, which is drawn from the Cabinet collective. Appointed officials must do their utmost to assist their political principals in carrying out that particular programme,
and although providing policy advice, the professional administrator must avoid making policy decisions. For this purpose, the professional administrator should provide sufficient information to outline all policy options and their full implications to political decision makers, and on the basis of this make an informed recommendation to him or her political principal. But the final decision-making authority remains with the political principal. Senior bureaucrats undermine their own professionalism if they fail to provide their political principals with full information they require to make informed policy decisions.

No matter how hard the effort to limit political influence under the guise of professional “neutrality” and managerial “autonomy”, in a democratic system the bigger challenge for government is to retain control over its bureaucracy.

Government officials throughout the history, have ignored the descriptions of “professional ethics” of their jobs and pursued agendas other than those of their political masters. Officials who behave in such self-serving and rent-seeking ways contradict the required characteristics of a professional administrator or manager. This is a well-documented phenomenon. Alexander Kouzmin and his colleagues for example describe this as follows:

“[a]n inherent tendency for such bureaucrats to be deceitful, even dishonest, by distorting information communicated upwards so as to promote their own self-interest, and by making decisions in such a way as to promote their own-interest.”

My more recent reading of the history of public administration in South Africa revealed a number of scholars commenting on the phenomenon of bureaucratic sabotage. The old apartheid civil service and its remaining proponents make a big deal of “professional neutrality” and “autonomy”. It is, however, said that some of the most vicious opposition to political reforms attempted by Chris Heunis came from the rank of officials in the old Administration Boards. For all their neutrality and professionalism, these officials actively pursued political agendas that differed from those of their political master and prevented them from introducing certain changes. At a point where they saw their own influence diminishing they came over very decisively in a political manner that protected their own narrow interest.

By now you might be asking why I am raising these issues. I am doing so because I want to clearly add the agenda of issues that we look at when we interrogate the reasons that are giving rise to our poor implementation performance. I want to suggest that during the six years I stay have been associated with this particular portfolio, I have come across some very special and very professional public administrators/managers. They have been absolutely exemplary. I honour them and I am prepared to walk a long way with them. But I have also come across many who do not deserve the right to call themselves professionals, nor who are not entitled to invoke protection from politicians in operational affairs. These officials actively undermine our implementation record and we need to see how we deal with them.

As much as we are turning the emphasis to capacity development, training, organizational development and so forth, there is an urgent need to develop systems to protect us and our citizens from disloyal public managers who sit at the top of our public service structure. They are cancer eating away at our capacity. They spread the cancer to unaffected parts of our organizations. They usurp positive energy and create negative energy. Just turn your own mind eyes to the damage that corruption cases, sexual harassment, and so forth are doing. Think about the times that tensions play out between senior managers and the executive authority when managers introduce their own agendas, for example making policy pronouncements and actively seeking a profile in the media. We need to look at what happens to organizational energy and performance when senior managers constantly bicker.

I want us to end off with the positive image, an image to inspire us all to work towards, and to re-dedicate ourselves to, becoming such Senior Management Service. Yeheskel Dror, a professor of political science at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, wrote in 1997 that a “delta type” senior civil service was what was required for the senior civil service in the 21st century. By now these characteristics have been more broadly recognized as key success factors within the ranks of senior bureaucratic leadership.

These “delta type” attributes are:

• Super-professionalism;
• Innovative-creativity;
• Merit-elitist, but society reflecting;
• Virtuous;
• Autonomous but subordinated; and
• A strong sense of mission, dedicated to pursuing a career working towards the public good.

If we can address our capacity challenges as they are being identified, but at the same time build a senior management service that reflects in abundance these delta-type characteristics, we will go far in overcoming many of our prevailing implementation challenges.

We have been talking about the means we need to perform, whether it is human resources, management skills, legislative support, or financial capacity. However, Victor Frankl reminds us that it is not only about means, but ultimately about meaning. In our case the meaning of government action should be clear for anybody who looks at our society. A society still marked by huge divisions between the haves and the have-nots.

As servants of the public, as those who enjoy full-time employment and SMS level certainly counts among the most privilege upper percentiles of our population, the adage of “noblesse oblige” is applicable. Privilege entails responsibility, and significant privilege entails significant responsibility. I trust that we are now in an era where senior managers own that responsibility that comes with their privilege and are ready to deliver against it.
GEMS a Call Away
By Themba Gadebe
A call centre has been established for public service employees wishing to gain more information about the new Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS).

The call centre started operating on 1 December. The member for the centre is 0860 00 GEMS or 0860 00 4367. E-mail enquiries can be sent to enquiries@gems.gov.za and people can also log on to www.gems.gov.za for more information.

Blum Klan the Chief Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Health Group which won the tender to administer the scheme, said “joining GEMS is now a phone call away. We have trained sixty people to work in the call centre and we are ready for calls from all provinces.”

GEMS, which is a closed medical scheme aimed at current and retired public service employees, began enrolling members in January 2006. All government employees are eligible to join the scheme. However, this does not apply to employees in the security forces such as the police, the defence force, intelligence and secret services.

Given its low cost structure, GEMS means that employees earning less than R2 500 will also be able to afford medical cover. Employees will make a personal contribution that is as little as R109 per month, which will allow them access to comprehensive benefits offered by the scheme.

GEMS product offering consists of five benefit options. These are Onyx, Ruby, Emerald, Beryl and Sapphire. Sapphire is the most affordable package offering essential cover and the Onyx is the top option and provides extensive cover.

Efforts to Fight Poverty Receive Major Boost
By Nozipho Dlamini
Government has boosted its efforts to fight poverty, inequality and gross human rights violations by setting up a research and development unit known as the Charlotte Maxeke Collaboration in the Economics of Social Protection.

Speaking at the unit’s launch at the University of Pretoria, Social Development Minister Zola Skweyiya said the country had now created a platform and the institutional capacity for real work to begin. He said the research and programme development activities undertaken under the auspices of this collaboration should also speak to South Africa’s own Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative.

The collaboration will look at issues such as infrastructure development, sector investment strategies, education and skills development, second economy interventions and ways of improving the state’s capacity to provide economic services. The Minister said that the main government objective was to cut poverty and unemployment by half by the end of the second decade of democracy and the Charlotte Maxeke collaboration had a vital role to play in this effort.

He also noted that the collaboration will also help public servants at all levels of government to respond effectively to the challenges of social transformation.

Over the next two years, the collaboration will train about 120 public sector participants: 100 at undergraduate level, 15 at the Honours degree level, and five at Masters degree level.

Minister Hosts Counterparts on Pan-African Issues
Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi met with her counterparts from Mozambique and Ethiopia, representatives from the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) on Friday, 10 March 2006, to approve work plans for the Pan-African Ministers of Public Service and Administration.

Ministers Fraser-Moleketi, Fikru Delasenge of Ethiopia and Lucas Jeremias of Mozambique are members of a Ministerial Project Steering Committee (PSC), which was formed under the auspices of the Pan-African Ministers of Public Service and Administration at a meeting in Johannesburg last year.

The meeting approved work plans for
the Pan-African Ministers of Public Service and Administration, and also signed a funding agreement with the European Union Commission. During their December 2005 conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Ministers adopted the Addis Ababa Declaration. According to the Declaration, programmes such as skills development, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge exchange, human resources development and anti-corruption, among others, must be implemented following the approval of the work plans and the signing of the funding agreement.

Led by Minister Fraser-Moleketi in her capacity as the Chairperson of the Fifth Conference of the Pan-African Ministers of Public Service and Administration, the Project Steering Committee will present details of progress on the ministers’ programme of action to the Pan-African Ministerial Bureau, to be held in April 2006.

The programme of action is a continental Governance and Administration initiative, driven by the AU to enhance state capacity and public service reform on the African continent.

**Sudanese Delegation Completes an Intensive Training Programme**

The DPSA was a hive of activity in the past three weeks as it hosted a 31-member contingent of high-ranking South Sudan government officials. The DPSA treated the Sudanese to a three-weeklong practical training programme that involved an intensive interaction with various units.

The practical intervention was preceded by a comprehensive theoretical programme that was undertaken by the University of South Africa (UNISA) for a period of two weeks. The induction programme was coordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs. The Sudanese received practical training from the DPSA, SAMDE, the DPLG and the Department of Housing. The African National Congress (ANC) did also share its liberation struggle experience with the Sudanese officials.

The DPSA has given a firm commitment to assist the government of Southern Sudan and indeed other post-conflict African countries in their efforts to resolve conflict and strive for a peaceful and democratically governed state. One of the critical elements for securing a lasting peace is the dialogue between the warring parties. The Sudanese received practical training from the DPSA, SAMDE, the DPLG and the Department of Housing.

The Sudanese received practical training in various aspects of government and administration, including various technology skills and language skills.

**ASGISA Boosted by Public-Private Partnership**

The programme of action is a continental Governance and Administration initiative, driven by the AU to enhance state capacity and public service reform on the African continent.

Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka launched the IBM’s Integrated Delivery Centre (IDC) as a public-private partnership to provide the necessary skills needed to implement Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA).

The IDC provides support for services such as server installation, monitoring and maintenance assistance to several problems that remain even as our economy grows. There are good developments as well. We now boast of a call centre which employs 600 people. It is expected that another 900 people will be employed this year.

Speaking at the launch, Deputy President Mlambo-Ngcuka said, “The key interventions in ASGISA are in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), sector development and second economy initiatives focusing on small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), rural development and universal access to basic services.

IBM’s initiative is one of the answers to several problems that remain even as our economy grows. There are good developments as well. We now boast of a call centre in South Africa with 16 languages. We can only grow to greater strengths with the initiative such as IBM’s Integrated Delivery Centre.”

IBM is expected to also invest a further R24 million in the next 12 months for its training programme, which includes various technology skills and language skills.
There is increasing agreement that the challenge of the new millennium is to increase the levels of public involvement in governance. South Africa is fortunate because it has a very rich history that has led into our democracy. It has been a history of involvement and engagement of the population as a whole in governance. A critical issue is to what extent have we been able to sustain public participation over the past eleven years and into the future.

The capacity of the “governed” to contribute towards this process is contingent of many factors that have to be considered if we are to make sure that the motto “the people shall govern” is not just something found only in the Freedom Charter. There is also the issue of the ability of the “governing” to listen, which is depended on many factors, including our culture and history.

Implementation

According to the APRM Base Document, the primary purpose of the APRM is “to foster the adoption of appropriate laws, policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration.”

The APRM is not just a once-off event. It is not a one shot in the arm. It is a process that will continue on an annual basis until we undertake the second review in four years’ time. The APRM process is a long haul and seeks to ensure that good governance practices and policies are put in place on the African continent and that African countries establish benchmarks so that we can learn from each other. The APRM process incorporates the following stages:

- Studies of the political, economic and corporate governance and development environment in the country are prepared and reviewed;
- The APR Team undertakes a Country Review Visit;
- APR Team prepares a report and raises its concerns where necessary;
- The APR Secretariat submits the APR Team’s report to the APR Panel,
which reviews the report and submit the recommendations to the APR Forum; and

- The APRM Report is publicly released, followed by two-yearly progress reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA).

The themes of the APRM are the following:

- Democracy and good political governance;
- Economic governance and management;
- Socio-economic development; and
- Corporate governance.

South Africa’s approach to the APRM is a participatory process that is led by government but inclusive of Civil Society (business, academics and others). A range of mechanisms will be used to ensure that citizens have a chance to contribute towards the APR process through consensus and buy-in to a country Programme of Action. The mechanisms used in the case of South Africa include the following:

- Two National Consultative Conferences;
- Nine Provincial Consultative Conferences;
- District and local level consultations led by ward committees;
- Several Community level discussion groups led by Community Development Workers (CDWs); and
- Several sectoral input sessions and other consultative events.

Some of the provinces, for example Limpopo, have done well in terms of implementation thus far. The Limpopo Province has already completed the consultative process in six districts and reports. These processes are not government processes as they involve multiple stakeholders. Parliament will also have an opportunity to do its own process. It, however, has to be stressed that the parliamentary report will be submitted to the focal person and be integrated into a country report because we will have one country self-assessment report. There are going to be no parallel reports and the parliamentary report is not going to be an annexure to the country report. I think we need to bear in mind that the overall objective of the process is to build consensus and to ensure that we have a country dialogue. It is not a critique of each other but talking together in order to develop a report that we will be proud of as a country.

As hinted earlier, inclusiveness is a hallmark of South Africa’s approach to the APR process and Community Development Workers and Ward Committees are to play a central role in community and local level consultations. Another innovation in terms of the South Africa’s approach is drawing in accredited research partners to participate in the process by making submissions in their areas of specialization as well as participating in technical workshops on each of the four thematic areas to ensure that the process is technically sound.

South Africa aims to complete the process in the recommended nine months, that is, from November 2005 to August 2006. And the process of compiling inputs, drafting the report and the PoA and finalizing the documents after consultation with stakeholders will take about three months. While the assessment review by the APRM Panel and consideration of the report by the heads of state and government will take about three to four months, which leaves two months for extensive consultation and mobilization.

The President formally committed South Africa to the APRM on 28 September 2005 and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on the 11 November 2005. On the 29 September 2005 the National Governing Council with alternate members and representatives from the provinces was elected. Provincial Governing Councils have been subsequently established in all nine provinces. The Governing Council has met four times and is doing so increasingly productively and provincial workshops are taking place, increasing the levels of public awareness and participation. Parliamentary hearings on the four thematic areas are taking place across the country and the Country Support Mission took place from 9 to 11 November 2005 and 6 to 8 December 2005.

Governing in South Africa

South Africa has always seen the need for a thoroughgoing transformation in the context of our past and looking towards a developmental future. This has been based on very specific ideological underpinnings derived from the ethos of the majority party. We also draw on our constitution. We see local government as the last hurdle to cross in terms of dealing with some of apartheid’s most obvious consequences, particularly in the restructuring and transformation of local government.

It could be argued that South Africa is a quintessential post-modern society and it is an anvil in which the future gets shaped. This is because South Africa deals with many of the challenges that many developed countries have dealt with much later. In fact, when the Austrian Chancellor visited South Africa around 1998, he said to the then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, that they look at South Africa as this large pilot project the world can look up to and emulate because we are dealing with some of the biggest challenges in the world.

Model of prosperity and inclusion

In conclusion, we need to ask ourselves whether we are becoming an African model for prosperity and inclusion. We also need to ask ourselves whether we can deal with issues of stagnation versus economic growth; poverty versus development; marginalization versus inclusion; unemployment versus human rights and democracy. The APRM process is not a finger pointing exercise. It is an opportunity for open-minded engagement that is both meant to acknowledge the challenges and celebrate the successes. It is supposed to assist in ensuring that our programme of action will be sustainable into the future. •
The countries that are members of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) are very diverse, a factor that should be taken into account in the review exercise.

For example, the four countries that are being reviewed (namely Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius and Rwanda) not only have different historical backgrounds, but their governments also have different priorities. In Rwanda, for example, the focus is on completing the post-conflict transition. Institution and nation building as well as reconciliation are therefore among the country’s priorities.

At the opposite end is Mauritius, which has experienced a relatively long history of stability and democratic tradition. By contrast, Kenya has just emerged from a long history of authoritarian rule and, as recent developments in the country suggest, it is struggling to find a post-Moi political footing. Ghana, on the other hand, seems to be succeeding in overcoming the legacy of military dictatorship.

South Africa, for its part, has just celebrated ten years of its post-apartheid transition. Building the country of the legacy of the apartheid remains the central focus of the country.

So, rather than being an abstract, one-size fits all, the APRM exercise should take as its point of departure the country’s history, its state and level of development, and the priorities that the country has set for itself.

The APRM as a programme of NEPAD, rests on the following assumptions:

• That the exercise is comprehensive; it is a review and appraisal of the performance of the country and its political, civil society and business elites;

• That the countries under review are capitalist countries;

• That the countries being reviewed have a multi-party political systems with a liberal democratic content; and

• That the state has a central role to play. As the questionnaires indicate, the state is expected to play an active, interventionist role in the economy and broader society.

APRM in the African Renaissance

The APRM is an integral part of the African Renaissance, and is particularly related to the following objectives:

• Promotion of democracy and good governance. There is now recognition, unlike the 1970s and 1980s, that African’s problems cannot be solved without appraising the role of the post-colonial state and elite;
• The promotion of self-reliant and sustainable development, including war on poverty, lack of education and shelter;
• Peace and security as important preconditions for Africa’s development; and
• Improving Africa’s global standing by developing institutions and capacities.

In this context, the APRM should help Africa advance in the following areas:

• By insisting on common standards and norms, the APRM is contributing to Africa’s integration efforts. The APRM should help harmonise Africa’s diverse institutions, practices and, indeed, the value and outlook of the elites. This should support the efforts of the African Union to develop an African charter on democracy, good governance and human rights;

• By insisting on compliance of participating member states, APRM should help Africa address a problem inherent from the days of the OAU whereby countries adopt declarations and access to instruments which they do not have the intention of implementing;

• Building self-reliance. But this cannot be achieved while economic policymaking in many African countries is still in the hands of the foreign institutions (especially the World Bank and IMF) and donors. The assumption in the APRM is that those states that are active and interventionist in society are in a better position to determine their policies and priorities. What is the point of giving a country feedback on its APRM review while the country’s agenda and priorities are externally determined?

• A successful continent-wide APRM process should help build and mobilize a constituency (motive force) for the African Renaissance.

Implied APRM principles

The APRM document is full of detailed reference to objectives and principles. However, there are three implied principles that must be singled out.

• Integrity and independence: hence the process is independently led at both country and continental level. The APRM panel drives the latter, which at country-level is in the hands of independently constituted, multi-stake Governing Council. The “who and the how” processes of the country-level self-assessment report and programme of action are also informed by the principles of independence and integrity. However, the APRM is not punitive or intended to embarrass poor performance, nor is the APRM a platform for the opposition to bring down government;

• APRM is a dialogue among leaders themselves, and between leaders and the people, at country and continent level. Hence the process is simultaneously a self-assessment at domestic level and external review in the form of the APRM panel mission to the country; and

• The APRM process is underpinned by strong emphasis on consultation, exclusivity and popular participation.

South Africa’s role

South Africa, as one of the NEPAD initiating countries, has a responsibility and obligation to ensure that the APRM becomes a success. This contribution is not limited to providing material support to the process, but should include an effort at country-level that the national APRM process can showcase the achievements of the country since the end of apartheid and the commitment of the country to the objective and principles of the APRM.

The following are among the areas where South Africa can contribute:

• To the benchmarking of the APRM member countries. Three stages of development can be envisaged: At the bottom could be countries meeting the minimum APRM standards; in the middle, countries making progress and consolidating their implementing of APRM standards; and at the top, countries at the advanced level, pioneering new APRM standards. A package of support measures and incentives could be deployed depending on the country’s APRM rating. It is however, possible that a country’s overall performance could be at the top while being rated lower in certain sectors. For example, South Africa can get at the top overall rating, but still rate “middle” in socio-economic development;

• To ensuring that its national APRM process is, at least, perceived to be independent and of unquestionable integrity; and

• By playing a role in the review of this first wave of the APRM experience. Possible candidates for the review phase should include (a) the APRM process itself; (b) the questionnaire; (c) post-country self-assessment feedback and follow-up; and (d) ideological concepts and assessment informing the APRM exercise.

The success of the APRM as a minimum common programme for the renewal of Africa should help place the continent in a better position in the 21st century. The APRM is essentially about freedom for the African people, fighting poverty and underdevelopment, and eradicating violent conflicts on the continent. The APRM reports of Ghana and Rwanda have unearthed problems, which are common in many African countries. These include:

• Lack of indigenous capacity at the level of institutions and resources;
• A weak regulatory environment;
• Challenged delivery of services to the people;
• Challenges of widening the political space especially for opposition political parties, minorities and other vulnerable groups;
• A weak and underdeveloped private sector; and
• Donor dependency, with national budgets in many African countries suffering from over 50% reliance on the injection of donor money.

Surely, if Africa overcame (as a minimum) the six challenges outlined above, the continent would be a different and better place in the 21st century. •
A story is told of a father and his child who were spending an afternoon at home. The father was reading his newspaper, probably catching up on the latest at the Africa Cup of Nations. However his child was at that inquisitive age and every other 3 minutes the child would run up to the father with all manner of questions. The father noticed that one of the pages of the paper had a map of Africa and in an effort to distract the child the father tore off this page, tore it into pieces and asked the child to go into his room and attempt to put the map of Africa back together. Much to the father’s dismay the child came back after 2 minutes and he had put Africa back together. The father asked his son how he had managed to do it so fast. The son replied. “Well you see Dad on the other side of the paper was a picture of a man and I knew if I could make the man right I could make Africa right”

This story captures what the APRM is all about, for if we can make ourselves right, our families right, our schools right, our churches right, our organizations right, our companies right then we can make our countries right and we can make Africa right.

The APRM is a voluntary mechanism considered to be the most innovative aspect of NEPAD. It aims to track and measure progress towards countries’ good political, economic, corporate and social governance. It is a powerful tool to assess the performance of all spheres of national life and assist countries to identify deficiencies and capacity gaps and recommend possible solutions. It is important that one make the distinction between governance and government. Governance goes beyond government. Governance refers to the way those who have been entrusted with power use it. To have good governance in a country we must inculcate a culture of good governance from the very basic unit. In his book Africa’s Moment, Pete Oundeng, says “I cannot think of Africa without thinking about myself, every time I ask does someone care, the question comes back to me - do you care? Every time I point an accusing finger I find the finger pointing back at me”
APRM in Kenya

Kenya among other African countries acceded to the APRM during the African Union Summit held in Abuja in March 2003 and in February 2004 volunteered to undertake peer review alongside Rwanda, Ghana and Mauritius. To get the African Peer Review process going, the government of Kenya established a broad based interdisciplinary taskforce that included government, civil society, and private representatives. This taskforce met under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Planning and National Development. The task force was charged with preparing the ground for the inaugural consultative forum by undertaking to make an initial identification of all stakeholders. The task force also held several national and other consultative meetings with leaders from the media, civil society and private sector.

Structures

The Kenya APRM Task Force set out as its first priority to draw up clear and concise Terms of Reference for the APRM structures in Kenya. This was in recognition of the need to clearly and concisely think out the roles of these structures to avoid any conflicts and in order to give ample direction to these structures. After much discussion and consultation a consensus was arrived at on the roles of the National Governing Council (NGC), the Government, The Lead Technical Agencies (LTAs), the Convenors, the Kenya APR Secretariat.

The challenge with creating the NGC was that it had to have 4 key qualities; it had to be legitimate, credible, competent and have authority. In order to have legitimacy and credibility the taskforce held two National Stakeholders Forums to allow stakeholders to gain an understanding of the APRM and to elect their representatives to the NGC. It was also decided that there was need for competent Lead Technical Agencies to sit on the NGC and to equally have representatives of the line ministries as they have the authority and responsibility to execute the Programme of Action. In the end, a 33 person NGC was created and members were allowed to elect their own chair.

Positioning APRM into existing national development frameworks

It is important that the APRM is not seen to replace existing programmes but to reinforce them. It is therefore quite critical that the APRM process has linkages with existing programmes. Kenya set out to use the APRM to provide indicators on how well the country has been served by the nation’s designated road map for economic growth and human development, namely the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERSWEC) paper. This road map spells out the essence of an enabling environment required for productive economic activities, including reforms in the public sector, promotion of good governance and the rule of law, the fight against corruption, investment in human capital of the poor, as well as a thriving private sector. The APRM, to be relevant to the needs of the Kenyan people, was intended to assess and contribute tangibly towards the realization of the goals of the ERSWEC.

Finding the appropriate positioning of APRM in Kenya's context was as a result of several consultations with relevant government agencies and stakeholder groupings.

Non-state operations were considered to be critical to developing a culture of good governance and directly impact on progress on human development. As such, the APRM was positioned to not only track public or state governance, but aligned the practices in the private sector towards the national goals of development. APRM in Kenya was therefore designed to provide a system for tracking non-state operations in the delivery of services and within the corporate sector both at a national level and at a devolved community level. This information provided a critical set of indicators to evaluate progress towards meeting ERSWEC and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets.

The APRM was equally positioned to appraise the efficacy of the new national system wide Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework to ensure that any capacity gaps identified are rectified through a National Programme of Action that outlines a set of actions and policy inputs that strengthen the capacity of the national M&E framework. In this way it doesn’t duplicate existing national M&E tracking programmes, rather it complements them.

Methodology

Stakeholders also got a chance to go through the indicative questionnaire sent by the APR continental secretariat and to identify any gaps and domesticate it. It was proposed and adopted that four research instruments be developed for use as follows:

1) Desk Research – based on existing literature.
2) Expert Panel Survey – questionnaires were sent out to 100 experts in each of the pillars of the review. Experts not limited to academic accomplishments but a mastery of the subject. A good number were drawn from civil society.
   In addition civil society representatives in the NGC were involved in the selection of experts.
3) Focus Group Discussion – Held countrywide in 16 sample districts. In each of these districts focus group discussions were held separately with male youth, female youth, male adults, and female adults. The purpose being to get data that is disaggregated along gender, age/generational, geographic lines.
4) National sample survey – this was a household based survey conducted on 1950 sample households country wide. It was based on a random strat-
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National programme of action

The beauty of the APRM is that it does not only seek to review governance and identify the gaps. It goes the extra step to provide a National Programme of Action to fill those gaps. In Kenya after the development of the National Programme of Action the various government ministries and departments who were identified as the implementing agencies were asked to assist in costing the Programme of Action. This was to make as realistic as possible. The challenge now is for Kenya to move forward to implement the Programme of Action.

Public engagement strategy of the APRM

The APRM is designed to be a participatory and inclusive process. Communication and public engagement is therefore at the heart of the process. Kenya invested in an integrated information, education and communications strategy to ensure that a sustained and coordinated approach to the process of disseminating vital APRM information is achieved. This strategy included mapping of dissemination strategies and activities and outline of stakeholder identification strategies.

These strategic approaches were:
- the mass outreach strategy that aimed at ensuring that the main APRM messages reach out to as many Kenyans as is possible and as far down as districts, locations and village levels;
- promotional and marketing strategy which focused on providing and sharing information on the APRM that will interest critical institutions to be part of the partnership that is envisaged in the reform process instituted by the APRM, and
- National sharing and feedback strategy that was meant for use in national institutions to feedback and feed-forward on the progress in the implementation of the APRM.

Some of the activities executed within the APRM IEC Strategy included, printing of English and Swahili APRM brochures, development and launch of an interactive APRM website (www.aprmkenya.org); promotional meetings with key media houses, radio and TV spots, interviews and talk-show sessions reach out to as many Kenyans as possible and as far down as districts, locations and village levels;宽泛的宣传策略, which focused on providing and sharing information on the APRM that will interest critical institutions to be part of the partnership that is envisaged in the reform process instituted by the APRM, and
- National sharing and feedback strategy that was meant for use in national institutions to feedback and feed-forward on the progress in the implementation of the APRM.

It is important that the APRM is not seen to replace existing programmes but to reinforce them

National Governing Council in all the provincial capitals of Kenya, various sectoral and stakeholder forums were held with groups such as youth, women, farmers, faith-based organisations, private sector, the disabled. The key lesson from the communication strategy was the need to effectively unpack the APRM such that all would be able to understand it. The use of local people to facilitate the sessions out in the provinces and districts greatly enhanced dialogue.

Validation of technical assessment by key actors

During the data collection stage, Kenyans asked for assurances that whatever inputs they give will actually contribute to the report. It is therefore important that stakeholders be given an opportunity to validate the report. Once the draft self-assessment report was ready, it was subjected to a panel of experts for quality control. After that a national stakeholders’ validation conference was held. About 1,000 people from all over Kenya were invited to this conference. This helped identify any gaps in the self assessment report. For instance, participants felt that not enough emphasis had been given to youth and marginalised groups.

Country review visit

Kenya completed its self assessment in September 2005 and from the 3rd to 17th of October Kenya hosted Dr. Graca Machel and the country review team. This team held provincial forum in all provinces of the Country and also held various meetings with representatives of certain sectors and stakeholder groups such as youth, women, faith-based organisations, private sector, academia, people living with HIV/AIDS, people living in informal settlements and the disabled.

Conclusion

A key highlight of the Kenyan process was the high involvement of young people in the process. This was identified as a best practice that needs to be shared with other countries. Equally there were deliberate efforts to ensure women participated. In fact in most APRM meetings women outnumbered men.

Throughout the whole APRM process the one thing that I appreciated the most was to see Kenyans from all walks of life dialoguing. In some areas the problem was simply that citizens lacked information and the APRM provided a forum for leaders and citizens to talk to each other.

The APRM also provided a neutral non-political platform to address some of the more touchy issues such as corruption which have become so politicised in our country. As this was a self-assessment the report was easily accepted by all. My hope is that we can find ways to sustain the dialogue that was started.
Peer Learning

How to Conduct Inclusive and Transparent Reviews

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in 2005 moved from the realm of theory into practice as the first round of African states conducted their initial country self-assessments during the year. Four countries, Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya and Mauritius have elicited international scrutiny in their efforts to engage in an honest and inclusive national conversation on the nature of governance in their respective states. Whilst Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya have concluded their self-assessments and presented national action plans for the next five years to the African Peer Review Panel of Eminent Persons (APR Panel) for consideration and implementation, Mauritius has lagged far behind its peers in conducting a successful self-assessment. With South Africa already well along the path towards completing its own self-assessment, the problems and delays experienced by Mauritius in completing its report can and should be considered in order to avoid similar experiences in South Africa. The South African government has publicly stated its intent in completing the country self-assessment process in a timely fashion, and in order to ensure that this applaudable objective is achieved, South Africa would do well to learn some lessons from the experiences of its SADC partner in the challenges of conducting a fully inclusive and transparent review.

Since its official accession to the APRM in July 2004, Mauritius has experienced repeated delays in compiling its self-assessment report. At first glance, there do not appear to be any obvious barriers to completion of the country’s report, as Mauritius boasts an impressive historical governance record, vigorous multi-party democracy, manageable population size and the APRM has received the complete backing of the Mauritian government. Yet despite these apparent strengths, Mauritius has to this point been formulating its submission to the APR Panel for more than 18 months (double the expected length of an assessment), and has extended its expected date of completion to mid-2006.

Overview of Mauritius

The African Peer Review Mechanism is made up of African states who have vol-
unteered to open themselves up to scrutiny regarding their governance practices to both their own citizens as well as other African states. The process is intended to act as a catalyst to both encourage better governance practices in all members of the APRM, as well as assist in information sharing and dialogue between governments, state institutions and civil society.

The APRM core document outlines the process of a peer review in five stages, as follows:

**Stage One** – The preparation of up-to-date background documentation on the country's governance and development environment, as well as a draft program of action outlining steps to implement governance reforms.

**Stage Two** – A visit by a country review team, which consults broadly with the widest possible range of stakeholders and other organizations in the APRM process.

**Stage Three** – The APR country team, using the background material as well as the materials gathered during its country visit, prepares a country report for submission to the APR Panel of Eminent Persons.

**Stage Four** – The country team’s report is submitted to the APRM Heads of State and government through the APRM Secretariat. This stage concludes when the report is adopted in its final form by the HSGIC.

**Stage Five** – Six months after the adoption of the report, it should be publicly tabled in key regional and sub-regional structures. This constitutes the final stage of a peer review.

The attached table illustrates the progress made by various countries presently engaged in the APRM vis-à-vis these five stages. Note that despite having signed the APRM memorandum of understanding in March 2004, and launched the process at approximately the same time in mid-2004 as the other states, Mauritius has yet to complete Stage One of the APRM process.

This is in direct contrast with the timeframes of Mauritius peers’ in the first batch of countries to engage in self-assessment. Does this lack of progress represent factors which are unique to Mauritius, or could other countries undertaking the process also experience the delays that have been observed in Mauritius?

In order to understand this question better, it is important to understand how Mauritius undertook the APRM process. Diagram 2 represents the simplicity and lack of multiple institutions in the APRM process in Mauritius. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the government ministry tasked with maintaining oversight regarding the APRM process in the country. The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) was appointed as the country’s national focal point (the institution that is tasked with the overall responsibility of producing the country’s APRM submission). The NESC is comprised of representatives from government, civil society and trade unions. The NESC, in turn, set up a National Coordinating Structure (NCS), which operated as a forum for representatives from mainly government and para-statal bodies, and to a lesser extent civil society and the media. The intended purpose of the NCS was to act as a broadly representative forum to engage in and discuss governance issues. However, given the constraints which exist in Mauritius, the NCS turned out to be a largely state-dominated and ineffective body.

**Main constraints**

The NESC submitted a “final” report to the APRM secretariat and various arms of government in August 2005. The report, which was urgently recalled from the APR Secretariat by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was widely criticised within Mauritius for failing to include inputs from a broad range of participants, and for a shallow analysis.

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**Diagram 1 - Progress of Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa in APRM process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Signed MOU</th>
<th>Process Launched</th>
<th>Stage One</th>
<th>Stage Two</th>
<th>Stage Three</th>
<th>Stage Four</th>
<th>Stage Five</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>9 March 2003</td>
<td>July 2004</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>To be completed Jan 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>9 March 2004</td>
<td>July 2004</td>
<td>To be completed late 2006</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Expected February 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of governance issues in Mauritius. The embarrassment of retracting the report has prompted serious reflection on the value, merit and significance of the APRM in Mauritius. At the time of writing, the entire process had been reset, and the NESC now operates under far closer supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs than was previously the case. Whilst the NESC has borne the brunt of the criticism of retracted report, it would be simplistic to assert that weaknesses within the NESC are the sole cause of the country’s delays in producing a report.

Weaknesses

The NESC is a para-statal body which is government funded, but whose members are drawn from civil society, business, and private charities. It is guided by a body of 35 persons, with committees delegated to pursue specific objectives for the body. The selection of the NESC as the national focal point was received with mixed feelings, particularly amongst Mauritian academics and civil society, who were concerned that the para-statal body would struggle to find consensus on the most challenging and controversial aspects of governance in Mauritius due to its conflicting interests.

From the outset, the NESC bore almost complete responsibility for the country’s self-assessment. The body was provided with a budget from the government, and was tasked with implementing the process. It was responsible for: the sensitization of the Mauritius public; the coordination and implementation of the country questionnaire and governance surveys; and the drafting and editing of the country report. The NESC communication strategy was widely criticized, in particular the body’s failure to address adequately the APRM questionnaire to the general public. Initially, the NESC simply completed the questionnaire in-house and re-submitted it to the APRM secretariat. After subsequent consultations with the secretariat, the NESC published advertisements calling for submissions based on the questionnaire, which could be made in French and English. In total, less than 70 submissions were received, including a number of duplications from government departments. These submissions formed the basis of the NESC draft report which was eventually retracted by the government.

Instead of delegating the four areas of governance to separate agencies, with specific and relevant experience in those governance areas under review, the NESC, in partnership with a single socio-economic consultancy, took almost complete responsibility for gathering data, compiling and editing the draft report, which was drawn only from direct responses to the NESC’s requests for submissions, and did not draw on any other existing research.

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The NESC approach, whilst widely criticized for Mauritius’ delay in completing the first stage of the APRM process, does not by itself explain why the response to the APRM from civil society and state institutions was initially so tepid. Even today, high levels of ignorance and misunderstanding exist in Mauritius regarding the significance, procedures and value of the APRM.

Civil society

The NESC did not conduct any extensive sensitization program, and even its public announcements and advertisements were irregular and allowed only the minimum notice periods required for responses. As a result, only 5 submissions from non-governmental departments were received prior to the submission of the first report to the APRM secretariat.

The minimal impact of the sensitization campaign had the subsequent con-
sequence of stifling national debate and dialogue on the APRM process. The engagement of civil society, as well as the private sector in the APRM process was initially almost non-existent. This could be attributed to a wider malaise in civil society, however, and not only to the botched sensitization campaign. Mauritian civil society is neither particularly strong nor organized, and there are only a handful of independent Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) which have thus far engaged in work on governance in general and the APRM specifically. This weakness has had a direct impact on the scope of consultations that have been possible up to now in Mauritius.

Role confusion

An aspect of the Mauritian experience which is unique to the island state is the “role confusion” of individuals who represent multiple interests simultaneously. In Mauritius it is common for a single person to sit on the board of business corporations, act as a representative of civil society organizations and consult with or even form part of a government department or ministry. This practice, which is prevalent and widespread throughout Mauritius, has a particularly salient impact on civil society organizations, as their interests are often sublimated beneath those of big business and the government. In these circumstances, it has been a major challenge for the NESC, as well as the APRM review team, to engage in frank discussions with civil society on governance issues affecting civil society.

Mind your language

The issue of language in the self-assessment process has also limited the opportunities for broad-based consultation. Whilst the official languages of government in Mauritius are French and English, the most widely spoken language, particularly at the rural level in Mauritius is Creole. In requesting submissions for its draft report, the NESC translated the APRM questionnaire instrument from English into French, but there was no provision made for a Creole translation. In light of the often complex and subtle variations of the governance issues being discussed, this omission excluded a sizeable proportion of the island’s population from participating on the basis of language differences.

Parliamentary elections

Possibly one of the most significant reasons for the retraction of the first self-assessment report in Mauritius has to do with the country’s general elections held on 30 July 2005. The parliamentary elections coincided with a critical period in the country’s self-assessment process, and given the hotly contested nature of the election, there is little doubt that it had a detrimental impact on the quality of the country’s self-assessment. In Mauritius, the parliament is dissolved at the start of the campaign period. Additionally, the election campaign period draws in numerous volunteers from the civil service, civil society and political parties, whose focus becomes campaigning for their preferred candidates. During this period the APRM was forced to take a back seat to the elections, as engagement with civil society proved virtually impossible during the election period.

The APRM process was further complicated by the results of the elections, which returned a new government to parliament, unseating the regime which had initially acceded to the APRM process. This created a huge amount of uncertainty regarding the future of the process, as unlike their colleagues in Ghana, the Berenger government did not make any provisions in the Mauritius process for a change of government halfway through the country’s self-assessment. Whilst the new government affirmed the country’s commitment to the APRM process, and did not interfere in the structures which were already in place, the change of personnel in the government undoubtedly impacted on the engagement of the government and other stakeholders in the production of the report. The change of government also temporarily disrupted communica-
enhanced broad-based participation, Organization and Process, would have
capacities, which is provided for in the APRM
governance to four lead technical agen-
cies, which reduced the
effectively. Additionally, there is little
capacity to discharge its responsibilities
government undermined the body’s
governments taking into account the
prevailing local conditions in which self-
assessment takes place. It is also impor-
tant to give serious consideration to the
adaptation of the APRM questionnaire
to make it accessible to people at all lev-
evels of civil society, to ensure that the
maximum possible participation is
achieved. It is important to recognise
that the APRM base questionnaire is a
large and technical document which is
potentially intimidating for the vast majority of a country’s citizens.
Consideration should be given to multi-
ple adaptations of the questionnaire
with clear target groups in mind when
designing the questionnaire to engage
all levels of society in a country self-
assessment.

The importance of establishing an
effective and capable national focal
point is essential to the future health of a
country’s self-assessment. The size of the
NESC (35 members on the governing
council), and its weak mandate from the
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evidence to suggest that the NESC ade-
quately delegated responsibility beyond
its own members, which reduced the
body’s effective capacity and delivery.
Sufficient delegation of responsibility
for the analysis of the four main areas of
governance to four lead technical agen-
cies, which is provided for in the APRM
Organization and Process, would have
enhanced broad-based participation,
and added vital expertise in vital govern-
ance issues in Mauritius.

Mobilizing civil society is essential in
ensuring that a country self-assessment
is broad-based and participatory. The example of Mauritius highlights the
importance of engaging civil society in
the process of self-assessment at the ear-
est possible stage. The weakness and
lack of engagement from civil society, role confusion
between civil society and government,
not accommodating all major language
groups, and the impact which the parlia-
mentary elections had on the process in
Mauritius. A combination of these fac-
tors has thus far conspired to constrain
Mauritius from discharging its responsi-
bilities in terms of the APRM.

Lessons

The delays experienced in producing a
self-assessment report in Mauritius illus-
trate several important points which other
countries that are already or soon
will engage in the APRM can and
should take note of.

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When Ghanaian President John Kufuor defended his country’s African Peer Review (APR) report to 25 fellow African leaders in Khartoum, Sudan in January 2006, the West African country—the first to shake off colonialism in 1957, once again become a pioneer. Ghana was the lead guinea pig in Africa’s latest governance experiment—the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Although Ghana had no roadmap to follow, its experience in successfully producing a credible and inclusive analysis of its own national strengths and weaknesses offers a valuable blueprint for others engaged in the peer review process.

Why was Kufuor so keen on APRM?

John Kufuor’s victory in the 2000 elections marked the end of Jerry Rawlings’ 22-year rule and Ghana’s first peaceful transfer of power since independence. Why then was a new president so eager to open his state to intense scrutiny in this untested and potentially risky peer review process, on a continent notorious for using sovereignty to hide widespread mismanagement, maladministration and systemic dysfunction? Kufuor quickly grasped the domestic, regional, international and symbolic advantages of being first in the APRM queue.

At home, Kufuor had embarked on an ambitious programme to strengthen Ghana’s fragile democratic institutions. He had revamped the security forces; modernised the tax regime, court system and legal framework; and bolstered media freedoms. Kufuor committed his administration to clean government, increased accountability and diversified economic growth. APRM and Nepad were continental ideas that gave impetus to his domestic political and economic objectives. "John Kufuor believes that he is a democrat, and APRM was a way to demonstrate his personal commitment..."
Kufuor knew that APRM could become politically volatile in Ghana, and not just from disaffected NGOs. Opposition parties could use the report’s assessment of deficiencies as ammunition against the incumbent government, particularly as a general election was due in December 2004. To avoid APRM becoming embroiled in politics — and possibly becoming derailed if his New Patriotic Party lost those elections — Kufuor ensured that Ghana’s peer review process was independent of him and his party.

“When we were there for the APR support mission in May 2004, the President told me that there would be an election at the end of the year, and rather than delaying APR until after the vote, Ghana would design a system that would not be affected by the election result,” said Dr Stals.

Ghana’s key APR infrastructure was therefore established not in the presiden-
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cy, a ministry or government depart-
ment. While Dr Francis Appiah — a
former senior technical advisor to
Ghana’s Nepad minister, Dr Kofi
Konadu Apraku — was designated as
the Ghanaian government’s focal point
(a communication conduit between
Midrand and the governing council), the
governing council was deliberately made
independent of government, to preserve
the integrity and autonomy of the
process. The seven-member NAPRM-
GC headed by Professor Samuel
Adjepong comprised credible, respected
individuals drawn exclusively from out-
side government, including prominent
academics, retired diplomats, distin-
guished lawyers, international consult-
ants and senior religious leaders.
“To ensure transparency and open-
ness, the governing council members
were of impeccable public standing,”
said NAPRM-GC member Professor
SKB Asante, “Its size made for econo-
my, flexibility and effective decision
making.”
The NAPRM-GC was afforded the
same status and legal protection from
government interference as the
Electoral Commission and Commission
for Human Rights and Administrative
Justice. Its members were not required
to swear the customary oath of alle-
giance to the president or government.
The governing council physically relo-
cated from Nepad Ministry premises to
offices elsewhere in Accra to underscore
its autonomy. The Council was support-
ed by an independent National APRM
Secretariat headed by an Executive
Secretary.
“The president made sure that the
governing council could do its work
outside of the political world,” said Dr
Stals.

Strong think tank model

“We had no template,” said Professor
SKB Asante. “We were a fore-runner
and so we had to break new ground and
be innovative.”
Confronting the complex demands of
the peer review exercise — making the
self-assessment questionnaire relevant and accessible to Ghanaians; including the voices and views of a diverse population; ensuring that the report was robust, accurate, credible and independent — one governing council innovation was to turn to Ghana’s top research institutions for assistance. Four Technical Review Teams were established in each of the four focus areas of the APR. The Center for Democratic Development headed the Democracy and Political Governance team, the Centre for Policy Analysis tackled the Economic Governance and Management material, Corporate Governance was analysed by the Private Enterprise Foundation, and the Socio-Economic Development section was the responsibility of the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research. Each of these respected think tanks eventually produced frank, rich, detailed reports of approximately 800 pages apiece.

“The four teams helped keep government at a distance,” Professor Asante explained. “They all had strong track records, autonomy, expertise, capacity and integrity. Many had showed leadership in advocacy and lobbying in civil society.”

Robust research

The researchers confronted tough questions. How does Ghana best evaluate itself? How should it adapt the often-vague and generic self-assessment questionnaire? How could they minimise speculation, allegation and bias? How could Ghanaians come to consensus on problems and solutions? And, most importantly, how would they keep the process transparent, fair and inclusive?

The Technical Review Teams developed a four-phase research process. The pre-field methodology entailed five strands: an education and sensitisation drive to inform and excite Ghanaians about APRM and foster a sense of ownership; coordinating and harmonising the methodological approaches of the four teams; identifying stakeholders; adapting the self-assessment questionnaire into a scientific survey instrument; and gathering information and data for the APR panel. Ghanaians managed to popularise the complex, unfamiliar and somewhat obscure concept of APRM. The governing council issued widely-distributed monthly newsletters updating the nation, and held well-publicised meetings across the country. The questionnaire was translated into indigenous languages, and APRM songs became radio hits. Special seminars were held to educate the media on APRM.

Dr Stals singled out Ghana’s effective sensitisation efforts. “Every time I landed in Ghana, I was met at the airport by several radio stations, TV crews and journalists,” he said. “They used my visit to promote APRM, but they also used themselves. The governing council members and Minister Apraku were very active in the media.”

The field methodology involved: elite surveys among experts with intensive knowledge about key governance issues in government, academia, the private sector and civil society; a mass household survey in all Ghana’s ten administrative regions to gather representative views; and focus group discussions with targeted groups (such as women, youth or people with disabilities) on particular questions.

The in-house methodology covered the internal operation of the research teams. It involved extensive desk research to review existing literature, and internal peer reviews where the teams criticised each other’s drafts.

Agyeman-Duah said, “We spent months putting the report together, day and night. You have to get the experts to gather the facts and analyse and get them to involve the people. There is no substitute for solid research.”

Finally, the post-field methodology served to test the findings generated in the first three phases. The drafts were subjected to a reality check. Technical experts interrogated the four draft reports, and the draft went through a “validation workshop” in February 2005, where a wide array of stakeholders — including government, unions, parliamentarians and businesspeople — compared the academic analysis to daily practice in Ghana.

“Ghana’s self-assessment report was candid,” said Change. “It had been developed by credible national civil society institutions. It was clear there weren’t any no-go areas.”

From self-assessment to peer review

Kufuor won a landslide in the December 2004 election, and with a renewed mandate, his government became more involved in owning Ghana’s APR programme of action, the document outlining solutions to the governance weaknesses identified.

“In the end the government committed strongly to the programme of action,” said Dr Stals, “and brought some practical sense to what was previously in some respects an ambitious, rather unrealistic wish-list generated by civil society. Government took full responsibility after the elections.”

A year after the inauguration of the governing council (and two years after signing the MOU), Ghana submitted its country’s self-assessment report to the APRM Secretariat, in March 2005. It consisted of a consolidated report, executive summary, the four technical reports as appendices, and a programme of action — amounting to about 2,000 pages. Government appended its comments to the national report, in accordance with APRM guidelines. Dr Stals led a 16-member country review team to Ghana, comprising mainly of people seconded from institutions such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Development Programme and African Development Bank to Ghana from 2-15 April 2005. They interacted with government, opposition parties, parliamentarians, civil society organisations, the media, academics, and professional bodies across the country, and concluded that the self-assessment was “technically competent,
Disappointingly, the Rwanda report was not presented to the Forum, as President Paul Kagame did not attend and his prime minister was not permitted to present on his behalf. Rwanda will therefore have to wait at least another six months until the next Forum.

Another frustration is that the Ghana APR report, now almost a year old, is yet to be formally released. There is some confusion over the reasons. The Panel feels that it should now be made public, having been presented to the Forum, but it may still take several more weeks or months to sort out protocol issues between the APRM and Nepad Secretariats and the African Union Commission, and to table the report at the Pan-African Parliament. Ghanaians and the world still wait to see what was written.

**Ten lessons learned**

1. Leadership matters: Ghana’s president was completely committed to APR, determined that Ghana should produce an honest report, and prepared to trust civil society to run the review.

2. Early civil society pressure delivers results: Although governments are usually better resourced and better prepared for APRM than non-governmental players, informed and vocal CSOs can exert most influence by lobbying early for a more inclusive and consultative process. Opportunities to change the dynamics diminish as systems solidify.

3. Independence lends credibility: Ghana’s report will be taken seriously because of the autonomy granted to its researchers and governing council.

4. Governing council must command respect: By choosing competent, respected, media-savvy, independent public figures, Ghana’s governing council had the trust of the people. However, public nominations would have been preferable to presidential selections.

5. Prepare the ground for APRM: Ghana’s efforts to raise awareness of and interest in APRM before embarking on the field research meant a more educated and receptive populace.

6. Sound methodology enhances quality: The mix of research approaches — combining education and sensitisation, eliciting expert views, undertaking broad household surveys, conducting exhaustive desk research, using focus groups; and validating and testing findings — ensured that Ghana’s report was accurate, fair and representative.

7. Participatory process fosters ownership: Ghana involved a wide range of its people in preparing and endorsing the country’s report. It advertised APRM events widely. People felt they owned the process.

8. Government must run with programme of action: While the researchers can sketch a programme of action, the line ministries affected must buy into the process.

9. Reconsider the peer review process at Forum level: The Ghana case shows that the APR Forum meetings need to be better planned and executed to make the peer review process more meaningful.

10. Reports must be released more quickly: The impetus and effect of APRM is lost when this crucial information remains out of the public domain for long periods. Although Ghana has set high standards, not all of its experiences and methodologies will be applicable and appropriate in other countries at different stages of development. However, it does offer excellent models to others wishing to follow.

Let me start by confessing before you that I feel like I am a real double contradiction. My contradictoriness is however not the normal one of a typical petty bourgeoisie who is caught somewhere between the real ruling class and the masses, and is by virtue of that position condemned to vacillate between the two main social forces. The class positioning of the petty bourgeoisie — and there are plenty of us everywhere in our society as the process of class formation accelerates with the advent of multi-racial constitutional democracy under a capitalist socio-economic formation — make them sway to and fro between the power wielding class and the disposed or marginalised classes on a continuous basis. The reason for this is that the insecure middle class is not poor enough to fully belong and identify with the masses and, at the same time, has very little or no real stake in the ownership and control capital and other important levers of power. He or she is very unstable socially, economically and politically due to his/her straddling position between the class of the rich and powerful on the one hand and the various strata of the toiling masses on the other.

The reasons why at this moment I feel like a contradiction first comes from the fact that I happen to be one of the so-called experts who have been commissioned by the African Peer Review Mechanism secretariat (APRM) to write a background paper for them on Democracy and Political Governance in South Africa. This is intellectually very challenging. However, I am part of this conversation and, as a citizen, I am equally committed to contribute to South Africa’s effort to develop a coherent and quality national self assessment report. The second source of my feeling like a contradiction is my role as the chairperson of the national panel of experts to advise government on the development of a regulatory policy framework on foreign ownership of land. The public hearings and submissions the panel organised throughout the country came up with strong suggestions that golf courses and estates, such as Fancourt where we are dinning to-night, should be discouraged because they are perceived to be undermining access to land for the ordinary citizens and promoting spatial racial and class apartheid. You may be aware that President Thabo Mbeki has also strong-
ly pronounced himself on the matter. I hope you now appreciate the sources of my contradictions and empathise with me!

I now turn to the substantive themes I chose to address and hope that they contribute favourably to your appetite tonight.

**Integrated governance**

The Hon. Minister Comrade Essop Pahad suggested — and many people hold the same view — that the masses on the ground are sometimes disenfranchised with performance of government at the local level. This might imply that the provincial and national spheres of government are not challenged in a similar manner. He also indicated that some local government structures do not have independent sources of generating their own revenue and this affects their capacity to deliver services. My considered opinion is that in the real consciousness of most ordinary citizens, there is one state and one government in South Africa, and that the ruling party is the African National Congress. If everyone in the public service or who holds a political position in government would understand this and approach their responsibilities accordingly, it is likely that they would develop a common purpose of service and a sense of individual and collective responsibility to the public. They would know that the strength of any chain lies in its weakest link. The strength of the state and government in South Africa depends and relies on all the three spheres of government functioning optimally. If one sphere is weak, it affects the potential and performance of the whole. Of course, snap opinion polls taken around particular incidents may give the impression that the citizens evaluate the performance of the different spheres of government separately. But we must delve deeper. It is from this perspective that I strongly believe that everyone who is in government or state employ must acquaint themselves not only with the division of responsibilities among the three spheres as stated in Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution, but also with a sense of collective responsibility and accountability. Where one has no institutional competence they must know the precise location in government that can serve the particular need of the citizen — and direct the citizen there instead of passing the buck or expressing ignorance.

As far as lack of revenue in certain municipalities is concerned, those poor structures should not necessarily be blamed. Rather, the constitutional and legislated principles requiring equitable and fair sharing of the national cake should be interpreted responsibly and applied accordingly. If this is not done there will be uneven development that may lead to instability.

**Non-partisanship**

Linked to, but distinct from, the issue of collective responsibility of the spheres and structures of government and state is the challenge many people seem to have with the notions of political neutrality and non-partisanship in carrying out government and state responsibilities. Let me hasten here that I do not necessarily blame them. After all, favouritism and partisanship were cultures carried over from the erstwhile colonial and apartheid past. Many perhaps, thought that by defeating apartheid and assuming power, the state and the party would be used to advance those who support the regime in power. Many find the new constitutional order constraining their narrow personal interests and ambitions. One possible remedy for this disease of false consciousness is for the ANC to take the lead is providing effective political education to its members. Since 1994 the ANC has become even a broader church than it was. This might explain the ANC’s reluctance to relinquish their stranglehold on the office of the presidency. The rest of the population is not any better. Those in the public service and administration also need political education and consciousness — to enable them to make informed decisions in providing services to the public without unfair discrimination.

**The reality of capital**

The third issue I want to address is the reality we have of living and operating in a capitalist economy, with its attendant class-based relations of production and other associated forms of societal organisation. The implication of this is that the state, even a developmental state like ours, is limited in what it can do to address the socio-economic and cultural needs of society. The state as a state can do a lot. However, the state is also dependent on its ability to regulate and pressure the private sector and the rest of society to play progressive developmental roles. The sense I get is that the state is pushing players who are generally reluctant. Even with progressive legislation such as the Employment Equity Act, Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act and the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, one does not see the accompanying patriotism similar to what the young man, Roland Schoeman, demonstrated when he declined the multimillion dollar offer to compete for Qatar instead of his mother/ fatherland, South Africa. Long centuries of slavery, colonialism and apartheid racism fractured, dismembered and traumatised the people. The project of building a nation in South Africa is a daunting historical project that will take a long time to achieve. It has just begun and all must play their part.

**Broader context**

The fourth issue is the need to contextualise the APRM. Essentially the APRM is one of the mechanisms and tools of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). There are many who embark on implementing the
APRM without bothering to understand NEPAD and its identity within the reforming African regional system, as led by the African Union. The APRM is seeking to contribute to a new paradigm shift in the way we pursue the interrelated and interdependent goals of political and corporate governance as well as economic and social development. It requires understanding the role of the state, regional economic communities and the international order. Above all, meaningful engagement with the APRM requires appreciation of the objectives and principles of the African Union and its institutional architecture as well as the larger vision, mission and spirit of African Renaissance. Principles such as peace, gender parity in leadership positions, non-acceptance of unconstitutional changes of government and the imperative for collective intervention to stop or prevent genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity needs to be understood.

Unfortunately, those of us who were involved at the initial stages in conceptualising the operationalisation of the review processes for the APRM seem to have overlooked an important dimension — namely cultural dimensions of development. I believe that in future, we shall not be called upon to assess and judge ourselves only on the current four areas: political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance, and socio-economic development. All regions of the world that have progressed and that we need to learn from have all relied on the strength of their diverse and unique cultural heritages and identities. Africa and people of African descent, the Diaspora, shall not progress as a people if they remain mere copycats and imitators of other civilisations. We must revoke and rely on the spirit of innovation and creativity as well as values that characterised Africa from the times of the cradles of humankind through the great civilisations of the Nile Valley and the great kingdoms and empires that dotted the continent before European and Arabian slavery and colonialism.

Conclusion

Last but not least, I strongly believe that the APRM process that we are involved in can and should be transformative. The process was conceived and is designed to bring fundamental changes in the relationship between states, governments and the people they govern, as well as changes in the way people relate to each other. It is designed to make participatory governance substantive and real. Civil society ought to emerge from the process understanding that they are part and parcel of governance and government has to know its potential and limits. Above all governments need and depends on its people and the people need and depend on their government. At the African Union level, the establishment of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council is expected to have the same effect.
The early 1990s was a period of profound social and political changes in South Africa. It was against this background that the King Committee on Corporate Governance was set up in 1992. Corporate governance in South Africa received heightened attention and the King Committee’s work culminated in the publication of the King Report on Corporate Governance in 1994.

The adoption of a new Constitution and consequent overhaul of legislation necessitated the revision of the King Report, and the second King Report was published in 2002. The purpose of the King Report is to promote the highest standards of corporate governance in South Africa.

The King Report (2002) Code applies only to certain categories of companies. These are companies listed on the JSE; banks, financial and insurance entities; public sector enterprises falling under the Public Finance Management Act (No. 1 of 1999) [PFMA] and the Local Government; Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 56 of 2003), including any state department acting in terms of the Constitution or legislation.

Another important document on corporate governance in South Africa is the Public Finance Management Act (No. 1 of 1999). In the public sector, the PFMA plays an important role in regulating good corporate governance practices. The PFMA aims to secure transparency, accountability, and sound management of the revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities of the institutions to which the Act applies. This Act applies to, among others, constitutional institutions such as the Electoral Commission (IEC), major public entities and national and provincial government departments.

South Africa has played an important role in the rest of the continent since 1994. A key activity was its participation in the establishment of New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). The vision of NEPAD is to chart a course for African countries which will lead to sustainable economic growth. There is therefore a challenge to establish a framework for well-governed public and private enterprises which will in turn be the driving force behind this economic growth. The issue of corporate governance has therefore now achieved a place on the continental stage.

In an effort to promote good corporate governance AU member states have adopted five broad objectives:

- Promoting an enabling environment and effective regulatory framework for economic activities;
- Ensuring that corporations act as good corporate citizens with regard to human rights, social responsibility and environmental sustainability;
- Promoting adoption of codes of good business ethics in achieving the objectives of the corporation;
• Ensuring that corporations treat all their stakeholders including shareholders, employees, communities and suppliers fairly; and
• Providing for accountability of corporations, directors and officers.

It is these objectives which will form the basis for the evaluation of South Africa’s performance in terms of corporate governance.

Characteristics of good governance

Good corporate governance is marked by seven characteristics: discipline, transparency, independence, accountability, fairness and social responsibility.

These characteristics should be present when one scrutinises the prevalent practices in the structures which comprises the governance models of business enterprises.

The board and the CEO

A lot of the discussion of corporate governance practices centres on the role of the board of directors. It is ultimately the responsibility of the board to ensure good corporate governance. The board has many important functions which include strategy development and execution.

The corporate governance process involves certain key activities. These are (i) giving strategic long-term direction for the future of the enterprise, (ii) taking crucial executive decisions, (iii) monitoring and overseeing management performance, and (iv) responding to those who have legitimate demands for accountability.

The board of directors owe their duty to the company and are accountable to shareholders and not to all stakeholders. The board however is responsible for maintaining relationships with all stakeholders in order to achieve the corporate objectives.

The directors have generally accepted responsibilities. These include:
• The fiduciary duty of being trustworthy in acting in the best interests of those whom the director represents;
• The duty of loyalty and duty of fair dealing;
• The duty of care, which means acting carefully in carrying out responsibilities;
• The duty not to entrench; and
• The duty of supervision.

It is therefore important that the board and its committees must include the right skills, attitudes and that the company’s governance structure should have the appropriate safeguards. In the context of a heterogeneous society such as South Africa, it is also important to ensure demographic diversity on the board.

There is some evidence to support the view that a strong executive director who is not distracted by a board dominated by independent non-executive directors can deliver favourable results. A study of the Australian Stock Exchange found that of 145 companies, the companies that had predominantly independent boards produced lower return to shareholders and lower levels of sales growth.

However, more research suggests that companies which employ good corporate governance practices overall are those which have a clear majority of independent directors on their boards. It is therefore recommended that a board should not have more than two non-independent directors and that there should be no non-independent directors on the audit, nominating and compensation committees.

An independent director is a non-executive director who is not:
• A representative of a shareholder with the ability to control management;
• Employed by the company for the preceding three years;
• A professional advisor to the company, e.g., someone who draws consulting or legal fees from the company; and
• A significant supplier or customer of the company.

In addition, independent directors have no contractual relationships with the companies on whose boards they serve and are free from relationships which could interfere with their capacity to act in an independent manner.

Good boards will include, at least, one independent director with experience in the company’s core business and, at least, one CEO of a company of similar size and stature. The well-governed company will ensure that, at least, one independent director with financial or accounting experience serves on the audit committee.

Furthermore, interlocking directorships are discouraged. This would be a situation where, for example, a CEO of one company sits on the board of another company and the CEO of that company sits on the board of the first one.

At the same time, the directors should have a significant stake in the company and may receive a large proportion of their pay in the form of share options.

Companies which practice good corporate governance also follow formal processes of evaluation of directors and are responsive to investor requests for information on governance issues.

The quality of the directors should be above question. They should not be overcommitted and should attend, at least, 75 percent of board meetings. Well-governed companies have boards that meet, at least, four times a year and an audit committee that meets, at least, three times a year.

One of the challenges that boards often face is the question of other directorships held by board members. As a rule, other directorships should not interfere with the immediate responsibilities of an executive director. Directors should also not sit on the boards of rival companies. Other directorships should be limited in number so as to ensure that companies enjoy the full benefit of their expertise. In Kenya, for example, the limit is five board appointments. In South Africa, three directors hold six directorships each and another five directors hold five directorships each. Elsewhere it is suggested that fully employed directors should not sit on more than three boards.

As has been indicated above, the com-
position of the board is a matter of crucial importance. Central to this is the people involved and how they were appointed to the board. Procedures for board appointments should be formal and transparent. Typically the board as a whole takes responsibility for these procedures though they might sometimes use a nomination committee.

As in any organisation, continuity of membership is very important for a board. For this reason staggered rotation is recommended and incoming directors must receive adequate formal orientation. At the same time, incompetent and unsuitable directors should be removed.

The personalities and styles of the chairperson of the board and the CEO will also affect the functioning of the board. The dominance of either can have a detrimental effect on the ability of the board to execute its functions. The question of the balance of power and authority is therefore an important one to resolve. Caution should be taken to avoid an individual or bloc from dominating the board’s decision-making.

The relationship between the board and management is an important one and one that will often be tested. Ultimately it is the board that chooses the CEO. Its responsibility does not end there though. The board:

- Delegates to the CEO the responsibility for running the company;
- Seeks to understand and approves the CEO’s strategies and plans;
- Monitors the execution of plans and evaluates results; and
- Decides when and how it should intervene.

Through all its actions the board must find the balance between being active and interfering. It is incumbent on the board to intervene:

- Based on past events, i.e., unsatisfactory results;
- Based on views of the future; and
- Loss of confidence in the CEO;
- It is important for the board to remain independent. The independence of the board is tested through;
- The administration of the CEO and executive performance appraisals and compensation;
- The willingness to question and — if necessary — overrule management recommendations; and
- The effectiveness of the auditing function.

Generally speaking, boards can fail in their duties in a number of ways. These include:

- Conspiring in or tolerating legal violations;
- Presiding over poor results which earn the dissatisfaction of shareholders;
- Lack of leadership, which could include dominance by the CEO;
- Political or personality conflicts; and
- Ineffective board organisation and processes.

It should be pointed out that many of the principles applicable to business companies can also be translated to constitutional institutions and the public sector as a whole. While there are some differences, the division of roles between the executive authority and accounting officer is broadly comparable to those of a board of directors and a CEO.

The relationship is more complex though and requires hard work on the part of all public sector entities to ensure the successful implementation of good corporate governance practices. In the case of some constitutional institutions, for example, commissioners are appointed by parliament. These commissioners are not executive officers. Their role and functions are also not limited to those of a board of directors of a private company. It therefore requires great dedication from the commission- ers and the CEO to define roles which will work best, bearing in mind the requirements of the PFMA and the broader principles of good governance.

In addition, the roles of commissioners appointed to constitutional institutions are bound to be subject to some tension. While appointed and held to account by parliament they are also expected to oversee and monitor the executive functions of the state. They also have the duty to ensure that the ruling party does not benefit unfairly from being in office.

In summary, the requirement for good corporate governance in the public sector — and of constitutional institutions, in particular - is more demanding and of a very intricate nature.

Independent auditors

The independence of auditors is crucial to good corporate governance. Questions about the independence of auditors arise especially when there is a long close association with the company by key partners and staff of the audit firm or when partners and staff of the audit firm have equity holdings in the company.

In addition, the use of the non-audit service of the auditing firm can pose serious risks. Such inappropriate assignments could include appointment to the dual functions of internal and external auditors, major consulting engagements for the design or implementation of important information systems; or assignments to act as legal representa- tives. The PFMA, in addition, requires the establishment of audit committees of which the majority of the membership must be external.

Disclosure of non-financial information

Increasingly good corporate governance practices are being seen in the broader context to include non-financial matters. Such matters include the role that companies play in society, e.g., investment in human and intellectual capital.

Effective framework for economic activities

There is a strong framework in place to ensure good corporate governance in South Africa. Recently though, Mervin King warned against a “tick-box approach” to governance by some boards. Even boards which adhere to all the guidelines can still fail as was the case with Enron in the USA.

It is therefore the quality and morali-
ty of the individuals on a board and in the company that play an instrumental role in ensuring good governance practices. What might be important to consider here is the professional development of individuals to take up positions as directors, company secretaries and internal auditors.

In particular, it has been noted that there is a shortage of truly independent non-executive directors in South Africa. As a result of higher levels of compliance required from boards, individuals are less likely to risk financial harm or to compromise their reputations by serving on boards. In addition, as companies begin to restrict outside board service for executive directors, the pool of talented independent directors will shrink.

There seems to be a lack of adequate attention to the induction and training of directors. This gap also exists in some public sector institutions. The need to develop and keep in supply a cohort of independent directors is therefore imperative. This is especially true in cases where directors are required to have specialist knowledge such as those who serve on the audit committee of a board.

**Good corporate citizens.**

The issues on the transformation agenda are complex and varied. They include employment equity, skills development, diversity management, BEE, and corporate social investment. The increasing emphasis in this area is warranted. In particular, greater attention should be paid to the issues of gender equality and corporate social responsibility. The importance of this is the need to ensure that companies do not only respond to their direct investors but also to the broader society in which they operate and that they contribute to social development. This serves the interests of companies in that it promotes greater stability and breaks down the divisions which led to conflict under the previous political dispensation.

The transformation agenda is therefore truly the next level when it comes to corporate governance. Space for improvement exists. The release last year of the first of the BEE Codes of Good Practice is therefore an important step to fill the gap.

**Business ethics**

The King Report (2002) favours an increase in shareholder activism though it is conceded that remedies available to aggrieved shareholders are limited. Criminal action is possible in only some cases and civil action is rare because of the costs of litigation. One of the preventive remedies that the state can implement is a register of delinquent directors.

**Fair treatment**

As suggested above, shareholder activism levels are not very high in South Africa. Shareholder activism brings its own set of challenges especially as they might relate to labour relations and full disclosure and if they are linked to shareholder dissatisfaction with internal matters of the board such as board entrenchment or overcommitted directors who hold multiple directorships.

**Accountable corporations**

The concept of a unitary board — consisting of both executive and non-executive directors — is the favoured board structure in South Africa. The application of this principle should also be extended more widely into the public sector to ensure that boards or equivalent governing structures are composed of a healthy mix of people from inside and outside the sector.

However, there is a need to strengthen mechanisms to ensure effective monitoring of the actions of directors. The effective monitoring of directors and officers is a complex issue. For example, board members of LeisureNet incurred an R18.5 million fine as a result of acting on incorrect information which was fed to them by the chief executives of the company. At the heart of all of this is the need for governing structures to engage in intense periodic self-evaluations. This should be made applicable to the board as a whole as well as to individual board members.

**Conclusion**

There can be little doubt that South Africa has stringent requirements to which both private companies and public sector enterprises must adhere if they are to claim to be successful implementers of good corporate governance practices. The present dispensation is in fact a tougher regime than what prevailed prior to 1994.

Various challenges remain though as can be seen by some high-profile corruption cases. In addition, negative public perceptions seem to linger and are reinforced by tools such as the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions index.

The hard work that remains is to translate the various codes of good practice into action. To this end we have to develop the necessary human capital that will not only populate the governing structures but will also continue to strengthen the good framework that is in place.
The Auditor-General (AG) supports constitutional democracy by auditing and reporting on the accounts, financial statements and the financial management of all national and provincial state departments, municipalities and any other institution or entity required by national or provincial legislation to be audited by the AG. Auditing comprises various aspects, such as regularity auditing, performance auditing, special investigations and performance of agreed upon procedures.

Regularity auditing comprises financial auditing and compliance with laws and regulations and currently the AG allocates the majority of its resources on doing regularity audits. This means that the AG focuses most of its resources towards ensuring that the money spent is on the intended purpose, and not generally in relation to the effectiveness and performance of an entity. As entities develop and financial controls improve and mature, the intention is to shift focus towards auditing the effectiveness, efficiency and the economy of the public sector.

Performance auditing is still at its infancy world-wide and research is underway to improve it. The AG’s intention is to increase the focus on performance auditing. For the 2006/07 financial year the AG budgeted 7 percent of its resources on auditing performance information. However, the effectiveness of performance auditing can only be achieved if the entity has implemented effective internal control systems and is able to produce information that is correct, accurate and reliable. Only then can an entity really succeed in setting pre-determined performance measures and monitor their achievement successfully.

The AG’s activities are governed by the Public Audit Act which replaced the Auditor-General Act and the Audit Arrangements Act on 1 April 2004. The main purpose of the Public Audit Act is to allow the AG greater authority in performing the audits, increased decision power over the auditing of public entities and clarity on the type of audit services that could be provided. The AG is also governed by the Public Finance
Management Act (PFMA) and the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA).

The PFMA and the MFMA set specific deadlines for the AG within which all audits have to be finalised. Obviously, finalising the audits in time depends on receiving accurate and complete financial records, supported by adequate audit evidence. Experience has shown that evidence supporting the financial statements is not in all cases adequate and could in some cases strictly be regarded as financial misconduct on the part of the relevant Accounting Officers in terms of legislation.

The credibility of the AG depends to a large extent on the independence from management of the entity on whose financial statements are examined. Its independence is entrenched in the Constitution, and it is also recognised in the code of professional conduct of the auditing profession. However, regardless of the fact that the AG’s independence is entrenched in the Constitution, we are constantly striving to manage our independence and not to be perceived as not to be independent.

I have indicated that specific questions have been asked as part of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) self-assessment process. The first question relates to how are we doing as a country in meeting the five broad objectives that were adopted by the Heads of State and Heads of Government to guide corporate governance reform in the continent? The objectives in question are the following:

- NEPAD Framework Document (2001);
- Principles of Corporate Governance (OECD and Commonwealth);
- International Accounting Standards;
- International Standards on Auditing;
- Core principles of Effective Banking Supervision;
- Core principles of Securities and Insurance Supervision and Regulations;
- African Charter on Human and People’s Rights; and

The last question is about the extent to which these standards and codes (which are universal codes governing corporate behaviour) have been developed, implemented and enforced in our country?

As can be seen these questions are quite broad and cover a variety of areas that can only be answered with extensive research on a variety of disciplines both in the public and private sector. The AG cannot be expected to talk with authority on all questions raised by the questionnaire other than public sector auditing and related areas. Therefore, in attempting to answer the questions the AG is guided by the mandate and role the institution plays in the public sector, work that has been done to fulfil such mandate and the resulting findings based on the work done.

Self-assessment

Based on the summary above, it is therefore necessary to re-phrase the question in such a manner that they address only those areas that the AG can talk to with authority and can support based on the work conducted. The questions stated above are therefore re-phrased to specifically deal with corporate governance in the public sector as follows:
• How is the South African public sector doing in meeting the five broad objectives that were adopted by the Heads of State and Government to guide corporate governance reform in the continent?
• How is the South African public sector doing in adopting the standards and codes adopted by the Heads of State and Government as suggestive guides for corporate government reform in the continent?
• To what extent have these standards and codes (which are universal codes governing corporate behaviour) been developed, implemented and enforced in the South African public sector?
In this next section, I discuss the AG’s responses to the objectives and standards and codes contained in the questionnaire respectively.

Enabling environment
In this area, the public sector is generally doing quite well. There are mainly two pieces of legislation that are key and fundamental instruments of corporate governance — the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) or the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA). The majority of government entities are governed by these pieces of legislation. The PFMA and MFMA are highly regarded world-wide and incorporate many good practices. There are other pieces of legislation and regulations to support the PFMA and the MFMA. For example, Treasury Regulations are issued in terms of the PFMA and provide for more detail on the financial management of departments and public entities, while the Municipal Systems Act and the Municipal Structures Act provide for additional aspects to the MFMA.

Public Sector entities such as departments, constitutional institutions and listed public entities are subject to the requirements of the PFMA of 1999, which came into effect on 1 April 2000. A significant portion of the PFMA deals with the establishment and functioning of the National Treasury and the preparation of budgets. The general principles of the PFMA deal at some length with accounting and reporting issues and are based on its objectives being to secure transparency, accountability, sound management of the revenue expenditure, assets and liabilities of entities to which it applies. PFMA provides for the establishment of an Accounting Standards Board which has the responsibility of setting standards of generally recognised accounting practice (GRAP) for the financial statements of state departments, public entities, constitutional institutions, municipalities and boards, commissions, companies and corporations.

Corporate governance protocol
The Department of Public Enterprises has issued a document, Governance in the Public Sector, which sets out the principles to be applied by National Public Entities as defined in the PFMA. The protocol is applicable to entities listed in Schedules 2 and 3 (B) and (D) to the PFMA, as well as unlisted public entities that are subsidiaries of the public entity, whether listed or not. The reporting requirements of the protocol go beyond those of the PFMA. The protocol sets challenging standards of corporate conduct, which are considerably more stringent than those for private sector companies.

Good corporate citizens
The AG has undertaken limited work in this area. Auditing of aspects such as human rights, social responsibility and environmental sustainability is difficult because it borders on the auditing of performance information. For this to effectively take place requires two things. Firstly, that financial management and systems need to be at a level where they produce credible and reliable information. Secondly, performance measures against which performance will be measured must be set upfront. Based on the general outcomes of our audits, we do think that the public sector has a few challenges in this regard. We do however acknowledge that government is doing some work to develop the necessary framework to assist with measuring performance information.

Business ethics
The main tool that the public sector uses to measure this is the extent to which companies comply with the recommendations of the King Report on Corporate Governance. The King Report also covers public sector enterprises and agencies that fall under the PFMA and the MFMA, including any department of State or administration in the national, provincial or local sphere of government. Albert only a guide, the King Report contains specific examples and good practices to promote good business ethics.

It is also quite important to note how some of the key recommendations of the King Report also feature on the main legislation covering the public sector. The establishment of Audit Committees, the Internal Audit Function, and Risk Management are some of the key tools of Corporate Governance that the public sector has adopted.

Fair treatment of all stakeholders
Our assessment of this particular objective varies depending on the context and stakeholder concerned. In the context of regularity audits, most of the work done here focuses on the testing of compliance with the law. An example of this is payment of suppliers. From a supplier’s point of view, late payment by government for services rendered might simply be regarded as unfair and detrimental to business from a cash flow point of view, particularly for small business. But from a compliance point of view, the PFMA says the accounting officer must ensure that all contractual obligations are settled within “the prescribed or agreed period”. In fact, in terms of the Treasury Regulations creditors should be paid within 30 days. This is not always
adhered to by government departments and from the point of view of corporate governance, this is not only bad, but against the law and exposes government to potential litigation by aggrieved parties.

Over the past few years the AG has issued general reports on audit outcomes for national departments, provincial departments, public entities and municipalities. In these reports key areas have been identified which need attention to ensure that the public sector deliver on its mandate. Whilst the issues identified have been a result of the general audit mandate that the AG carries and have not been specifically conducted to answer the question raised on the objective directly, we do think that other findings contained in the reports can be useful in assessing the extent to which government acts fairly towards its stakeholders in the context of financial management. The main areas where entities continually have weaknesses are asset management, internal audit and audit committees, procurement, personnel expenditure and information and communication systems.

**Accountable corporations and directors**

In the case of the public sector, this objective should be read as the state, government and government officials. In the context of what the AG does, accountability is at the core of its existence. The AG exists to facilitate accountability of all tiers of government and public entities.

There are various accountability mechanisms in place to ensure that the public sector in general is accountable, particularly in regard to use of financial resources. The first mechanism is preparation of a strategic plan and budget which are debated publicly and approved in parliament. Legislation like the IPMA and MFMA also exist mainly to facilitate accountability. These pieces of legislation provide for specific deadlines, which ensure that the financial statements are submitted timeously to the AG for auditing. The AG is also given specific time scales to "audit and report" on the financial statements which should be tabled to parliament within a specified time frame.

The implementation of internal audit and audit committees are other mechanisms aimed at improving accountability. However, the AG's concern over the past few years has been that these mechanisms have not yet been fully functional and not as effective as intended. This may be due to a lack of resources such as financial support, skills and staff. Based on the audit report and findings contained, the Standing Committee of Public Accounts (SCOPA) will prioritise hearings for departments and in some cases public entities.

The AG participates in SCOPA committee meetings, where it scrutinises the financial affairs of a specific entity. The accounting officer is required to answer specific questions and provide reasons and explanations for specific shortcomings at his or her department. A key document during this process is the AG's audit report since it provides SCOPA with the basis from which to determine questions to be asked particularly regarding the shortcomings identified. SCOPA meetings are in fact providing another key platform for accountability by government to the legislature. There are similar committees at provincial level, referred to as Provincial Public Account Committees. I might also add that Section 129 of the MFMA provides for the establishment and functioning of public accounts or oversight committees. This is another important mechanism, aimed at improving accountability at local government level.

**Standards and codes**

In the field of accounting and auditing specifically, South Africa has done very well to ensure that international standards and codes are adopted, implemented and enforced. The South African Accounting Standards have been substantially harmonised with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Companies have begun implementing the IFRS standards.

For the public sector, the AG has also adopted the South African Auditing Standards and is also in the phase of adjusting to the international standards.

**Public sector**

In the public sector, there are various accounting standards that have been adopted. For example departments use a modified cash-basis of accounting, referred to as Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP); public entities prepare financial statements using the GAAP which is based on the International Financial Reporting Standards, while municipalities prepare financial statements on either Institute for Municipal Finance Officers (IMFO), Generally Accepted Municipal Accounting Practice (GAMAP) or GRAP. There are specific challenges that result from the use of different standards by the various entities particularly when it comes to the preparation of consolidated financial statements. The AG, National Treasury and the Accounting Standards Board have over the past number of years been working together to research and improve the accounting standards used in the public sector. The AG participated in this process to improve accountability, although certain measures were implemented to maintain our independence.

**Conclusion**

As can be seen from our assessment above, the South African public sector has come a long way in the journey of continuously improving corporate governance and accountability. We consider this as a journey. Some areas need more attention than others. As the AG we will continue to play our part to ensure that Corporate Governance, accountability and transparency are improved in the public sector.
The views contained in this presentation are drawn from my personal experiences on how those of us in the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the civil society sector are impacted upon at a micro-level by government and private sector policies.

I make my comments as well by taking encouragement from comments by Professor Shadrack Gutto who said that the self-assessment prompted by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process should, at best, leave us as South Africans transformed. In other words, it should usher in a beginning from which we could do things in a better way or a little differently.

He also said the APRM is not just about government and the private sectors. It invites all organs of society to review or self-assess their respective performances over the past 11 years and, on the basis of their findings, begin to do things differently towards achieving South African, continental and international developmental goals.

The socio-development section of the APRM is intended to highlight efforts and progress made in designing appropriate policies and delivery mechanisms in key social development areas and to propose a programme of action. In my experience, there have been serious shortcomings in the design of pro-poor policies as well as the design mechanisms in several key areas that range from finance, housing and water delivery.

Through processes leading to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), South Africa produced clearly articulated pro-poor programmes which inspired many of us in civil society to design and begin programmes that would assist our government to reach out to the poorest sectors of our community with a variety of development services. We expected to do this in partnership with government in terms of policies, regulation and funding. The expectation from government, which had such a strong commitment to poverty alleviation, included a pro-poor regulatory environment that would promote the development of community-based organizations and NGOs.

It is widely accepted that while NGOs may not have the same reach as government, they have the ability to reach isolated communities more speedily and can be innovative in designing programmes that are responsive to local needs. Government responses are
understandably slow as a result of processes of regulation, legislation and budgeting, which take time. In many instances when NGOs have shown what can be done, government is able to then take over the spreading out of programmes because NGOs cannot be responsible for social services. NGOs are a support system.

There was also an expectation that institutions or agencies would be created to serve exclusively the needs of the poor and even boost traditional survival institutions, such as stokvels, that promoted self-reliance and social cohesion.

It was also hoped that developmental colleges would sprout throughout the country and that they would produce agricultural extension workers, community development workers and artisans, amongst other.

Appropriate skills training and human resources management are perhaps even more critical currently due to the fact that the new government denuded the NGO sector of practically all its leadership and operational skills. Very little was done to replace this layer of civil society workers among the people. This was also probably as a result of lack of clarity in terms of the role of civil society organization in a post-Apartheid South Africa. We expected a resource base far beyond the welfare grants but a specific developmental fund because we were creating a developmental state and not a welfare state.

Poor people are regarded by traditional economists as consequences of a market failure, which implies that they are under-resourced. We expected all these things but many of them did not happen. I think it is because government at the time recognised that South Africa was a two-nation society, with one sector wealthy, and mainly white and male, and the other one poor, mainly black, and female.

It took much longer for government to recognize and admit that these two are products of two economies, one highly developed and resourced and supported by appropriate institutions and a legal framework, while the other, was poorly developed with no supporting institutions and legal infrastructure. In a universalist policy approach that government took, there was an understanding that there are two nations operating within one economy. It was never a question of first and second economy.

The two sectors, or nations, are expected to operate within one economy and regulatory frameworks, perhaps with variations and exemptions here and there to accommodate members of the second economy.

The universalist policy approach, however, does not adequately make provision for the needs of specific programmes that are run by the poor. For instance, many women’s groups that we worked with had no residential address or post-boxes which they are required to have these when they open bank accounts as per Financial Intelligence Centre Act (FICA) requirements. This is because the universalist approach does not ring-fence the needs and programmes of the poor and as a result marginalises them, which is why interventions that are aimed at the poor, for example micro-lending, end up being dominated by the very established banks that are often prejudicial to the needs of the poor.

Services for the poor have to be targeted. We need to ring-fence beneficiaries by identifying who the poor are, so that we can be able to properly target them. Any programme that is open to the poor, the not-so-poor and the wealthy will exclude the poor because the others rush in faster than the poor. A case in point is the issue of micro-finance which was so open to the extent that it unwittingly excluded the pro-poor micro-lending groupings. This was the reason why we fought for five years for a different fund that was eventually approved.

What also needs to be looked at as well in terms of the programme of action is the recognition of the skills of the poor. A lot has been said about the lack of capacity and skills in the second economy. However the fact of the matter is that there are skills that are not recognised.

The credit bill, for example, excludes the poorest as it requires people to have assets as a pre-requisite to access to credit. The opposite applies in the pro-poor micro-lending sector - we provide credit to the poorest and asset-less on the basis of the fact that they do have some skills for self or community development.

In conclusion, I want to comment on South Africa’s rising Welfare Bill, which is one of the best on the continent, surpassed only by Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. However we should watch that government is not putting itself in danger - what happens in a situation where government is unable to provide these services as a result of an economic crisis?

Another issue that has to be noted by way of conclusion is the whole notion of mainstreaming of women’s issues that has had the consequences of removing resources. We often say that women are the poorest, that they need the most affirmative action and yet (when it comes to the implementation of affirmative action policies) we mainstream issues that affect them by not putting dedicated funding for women empowerment.
Richard Levin, the Director-General of DPSA, says that research in the public service should be considered from a creative, dynamic perspective that is not traditionally defined.

When compared to academic research, public service research is often theoretically weak. It often lacks rigour in its choice and use of methods. It is also very inconsistent in terms of quality. I therefore propose that public service research should selectively adopt certain academic practices. These practices could include: protocols for testing innovations, making use of peer reviews, using standard proposal and report formats and ensuring sources are acknowledged.

Public service research is close to action research (AR) in that it also draws on a multidisciplinary and customised approach. However, it usually does not have the sensitivity to processes that characterize action research. It also does not have action research’s freedom to explore and investigate, especially since its outcomes are often predefined.

In practice most public service research is seen as a separate activity divorced from programme management. This is mainly because it is mostly driven by short-term priorities and conceptualised without theoretical foundations. As a result, it is usually outsourced to service providers. This often happens without attempts to build internal capacity to lead or even participate in such research. However, most worrying is that research findings are often not disseminated and thus inaccessible.

**Research for implementation**

Research needs to be seen as something done by everyone involved in programmes. This is because research is important for planning since it should
provide the knowledge base on which operations function. Clear knowledge requirements and standards for planning would improve the quality of programme and implementation plans and would ensure they are realistic and achievable.

It should be noted that implementation often falters because reality does not match expectations. This is the case also because assumptions turn out to be invalid. This is where research is more useful. It should support implementation and provide implementers with an ongoing reality check. This should compel them to adjust activities as required. Research in this instance is therefore, often simply making reflective use of thoughtful reports.

I must say that monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is often unjustifiably mystified and treated as an add-on in the area of public service research. Practical, useful M&E is another form of research that should give policy planners and coalface implementers useful information. It needs to be part of the everyday management cycle and integrated into it on a practical basis.

Knowledge management (KM) is an overarching approach that could support a public service research strategy. It entails the systematic and sustained capturing of knowledge, including the tacit and implicit, and making it available to those needing it. Despite often being seen as an information technology solution, knowledge management is about people and the organisational set-up in which they work.

**Public service research strategy**

I want to propose the adoption of a formal, written public service research strategy for widespread adoption by government departments. This strategy should be based on principles drawn from South Africa’s Constitution. It should also include perating principles such as accessibility, accountability, ethics and communication.

The overall strategic approach should be based on an open framework without barriers to entry and should be based on cooperative partnerships with other stakeholders. Its key elements should be defining procedures and standards and ensuring findings are shared and taken into account. This strategy, I may also add, should not involve new structures, but should use existing bodies and make creative use of information communications technology.

The strategy needs to speak directly to the needs of its role-players. To make sure this is the case it must be based on thorough research that identifies stakeholders’ needs and their preferred solutions. Like any strategy, it needs a guardian or champion. We need to think about who could play this essential role. A body with research as its core think about who could play this essential role. A body with research as its core function must be created.

The research strategy should be that researchers should give policy planners and coalface implementers useful information. It needs to be part of the everyday management cycle and integrated into it on a practical basis.

Knowledge management (KM) is an overarching approach that could support a public service research strategy. It entails the systematic and sustained capturing of knowledge, including the tacit and implicit, and making it available to those needing it. Despite often being seen as an information technology solution, knowledge management is about people and the organisational set-up in which they work.

**Weak methodologies**

Public service research is characterised by an inadequate analysis of methodologies and the choice of research tools. Survey’s questionnaires and review formats are often structured without due reference to original plans and objectives. Research tools developed by others outside the public service are used. This makes every study conducted within the public service a baseline instead of updating existing data. Longitudinal perspectives are impossible in this strategy.

The notorious and unproductive ‘self-completed questionnaire’ is over-used in public service research. Many studies conducted by the public service are inaccurate because information submitted by research subjects is rarely verified. Linked to this, is that less imposing techniques such as self and peer assessments are undermined. This suggests a lack of regard for those researched. Furthermore, findings are often not shared with research subjects, which creates a form of ‘knowledge imperialism’.

One of the results of a public service strategy should be that researchers develop an awareness of their methodological options and choices. The strategy should also encourage methodological triangulation wherever possible. Moreover, it should encourage streamlined and integrated research to overcome the sense of being under constant scrutiny felt in many institutions. There is also a need to record experiences so that good practices can be identified and promoted. This will have the effect of improving the methodological practices used in public service research. This is knowledge management in practice and is essential for excellence.

In conclusion, I want to point out that building learning organisations in the public service is the real challenge. Meeting this challenge will take a long term, incremental approach. This will mean putting structures and systems in place and building capability. It also requires that organisational culture and the built environment be taken into account.
Dr Lilian Dudley of the Health Systems Trust gives a brief tour of the findings the 2005 South African Health Review (SAHR), including the increased demands made by the HIV/Aids pandemic on the country’s healthcare system.

Let me begin by providing a few definitions that are critical in the assessment of capacity challenges facing the health sector. One of the key concepts in this area, is the human resources for health (HRH), which refers to persons engaged in any capacity in the production and delivery of health services. These persons may be paid or volunteers, with or without formal training for their functions, and in the public or private sector. Human resources for health encompass “all individuals engaged in the promotion, protection, or improvement of the population’s health, including clinical and non-clinical workers”.

The second key concept is human resources development (HRD), which encompasses the planning, production, and management of health personnel.

Key in the area of policy framework, is the National Health Act, 2003. The Act establishes the National Health Council to develop “policy and guidelines for, and to monitor the provision, distribution, development, management and utilization of human resources in the national health system”.

It also provides grounds for the development of human resources planning that is required by provinces and districts to deal with capacity challenges facing the sector. In August 2005 the pillars of the HRH plan were proposed. These were mainly the human resources policy and planning; human resource production; HR information system;
HRH research, monitoring and evaluation and HRH management or leadership (capacity development).

In July 2004 the global crisis in HRH was acknowledged. This crisis was caused by a range of factors, the major one being the destructive impact of HIV and Aids on human resources. However, there are other factors that have contributed significantly to the crisis. These include the skills shortages, maldistribution of HRH and migration. Others are the chronic underinvestment in HRH, poor work environments and a weak knowledge base on HRH.

In response to the crisis, a five pronged strategic approach was proposed. It involved, firstly, engaging all stakeholders on matters of HRH development. Secondly, it involved planning human investments. It enforced the acknowledgment of the development of human resources as critical investment. Thirdly, the strategic approach proposed the careful management of performance. Fourthly, it proposed the development of enabling policies. Lastly, it encouraged learning for the improvement of HRH.

The Health Systems Trust (HST) commissions and conducts research in support of strengthening health systems, including human resource aspects. As part of this, the HST has since 1995 produced the South African Health Review (SAHR), an accredited journal peer reviewed by internal and international experts as well as the National and Provincial Departments of Health.

The main users of the SAHR are mainly National, Provincial and District departments of health, municipalities and parliamentarians. Academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, the corporate sector, the international community including foreign missions also use the SAHR. It is often accessed through the web (www.hst.org.za)

Ratio of health worker to patients

In 2005 the review’s theme was focused on human resources. There are several key HRH issues raised in the SAHR 2005 volume. It provided the international context of the HRH and outlined
national strategic priorities for the period between 2004 and 2005. The review also engaged with human resource policies. The nursing profession, mid-level workers, community health workers and HRH at district hospitals are also dealt with. The international context as it is important to local HRH thinking and development. It is worth noting that South Africa has the lowest ratio of health workers to population. Adding to these are three factors identified as major deficiencies of HRD. These include the lack of planning and poor management, which result in low staff morale and poor performance.

The 2005 review took place against the backdrop of South Africa as developmental state. It drew a balanced picture of the achievements in areas such as the reduction of smoking, the Health Act and less success in other areas such as HRH, TB, and cervical cancer screening. The HRH was seen as a critical constraint to the achievement of other targets.

A few recommendations were made as part of the HRH plan. Firstly, it was suggested that politicians and managers communicate a vision or mission that resonated with the front line health workers. This should be followed by clear operational strategies.

Secondly, there was a call for a programme of action that is developed with the front line workers and one that captures their imagination.

Thirdly, the review called for the implementation of an effective governance and management system. Lastly, it recommended the mobilization of a critical mass of skilled and motivated health managers and workers.

The 2005 review concluded that while the Health Act was a positive and a big step towards the improvement of capacity in the health sector, there remained challenges facing the sector. These included the provision of clarity of assignments or delegation to local governments and the building of cooperative governance.

Other challenges were the provision of guidelines on how the functioning of the district health team, the issue of demotivated health workers, and HR management.

The review also found that rural areas faced the most shortages of skills within the health sector. It recommended more primary health care nurses and a standardized definition of what is a rural area.

**Looking at the figures**

It also called for appropriate training and support for hospital managers and the striking of a balance between financial management and service care and quality. The recruitment and retention of professional staff (especially nurses and doctors) needed a private sector approach.

During the period 1996–2004, the number of nurses increased at a rate slower than that of the population growth. Making matters worse was that at the same time demand for nurses rose significantly because of the effects of HIV/AIDS and migration.

It should be noted that the production of professional nurses declined from 2682 (1997) to 1553 (2003). Universities make the smallest contribution to the training of nurses. All universities together have total graduation of 800 per annum. For example, 3 universities in Western Cape produce 50 nurses per annum. Nursing colleges produce more than 80 percent of all professional nurses. In addition, more than 40 percent of all professional nurses are produced via bridging courses.

The number of enrolled nurse increased in 2005, albeit off a low base. The private sector is now producing more nurses per annum than public sector nursing colleges. Private sector institutions in KwaZulu-Natal produce about 90 per cent of nurses. Public sector training is also not equitably spread, for example, the Eastern Cape province produces very few enrolled or employed auxiliary nurses.

**ART demands**

The conditional grant funding of about R325 million currently covers 50,000 people on anti-retroviral treatment (ART). This figure will rise to one million people by 2009, at a cost of R6.5 billion. The ART programme will also demand more health care workers, including 3100 doctors, 2300 nurses, 765 social workers, 765 dietitians, and 2000 data captureurs.

Current spending on primary health care (PHC) needs to double to R308 per person. This means that R13.5 billion is required for the PHC. If PHC continues in hospital out-patient departments (OPDs), an extra R4.5 billion is required. On top of this, R1.8 billion is needed for community health workers (CHWs) programmes by 2009 and 2010.

The review found a need for research on norms, standards, staffing establishments and workload. It also called for an investigation of the availability and distribution of skills, the impact of retention strategies, including special allowances. There was also a need to study health education and training with a particular focus on funding, the interface between the department of health and the department of education, and the rethinking of the settings of training and the nursing education reform.

Research and information were also necessary to ensure the continuity of professional development and career progression. They should also help advance knowledge and the development of new health worker cadres and also to consolidate the role of community health workers. Research should also help to establish structures and systems for effective HRH planning and management.

Lastly, research should also assist on impact assessment of HRH planning. In conclusion, priority in the development of capacity in the health sector should focus on the implementation of effective policies, planning and management of HRH. This should be informed and supported by research, reliable information systems and routine monitoring and evaluation in HRH.
A study by the Department of Public Service and Administration finds that despite the existence of the interdepartmental fora, coordination between the activities or functions of various departments is almost non-existent, writes DPSA researcher, Glenda Moss.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) conducted a study into the capacity of government to implement integrated developmental programmes. Examples of such programmes include the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), the Breaking New Ground (BNG), the Urban Renewal Programme and the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

Due to resource constraints, the focus was limited to the relationships between the infrastructure component of the EPWP, which seeks to promote the use of labour intensive methods; and the BNG, which is piloting a new implementation plan in the delivery of housing. These programmes are driven by the Department of Public Works and the Department of Housing, respectively. In addition, these departments collaborate with other relevant departments and stakeholders to deliver sustainable human settlements.

The central question is whether the different programmes have sufficient capacity in terms of human and physical resources and whether there is any coordination amongst these programmes. Indeed, our assumption is that coordination is central to the successful implementation of joint programmes.

Qualitative and quantitative methods were combined into a single approach known as rapid appraisal. This allowed for an in-depth exploration and quantification of capacity and other related constraints faced by integrated programmes.

Further, capacity was defined broadly to account for both internal and external variables, which impact on the successful implementation of joint programmes. Specifically, internal capacity relates to factors such as the legislative and policy framework, budgetary allocations, human resources, etc. External capacity on the other hand relates to, amongst others, variables such as community participation in government initiatives. This approach represents a shift from the narrow focus on internal capacity constraints, such as human or financial resources.
Human resources

Skills Shortage: Generally, there is a shortage of appropriately qualified people with technical qualifications or “hard” skills, such as engineering, land-surveying, and other related skills. It has been pointed out that South Africa currently does not have sufficient engineering and artisan skills to support the large private capital as well as governmental infrastructure projects. Apparently this will become more critical towards the 2010 World Soccer Tournament. The situation is aggravated by the international demand for professionals.

However, there is a view that there is a tendency to over emphasise the demand for “hard” skills and to overlook the role of “soft” skills. For instance, it has been reported that there are instances where community members have rejected some development initiatives because of failure by government to engage effectively with the communities it serves. In this context, it would appear that skills such as facilitation, negotiation and mediation play an important role. As one project manager puts it “…we need a holistic approach … to understand the human and social dimensions of our … interventions”.

Government also appears to rely excessively on external providers because of the shortage of skills in the public sector, especially the paucity of project management skills.

Recruitment: Various explanations are often advanced for the apparent failure of government to attract scarce skills into the public service. In the main, it would appear that the wide discrepancies between the public and private sectors salaries are responsible for government’s failure to recruit scarce skills. The private sector pays extremely high salaries for scarce skills, such as engineering, while it trails behind with lower salary scales. As one observer puts it “senior engineering posts are advertised at Assistant Director’s salary scale … this is far below what the private sector offers to engineers … but the same engineers are then contracted at high

costs”. In this regard, questions can be asked about whether there is any thorough evaluation of jobs performed by government officials in various capacities.

Employment Conditions: It would seem that salary discrepancies are not limited to the public and private sectors. Indeed, there are salary discrepancies even within government itself. It has been reported that local authorities pay competitive remuneration packages, as opposed to other spheres of government. Similarly, salary differences also exist between government and parastatals. Consequently, there is an outflow of skills from the central and provincial levels of government. Thus, it becomes difficult to transfer staff across different spheres and organs of government. Clearly, there is a need to harmonise the conditions of employment between different spheres and organs of government.

Staff Retention: Government often commits vast resources in terms of time, money and effort trying to develop its human resources, in order to improve service delivery. However, the high staff turnover in the government sector flies in the face of such efforts. For instance, the vacancy rates in the Western Cape’s Directorate for Housing Settlement was estimated at 21 percent as at June 2005. The situation is not limited to this department only.

Evidently, staff retention is a serious challenge to the capacity of government to deliver. The problem is further exacerbated by the lack of flexibility in the administration of government’s remuneration policies. Line managers reveal that it is difficult to retain “star” performers because they do not have powers to exercise their discretion to increase salaries and thereby curb the outflow of skills from the public sector.

Financial resources

Municipalities face specific problems with regards to the funding of integrated programmes. In particular, programmes such as the EPWP are often devolved to municipalities without providing the necessary funding. As a result of such unfunded mandates, it becomes difficult if not impossible to further the aims and objectives of these programmes. For instance, it has been suggested that when housing was devolved to some municipalities, there was no funding provided for this function. But the municipalities were expected to deliver. Therefore, municipalities have sought to finance the shortfall by borrowing from other sources, including the private banking sector. This has reportedly plunged some municipalities into a debt cycle.

As an illustration, the City of Cape Town is required to implement at least one new project of the same magnitude as the N2 Gateway each year. Currently the cost of this project is estimated at approximately R2 billion per annum. In light of the annual national housing budget of R4.5 billion, and medium term trends, it is clear that the national department allocates insufficient funds for this project. Thus, the City of Cape Town will be required to source additional funding, most probably through loans.

Coordination

Vertical Integration

It is interesting to note that there are differences of opinion between national, provincial and local government officials regarding the feasibility of achieving some policy targets. Generally, national government officials are optimistic that the targets set in policies such as the BNG and EPWP are achievable. Nevertheless, there is acknowledgement that policies are often complicated and difficult to implement. Thus, national officials believe that interpreting policies is a challenge, particularly for provincial and local government officials. Indeed, provincial and local government officials argue that they occasionally overlook policies in order to accelerate service delivery.

Local government officials contend that conditions on the ground dictate
that some policy prescripts are not achievable. For instance, with reference to the eradication of informal settlements by 2014, local government officials believe that there is an increasing trend by the communities to erect informal housing structures in their backyards. This occurs despite efforts by government through the BNG to build sustainable human settlements. This trend can be ascribed to the disjuncture between the needs of the communities and what government can “realistically” afford to provide.

Intergovernmental structures: A number of intergovernmental structures have been established to facilitate integration between different levels and organs of government. Participation in such structures usually differs according to the ranks of government officials. For instance, there are high-level structures that cater for political heads and senior management. Other similar structures have been set up to cater for operational levels. However, most of these structures are ineffective. As a result, integration occurs mainly at the highest levels, while at lower levels people work in “silos”.

Devolution of functions: There is a general consensus that there are serious service delivery blockages at the municipalities. As services are devolved, new functions are created for municipalities. Yet municipalities report difficulties in accommodating responsibilities created in this way within their existing structures. Consequently, functions that have been delegated from other spheres of government are often perceived as “by the way”. Not surprisingly, there is usually insufficient or no staff dedicated to work on functions that have been devolved from higher spheres of government.

It should be pointed out, however, that municipalities are willing to take on additional functions. Moreover, this will help to accelerate service delivery. Nevertheless, it is important to ensure that budgetary allocations increase in tandem with additional responsibilities assigned to municipalities. In this way, municipalities will be empowered to effectively deliver services.

Horizontal integration

Interdepartmental Structures: There are a number of structures that facilitate coordination between the activities of the different departments. The levels of coordination ranges from clusters consisting of heads of departments through to ad hoc structures created by officials at operational levels.
Despite the existence of the interdepartmental fora, coordination between the activities or functions of various departments is almost non-existent. This could be accounted for by, amongst others, the absence of joint planning between the various departments. Thus, the priorities of one department are usually not the priorities of another department which means that implementation of joint projects becomes the responsibility of the lead departments, with minimal support from other departments. Yet, if joint programmes are to succeed, it is important to ensure that there is collective ownership of such programmes by all departments. Importantly, the strategic plans of all departments involved in the implementation of integrated programmes should be aligned. This could perhaps be achieved with the assistance of cluster committees.

Budget Alignment: The absence of alignment between the budgets of the departments that participate in the delivery of integrated programmes hinders effective implementation. Because the budgets of the departments responsible for implementing joint programmes are not aligned, it becomes difficult to provide integrated services to the communities. Consequently, there is a lot of fragmentation and duplication of resources, with limited impact on the ground. Perhaps cluster committees should intervene and ensure joint planning and budgeting of integrated programmes. Such intervention will maximise the participation and commitment of all the implementing agents.

**Conflicting mandates**

There are competing mandates between various programmes. As an example, there are inconsistencies between the EPWP and the BNG. On the one hand, the BNG seeks to eradicate informal settlements by 2014. The EPWP, on the other hand, advocates the use of labour intensive methods in the construction of houses. This is confirmed by the high and sustained employment of external consultants. However, there is a view that this model is not sustainable, and therefore there is a need to develop internal capacity. This is backed by the observation that government lacks the capacity to monitor the activities of external providers. The result has been poor service delivery to the communities.

In addition, it appears that there is a need to re-think government’s human resources policies. In particular, there is a need to re-evaluate the policies governing the remuneration of “scarce” skills. The ultimate objective is to create an environment for attracting such skills into the public sector.

Equally important is the need to ensure alignment between various programmes. In this regard, the cluster committees could play a useful role in terms of compelling different role players to join-up and coordinate their activities.

The DPSA has implemented initiatives such as the framework for managing joint programmes, the unified public service, outsourcing and for the support service delivery improvements.

Furthermore, the following additional interventions are recommended:

- There are conflicting mandates between various programmes. In order to reach set targets, work is being outsourced to large contractors, while community participation is minimized. Lead departments should resolve this tension;

- Additional dedicated capacity building programmes are needed where job-requirements and skills development, including further and higher education and training, are aligned with the needs of the developmental state. In addition, it is important for SAMDI to investigate and develop responsive training modules in line with identified skills shortages in the public sector;

- Improved recruitment and retention strategies for scarce skills should be investigated, extending the current framework to include special dispensation for strategic and critical positions. This could, amongst others, discourage the high turnover in selected critical positions, while encouraging longer tenures in specific positions, and moving away from a “one-size-fits-all” approach to job-grading; and

- Better alignment of community needs and implementation plans is needed through improved participation and communication strategies.
The business of government is to make choices and to strategically manage resources towards achieving the intended goals. The ultimate choices are political. However, Heymans is of the opinion that in the making of choices and the marshalling of available resources to realise the intended goals, an elaborate process has to be followed. This process has to be understood and well-managed. Heymans further asserts that if the policy process is not properly managed, policies could either never be formulated or could become little more than novel statements of intent which are never implemented. Developing countries like South Africa are confronted with a mammoth challenge of having to adopt suitable and appropriate approaches to the management of policy processes to ensure the optimal utilisation of the limited resources at their disposal, for the attainment of greater social impact of all governmental programmes.

Making Government Stronger

S. Mbanga of the Strategic Planning and Policy Research Division, Eastern Cape Department of Public Works, argues that South Africa should adopt a more flexible policy making model, which takes into account the need for popular participation in shaping the content and processes of its public policies.

Studies of policy process are concerned with how policies are actually made in terms of actions taken by various actors at each stage. However, the policy process is a complex set of events that determine what actions governments will take, and what effects those actions will have on social conditions. A viable system of policy management should include a series of interlinked activities constituting the functions of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation, which are performed through an elaborate institutional and organisational framework. The stageism approach to the analysis of the policymaking process is supported by writers like:

- Nsibambi who states that a public policy passes through, at least, eight stages: problem identification, drafting a policy manifesto, setting of a policy agenda, moderation of policy debate, actual policy formulation, policy implementation, policy outcomes and policy evaluation;
- Meiring who views the policy process as constituted of three broad stages: policymaking, policy implementation, and policy analysis and evaluation. Each of these broad stages is comprised of a number of steps. For instance, policy making, in Meiring's...
opinion, can be disaggregated into initiation, formulation and approval of a policy;

• Dubrick & Romzek who define the policy process in terms of ten stages: problem identification, problem articulation, agenda setting, policy formulation, policy legitimization, programme design and development, programme implementation, programme evaluation, policy reassessment and policy change; and

• Dunn who views the policy process in terms of five phases: agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation and policy assessment.

It has to be mentioned at this stage that a processual approach to the study of policymaking has been accepted, in general, as a means of simplifying and building consensus on how scientists, analysts and practitioners of public policy should deal with governmental operations in a systematic manner. However, caution should be exercised in saying this, because there is no universally-accepted policymaking process framework. Some authors, for instance, advocate for a dichotomy between policymaking and policy implementation. Others present elaborate steps that detail the kind of actions undertaken in the major process phases of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation, and for a variety of reasons putting greater emphasis on one process phase than the other.

Important to note also is that authors like Wissink tend to escape from the trap of a 'discrete stageism' approach in the study of policymaking. Wissink, for instance, views the policymaking process as extremely complex and disorderly to which there is no apparent beginning and end, and which exists between boundaries that are most uncertain. In this regard, policymaking has to be understood as a complex, ever-changing and continuous process. In practice, there is no public policy that progresses through the stages of policymaking in a sequential manner.

Public policies move back and forth between adopted conceptual stages. The Eastern Cape Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP) Vision 2014, for instance, has been subjected to a brief evaluation of its implementation on the very first year of its implementation, that is during 2004. The study was aimed at assessing the capacity of implementing agencies in the implementation of the PGDP flagship projects with respect to resource mobilization, coordination and inter-sectoral cooperation. As would be expected, this study was aimed at making improvements in identified areas of weakness. A discreet stageism approach to the study of policymaking would regard the evaluation of the PGDP on its first year of implementation as out of line if not premature. However, theoretically, programme evaluations are conducted for a variety of reasons, and it is for the reason that has necessitated the evaluation that determines the suitable timing for an evaluation study.

It can, from the above exposition, be deduced that policymaking process steps should be understood for the noble purpose they exist for, that of clarifying the understanding of policy analysts, political scientists and practitioners of various aspects of public policy they are dealing with in a particular phase, and hence, the type and level of skills, techniques and resources required for the success of each policy action.

Having said that, it is equally important to note that the varying points of emphases within the various phases of policymaking, and the methods and techniques applicable at each phase has land ed the policymaking process to be considered as either formal or informal. Some of the characteristics of a formal and informal policymaking processes are briefly treated hereunder.

**Power and policy making**

Policymaking is, essentially, about power. The forces in society that accumulate greater power determine the direction of the policy agenda. This power could be economic, communication muscle, force or sheer patronage. The demise of the Apartheid regime in South Africa in the early 90’s attests to power play in policymaking. Subsequent to the introduction of the transformatory policy framework, resources had to be redistributed from areas of low need to those of highest need. In actual fact, the legislation pieces that were put in place both prescribed and enabled this new policy direction by way of policy content.

It can be deduced from the foregoing exposition that formal policymaking processes are characterized by explicit rules that influence actions, discrete steps prescribed for each action and
clearly-identifiable participants in each step of the policy process. Informal policymaking processes are not rigid, in terms of what should be done, in which specific manner, by whom, with what and when. There is greater flexibility for policymakers to work within a framework of societal needs that should be addressed through a proper mobilization of resources, and a political ideal of community development and empowerment that must be realized through appropriate policymaking processes. It has been observed, though, that developed or so-called First World countries are more inclined towards highly formalized policymaking processes than is the case with developing or the so-called Third World countries. However, on closer scrutiny, public policy processes in developing countries are found to represent a variable mix of formal and informal characteristics of policymaking. It seems though that in some areas there is more political will to mimic formalized policymaking approaches applied elsewhere, under the guise of benchmarking against best international practices.

**Harrismith uprisings**

However, while the significance of benchmarking in policy management is not disputed, socio-economic, cultural and political conditions, back home, do not always permit for the importing of formal policymaking process approaches and practices into developing countries. When this happens, chaos emerges as, on the one hand, there will be advocates for formal policymaking approaches, while on the other hand, there are those whose concern is mainly the need to channel the available resources to the poor and destitute. The community uprisings in the Harrismith municipality and surroundings in the Free State province during 2004 bear testimony to this fact. Certain communities in this municipality have thought it prudent to organize themselves into a Concerned group that led protests marches against the municipality which was perceived to be corrupt and inconsiderate of the basic needs of communities in the area. This case drew the attention of the national media to an extent that the country’s President, Mr Thabo Mbeki, relevant national ministers, Provincial Premier and Member of the Executive Council, and high-ranking ANC leaders had to intervene and bring about order in a municipality that was moving the direction of anarchy.

Interesting in this case is that, when the Mayor and Councilors of the Harrismith municipality were interviewed in the national television they acknowledged as genuine, a number of concerns raised by the Concerned Group regarding the municipal services. They proceeded to report that they always had a ‘Grand Plan’ on how to deal with these service delivery backlogs in a systematic manner within finance and capacity constraints confronting this municipality. The important question this raises is how it happens that communities are not aware of the municipality Grand Plan when they should have been part of preparing that plan in terms of the Constitution of the R.S.A., Act 108 of 1996 and the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 1998.

The main point that the above argument raises is that the municipal planning processes that generate the legally-prescribed Integrated Development Plans (IDP) represent an elaborate, highly-involved and technical policy process. However, circumstances of a municipality do not always permit that all the IDP steps be followed to the letter. While communities are expected to participate in the IDP process, which involves determination of policy priorities, some municipalities conduct IDP processes as a desktop exercise that is, by and large, outsourced to consultants.

One of the reasons for this is that many municipalities are seriously lacking in skills and resources to develop IDPs as prescribed by relevant pieces of legislation, and directed by the Good Practices Notes released by the Ministry of Local Government and Constitutional Affairs. In some cases Ward Committees, which are prescribed by the Municipal Structures Act, 2000, to be used as mechanisms for community participation in municipal policymaking processes, are non-existing. The level of functionality and capacity of Ward Committees to meaningfully and sufficiently deal with public policy issues within municipalities is something still to be witnessed even in the so-called historically-advantaged municipal areas. The latter point questions the extent of rationality of the purported formal policymaking processes especially in the context of developing countries.

**A learning culture**

There has been an ongoing debate within political science on whether policymaking is a rational, linear process or a more chaotic procedure dominated by political and socio-cultural forces. Chaos, in this instance, is about the positive appreciation of uncertainty in organisation and management, which advocates for self-organisation and adoption of a learning culture in public institutions.

It has been alluded to elsewhere in this article that the differentiation between a formal and informal policymaking process relates to the weight values given to the broadly accepted conceptually-phases of policymaking, and rules, techniques and skills applied in each phase of the policy process. The formal policymaking process is, in this respect, viewed as more rational and comprehensive while the informal process is rather more chaotic. Chaos in the informal policymaking process is mainly triggered by the stiff tension for allocation of inadequate resources either for strengthening the organisational systems and managerial processes or to impact directly on immediate societal needs.

This tension is better expressed in the Policy Statement made by the Eastern Cape Province Premier Nosimo Balindile when she entered the office during the 2004 national elections. Premier Balindile advocated for the reorientation of government’s expenditure from focusing it in strengthening...
the administrative capacity of government to meeting the needs of the citizens with particular bias to the poor. This move is not about a complete disregard of the necessity for strengthening the administrative capacity of government institutions for effective policy implementation, but rather points to a need for strategic choices that must be made in the allocation of resources, between creation of world-class operational systems (which seems to have captured the attention of government planners) and the immediate delivery of massive services (which may not necessarily be of highest quality standard).

Concealed in the Premier Balindlela’s policy statement is the fact that the emphasis put on massive community-oriented projects and services may, in many instances, be done in a manner that puts to abeyance the formal policymaking processes. In fact, it promotes a model that gives government a responsibility for making policy decisions, based on a ‘broad mandate’ (elite/mass model), that flow downward to the population at large, and executed by the bureaucracy. As has been the case in the Eastern Cape, government then focuses on monitoring of the implementation of the designed programmes (thought to be addressing ‘urgent’ community needs).

The adopted approach is borne out of sheer frustration on the delayed implementation of government policies, based on a general notion that policy failure in South Africa does not lie in policies themselves, but rather, something is wrong with the implementation phase of policymaking.

While the Eastern Cape province has taken this direction, South Africa, like any other developing country, still upholds an ideal of a formal policymaking process. However, a formal process has advantages and limitations as are presented below.

**Advantages of a formal policymaking process**

- **Dynamism**: The opportunity exists in a formal policymaking process that feedback can be seen at many points in the process. Information gathered during implementation stage results in the problem being re-defined. Monitoring of existing programmes leads to the modification of previously stated objectives;
- **A better understanding of social interactions**: A broad-based participation during the various stages of the policy process leads to a better understanding of stakeholders regarding their needs, interests, aspirations, likes, dislikes, weaknesses, strengths and how they relate to each other and the broader economic environment;
- **Systematisation of knowledge**: Existing knowledge is better organized with future insights being easily integrated.

**Disadvantages of a formal policymaking process**

- **Inappropriate policy process blueprints**: The conceptualisation of government’s policymaking process within the confines of a single policy model, which is common in developing countries, lends governments into a risk of not advancing their development goals through the consideration of strengths of other policy models and or approaches. Policy blueprints are as bad and counter-productive as not adopting a policy model or generic approach for a government.
- **Unintended justification of past acts**: The adoption of a clearly-defined sequence of policymaking stages lends itself in a situation wherein acts that led to the construction of a particular model are justified in present times, and accorded the same policy agenda status as they existed in the past. This statement relates to a point mentioned earlier on in this paper that the extent to which one policy process stage is cognitively emphasised over others is influenced by socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural factors at a particular place and time. It is for this particular reason that some models would fail in one area and succeed in another area, at different times, and vice versa. Similarly, a common-sensical view that policy analysts should always attempt to provide Third World solutions to Third World problems does hold water in this instance.

This immediately leads us to formulating a policy process approach that is compatible with the needs of a modern-day South Africa.

**Recommended approach for South Africa**

If an approach is commonly understood as a manner of doing things, it then follows that a policy approach is about a manner in which the policymaking process is managed in a particular country or region. Any attempt that seeks to recommend a particular policy approach for a country, like South Africa, presupposes that a variety of policy approaches either exist or may be found.

A policy approach that is recommendable for South Africa is the one that is not only place bound but also time bound. It is an approach that takes into consideration socio-economic, political and cultural factors that constitute the policymaking milieu in a modern-day South Africa. It is an approach which is architected within a framework of economic growth and development goals of the country. It is an approach that is mindful of the efforts undertaken by government to bridge the gaps existing in a country with a dual-type of economy, wherein one section of the population, and a minority, is very rich while the other, happening to be a majority, lives in abject poverty and destitution.

A more holistic approach or model similar to that developed by Walt & Gilson (1994:354) which considers the interaction of four key elements: actors, process, content and context, juxtaposed over four strategic levers: change management, operations planning and management, institutional design and power relations and political mapping that are suggested by Mokgoro (2003:3), is rec-
The above suggested Integrative Policy Management Model: 4X4 Option integrates the following four interrelated variables:

- **Content of the policy**: Involves the vision, goals, critical success factors, strategies for implementation and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
- **Context in which the policy operates**: Policies do not exist in isolation but are deeply interconnected with factors of a demographic, socio-political and economic nature;
- **Processes applied**: Processes refer to the steps or actions followed in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies. The outcome of a policy is determined by the processes followed to implement it; and
- **Actors in the policy process**: These could be elected politicians, appointed officials, consultants, communities, stakeholders, clients, customers of public services who participate in the various stages of policymaking.

The Integrative Policy Management Model further integrates four macro-variables: change management, operational planning and management, power relations and political mapping and institutional design issues. Cue is taken from the wisdom of Mokgoro (2003:3) who views successful policy implementation from a perspective of four interdependent macro-approaches: structural, political, behavioural and managerial-procedural. The structural approach is mainly concerned with the synergy between public policy and organisation design. The political approach relates to the analysis of patterns of power across public sector organisations and intergovernmental relations. The behavioural approach is concerned with harmony, power positions, human behaviour and attitudes, in so far as they enable or disable policy development and implementation. Management and procedural approaches focus on operations management, planning, resource mobilisation and scheduling, systems analysis, project management and leadership.

The suggested IPMM: 4X4 Option integrates the above elements and offers flexibility of emphasis for various public institutions and governmental spheres in South Africa. Like any other model it represents and oversimplifies a more complex reality in order to describe and explain the relationships between key variables at play. However, by implication it also prescribes a best order of things in order to create a generic conceptual framework for political scientists, policy analysts, government planners and practitioners in the country.

Based on the preceding analysis it is apparent that the policymaking process is not necessarily linear and rational as theoretically perceived to be. In practice, policymaking is chaotic and complex with public policies moving back and forth within theoretical and discreet policy process phases. There is also no universally-accepted policymaking model. Various authors continue to emphasise certain policy process steps over others, for a variety of reasons. It does seem though that authors are, in so doing, influenced by socio-economic, cultural and political factors in different places and times.

Having said that, developed countries tend to follow more formalised policymaking processes than is the case with developing countries. Formalised policymaking processes provide explicit rules applying in the various phases of the policy process. Developing countries lack resources and technical skills to follow formalised policymaking processes. In addition to this, developing countries are under extreme pressure to address the overwhelming social needs with the limited resources at their disposal. However, these countries still aspire to attain highly formalised policymaking processes.

South Africa, as a developing country, should adopt a more flexible policymaking model which integrates considerations of the contextual factors, a need for popular participation and empowerment in shaping the content and processes of its public policies. However, policymaking in South Africa should take due cognizance of the structural, behavioural, political and management implications for successful policy development and implementation.

The views expressed here do not necessarily represent policy positions of the Eastern Cape Department of Public Works.
Cape of Storms” is Cape Town’s well-known historical epithet. But there are also hundreds of other epithets that describe the city’s modern-day moods, depending on one’s vantage point — whether from the colonial grandeur of Constantia, the modern opulence of the Waterfront Shopping Mall or from the crude tin expanse that is Khayelitsha or Mitchell’s Plain.

Cape Town could also be called “Cape of contradictions”, because sometimes it seems one could compare grapes with snoek, and all those comparisons without end. Writer-poet, Sandile Dikeni, often referred to the “grape curtain”, in his description of the seemingly impenetrable social, political and economic construct that defines parameters of the city’s (and greater peninsula’s) many contrasts and contradictions - from rich or poor, tourist or local, white or black, coloured or African, and to anything in-between.

People who could be described as living an “in-between” existence inhabit “Sun City” or “Rastakamp Informal Settlement”, which is situated around Sir Lowry’s Pass.

Originally a settlement founded by farm workers, “Sun City” or “Rastakamp Informal Settlement”, is about 40 km east of Cape Town. Although largely coloured, the community has one of the Western Cape’s atypical features of being “integrated”, which means “Africans” and “coloureds” co-exist in this community of about 10 000 people. Added to the area’s demographic mix is the commune of Rastafarians.

Judging by activities a stone’s throw from the settlement, the Sun City or Rastakamp Informal Settlement will soon be joined by a new breed of neighbours. A luxury residential area with properties billed from R800 000 upwards is under construction.

Sun City or Rastakamp Informal Settlement is a confluence of many diverse under-currents that could potentially turn into raging storms if not well mediated. It is also a potential model of social reconstruction and peaceful co-existence in the complex province.

This is the subterranean-like world that Community Development Worker (CDW), Claudia Erasmus, treads daily. It is the world that typifies the much-talked about two economies, or, simply put, the haves and the have-nots, and those in-between.

Erasmus begins the day at dawn with a prayer. She then joins her “Love and Care Soup Kitchen” colleagues to mitigate against the combined onslaught of rising unemployment, the neglect of the aged and young, school dropouts, teenage pregnancies, alcohol and drug abuse in the community.

As a community development worker Erasmus deals with whatever the day’s challenges may throw at her. But the soup kitchen in Sun City Hall is the backbone of her activities. It is a living CDW office populated by eager volunteers and beneficiaries, especially the local aged whose programme includes both spiritual and physical nourishment, bible reading and soup. There is also a touch of the worldly, which comes in the form of regular manicure and pedicure sessions for the local senior citizens.

Erasmus explains her personal ethos as: “If you can’t make other people happy then you can’t be a happy person yourself.”

Love and Care Soup Kitchen feeds as many as 150 people daily, with beneficiaries ranging from the unemployed, the sick, the elderly, the disabled and children.

What keeps the soup kitchen going? Apart from the energies and dedication of the CDW and local volunteers, the soup kitchen relies on a patronage network made up of government departments, individuals and local businesses such as the Survival Fruit Stall, which is run by local Rastas, and Roelcor Butchery, which is based in Somerset West.

The work of the CDW is not without challenges. The much spoken about laptops with wireless access to government service delivery portals are yet to reach this CDW working in a semi-rural set-
How Community Workers Fit Into the Bigger Picture

By Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi

The Community Development Workers (CDWs) programme is one of government’s initiatives whose objective is to ensure that government services reach their intended targets.

Community Development Workers play an important role in the improved co-ordination between the three spheres of government and with all the community development stakeholders and organs of civil society.

One of the critical linkages at local level through which service delivery needs to be improved are the ward committees. During the initial stages of the implementation of the CDW programme, there were tensions as a result of a misunderstanding of roles and relationships. These tensions were resolved through workshops that involved CDWs and ward committees.

Provincial units are also rolling out workshops to introduce the CDWs in their communities, their fellow public servants in other government departments as well as to the municipalities in which they are deployed.

CDWs are multi-skilled as their training involved practical project management as well as exposure to direct work experiences. A number of them were equipped with laptops to run a pilot e-gateway in Gauteng during 2004/5, although this project has experienced some difficulties. In 2006 the pilot project will be extended to KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

KwaZulu-Natal has installed an information management system, while Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces are in the process of installing theirs. Nationally, discussions with SITA are underway to provide a national information management system. Access by CDWs to computers will be through MPPCs, Local Municipalities, Post Offices and other locally based government offices.

Nationally, 3000 Community Development Workers have completed their learnerships. Four provinces, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng and the Western Cape have already integrated these CDWs into the public service (690 in total).

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Building on the achievements made thus far, this year will be a year of consolidation. It is our belief that the fundamental institutional framework is in place, in order to achieve the following broad objectives for this year:

- CDWs are integrated within the broad government initiatives of building a better life for all;
- CDWs are fully integrated within the broad public participation programmes by improving co-ordination between their programmes and those of ward committees;
- They play a role in achieving the objectives of project consolidate;
- CDWs play a critical role in initiating projects that will work towards the realisation of the Local Economic Development objectives at municipal level; and
- There is integration of the CDW Programme with the improvement of frontline staff development with the objective of achieving the Batho Pele Principles.

Excerpt from public service and administration minister’s Feb 2006 Governance and Administration Cluster Media Briefing •
To fully address the topic I must first do a lot of motivated amnesia because I was a Resident Advisor to the Provincial Government of KwaZulu-Natal; for three years I was head of the Department of Public Enterprise at the National level of Government; I became the Economic and Development Policy Advisor to the KwaZulu-Natal Premier Dr. Ben Ngubane, among other public duties. It is for this reason that my total memory included the “Ins and Outs” of working for the Government. To deal with the topic requires me to undertake a memory surgery, in other words, separate and create a division within what are in fact holistic and mixed experiences.

The government and non-government environment is essentially a continuum and definable through, as it were, crossing the threshold. Being outside government would mean being outside the hierarchy while not being fully on the market (hierarchy versus market consideration). The consequences of an error are borne by those who are in the hierarchy. When things go right as a consequence of ones interventions, one needs to be remembered by accolades and recognitions; when things go sour, one reminds every one else that it is not your responsibility that things have gone wrong. The relationship between the “outsider” and the manager in the hierarchy is, among other issues, influenced by the sharing of the responsibilities for failure and success.

Notwithstanding, the field that I was in also operated within certain rules, standards, expectations and the responsibility for experimentation, risk taking and innovation was more available. The downside risk for error was less ghastly to contemplate. The whole of government interest was more of a norm as opposed to sectoral or departmental interest. Government in its totality was its point of reference. Of course I worked with particular departments. But this did not remove the broader scope of attention. I was also more susceptible to listen to the demands and the pronouncements of needs, expectations and aspirations of the public. Working in a matrix-like position, I had to be dually focused and influenced. I was part of the civil society (the public) as I was part of the government. I could not therefore, be too gov-
ernment-centric or civil society-centric in my outlook, perspectives and conceptualisation of issues.

Lacking positional power, I had to rely on expert power. This had a positive contribution to my knowledge development. I was aware of the fact that it was my superior know-how of issues at hand that made senior government managers to listen to me and eventually work with me. Value-adding was, therefore, a key consideration. I had to know my stuff.

Inside

I have already alluded to the fact that being in or out of government is a difficult epistemological and ontological problem. This, of course, would be considered both in static and dynamic terms. Joining government after having been “outside” is inundated with sparkling enthusiasm — an opportunity to show them how this and that would be done. The context within which issues are conceived and transformed into programmes in government is usually naïvely understood by outsiders. But it must also be upheld that the naive person is less constrained to try nothing differently: to dudula may be what is needed to break through the impasse.

Latent memories of working from “outside” government remained with me for a while and this was good for government with its emphasis on the relationship between government and non-government actors. Having been “outside” government had its advantages even under conditions full of the dust of action inside government. It is my view that the outsider-insider position is a potential force of dynamism, experimentation and creativity within the hierarchies.

Government is an elephant and we are all blind persons trying to experience the phenomenon, to be an elephant. A person from outside is more likely to have more or less seen or experienced the total body configuration of the elephant. Through imaginations supported by memories, as one who was once operating from outside, but with interest in what was happening inside government, I was more likely for a while (subject to memory erosion through time) to perceive the elephant (read government) in its totality.

Having worked from outside government, I was well known by all senior managers within the KZN provincial administration. It was, therefore, much easier to establish effective networks and relationships which are critical for performing government work.

In conclusion I wish to suggest more of the critical chapter that must be incorporated in the Legacy Book. These are as follows:

1. Procurement systems to support speedy programme and project management emphasizing flexibility and close interactions between project managers and procurement staff;
2. Support services to its Director Generals, Heads of Departments, the Premier, the Cabinet and FOSAD;
3. Support for innovation, risk taking and experimentation within government as part of learning;
4. Design and maintenance of integration, alignment and coordination mechanisms across spheres of government and using IPSP lessons in the alignment of NSDP and IDPS;
5. Management of change within discursive consideration and the political economy of institutional change; and
DM: What was the prevailing ethos when you were inaugurated into the public service?

KN: I first joined the public service in 1995, in the office of the premier. At the time the administrative infrastructure was still TPA, or the Transvaal Provincial Administration. So you basically had the Jo’burg component, which was new, and the Pretoria component, which was generally the old guard. You had parallel values within what was supposed to be a single administration, with activist oriented people in Jo’burg, who tended to look at their Pretoria counter-parts with a bit of contempt. Although clued up with matters of policy and strategic vision for the new administration, the Jo’burg people were very weak in terms of understanding the rules, procedural and process issues. These PTA counterparts had turned rules and procedures into a bureaucratic art form.

DM: We are currently pushing towards twelve years of the construction of the country’s public service - what is your assessment of the failings as well as the successes of the administration during this period?

KN: There is recognition of the fact that we tend to spend a lot of time constantly formulating and reviewing policies and strategies. South Africa’s policy and legislative environment across all sectors is substantially different to the situation in 1994 - the public service is a completely different organization. But at the time we did not focus as much attention on
administration itself, for example changing the very processes and practices in such a way that we could change the way the system works in a radical way. This is particularly important at the point of interface between the citizens and administration. The approach at the time was to tackle the transformation project from the “commanding heights”. In other words, if you deploy enough people at the commanding heights of the ship then there are better chances of steering it. The problem with this approach is that it does not recognize that there are actually many points and moments of decision-making in public administration across the value chain of service delivery. If you do not deploy people across the value chain, you will soon find out that certain aspects of the value chain can frustrate even the so-called commanding height from achieving their objectives.

We also tended not to appreciate the strategic value of administrative and procedural processes and as a result we tended not to bother with components such as corporate services, in different forms, and not understanding the strategic value and the power of these components in translating our policy intentions into service delivery programmes.

The Ten-Year Review identified the fact that each time we got stuck, we tended to address challenges by restructuring head office or dealing with the things we understand - even when the problem is not at head office but understanding what the value chain is making interventions across the value chain. We never understood that you cannot resolve a service delivery problem by merely restructuring head office.

In the main, these were some of the issues. However we learnt over time that the process of translating policy into programmes is complex. Sometimes we actually discover that there is a huge gap between policy pronouncements and our ability to implement these.

Lastly, I am not sure if we understood the structural issues or the extent to which structure, both in terms of “macro” and “micro”, that is, the macro-organisation of the state and the micro-organisation within departments. I do not think we fully understand the extent to which these shape the management of strategies within an organization, the allocation of resources and the lines of authority. We have not fully understood that when you talk about coordination and integration, that the current system...
of administration is structured in such a way that it severely punishes people to get outside the box. We often complain that public servants do not think outside the box without recognizing the fact that there are major consequences for people who think outside the box. We run a system that is defined by the box you are in and as long as you remain in that box you are safe.

The more we are able to understand these dynamics, we will be better positioned to strike the balance between the rigours of procedure, the need for predictability and the need to be innovative. If you focus too much in one direction that has the potential of causing the system to collapse.

You have been associated with the DPSA for a while – how do things look from the provincial vantage point?

My view is that I started in the province, and joining the province brings a sense of deja vu. Some of the issues that have always been tentative at the time would probably crop up from time to time. Secondly, I think I have also made many movements within and around different parts of the public service, Pretoria, through the DEAT and the DPSA, as well as the Inter-Provincial Support Programme (which I nationally coordinated until recently) and a whole range of international projects in countries like the DRC.

What I have observed as well is that a lot of time we get lost in trying to close the gaps or encourage an interface between structures, for example through meetings or conflict resolutions or even e-mails. The lesson as far as I am concerned, is that when you deal with an organization as large as the state, you have to understand the way in which structure drives strategy, which in turn drives organizational culture.

Speaking of the need to understand structures, what are your views on the notion of a single or unified public service?

I think it depends on what you understand the problem to be and what you want to solve. If you see a single public service as a structural issue then one would formulate a structural solution, for example, by creating a single employer across the three spheres of government. It is about a clear understanding of what we want a single public service to achieve, which, in my view, is to reintegrate the value chain across the three spheres. I think we should only integrate the value chain and not try to integrate everything.

The principle of integrating the process of public service administration is correct, depending on whether what needs to be integrated is clearly defined.

Questions are being asked as to whether the country should have provinces — what is your take on this debate?

As is the case with discussions on a single public service, the debate on the future of provinces should be framed by what is it that we are trying to solve and whether scrapping them could in fact solve the problems that are associated with the provinces. We should be careful not to usher in immense changes without the guarantee that our intervention would certainly resolve the targeted challenges.

People are increasingly becoming assertive and in some instances militant in demanding their service rights — is this a good thing in terms of spurring on the administration to do its work?

It is obviously a good thing when people assert their rights. The more people get to know what their rights are and the more they assert those rights the better for all. In many cases it is always the poorest people who get the worst services because they tend to be the least empowered and the least assertive.

Coupled with the push for service delivery is the need to make service delivery value chain processes more efficient by sharpening our understanding of the operational aspects. A good strategy does not automatically translate into efficient operational processes. In a nutshell, my feeling is that we have not given sufficient attention to the hard operations management side of the public service.

What’s your prognosis of the public service in the next decade?

It can actually get better or worse. Amongst the reasons why it could get worse is the tendency to randomly institute changes; the tendency for personnel to change too frequently and the tendency not to maintain institutional memory — losing the lessons of the previous era and being in a random and perpetual state of experimentation, with the good ideas dying together with the bad ones because there is no capacity to evaluate in the absence of benchmarks.

Also when one considers the challenges at local government sphere, you can see that it is not a given that there will be an upward trajectory. But I think it can and should move upwards if we focus on getting the basics right — like appointing the right people to positions in which they are suitably qualified. We need an administration that is peopleed by personnel who are “Read and Expert”. A public servant who is “read” is committed, progressive and aligned to the values enshrined in the Constitution. The “expert” part means the ability of a public servant to translate policy pronouncements into processes and programmes that impact on the lives of people. This is critical because ultimately incompetence is as dangerous as resistance or hostility to the objects of any state.
In this abridged version of his presentation at the fourth Senior Management Service (SMS) Conference hosted by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), Prof Richard Levin, the Director-General of DPSA, says senior managers are the cream of our public service and also discusses their role as leaders, pace setters and role models.

About five years ago it became clear that the public service was experiencing distinct problems in attracting effective leaders and was not making optimal use of its senior managers. High turnover rates and serious problems in service delivery were some of the signs of trouble, along with a general sense of stagnation.

The DPSA undertook a detailed study that identified a range of diverse but interrelated problems such as difficulties in recruiting and keeping senior managers. Other difficulties included problems with managing the performance of senior managers and rewarding good performers as well as in providing support to under-performing managers. The recommendations from that study centred around the proposal that we create a distinct senior management service incorporating heads of departments and around 3800 of the most senior public servants, excluding Police and Defence Force managers.

Although most human resource management matters had already been devolved to individual departments, it was agreed that the SMS should be constituted as a separate corps, supported by the centre of government, with its members able to be deployed where most needed. A number of other recommendations were also made such as tightening up recruitment and selection procedures and the revision of equity targets.

Since then we have made significant progress in implementing most of the recommendations. The SMS has been formally created with its own labour relations dispensation and is emerging as a distinct, prestigious group within the public service, helped in part, I should add, by the SMS conferences.

A flexible remuneration system has been adopted for the SMS and standardised remuneration and conditions of service have been adopted. A technically sound competency framework has been developed, and competency assessments...
are becoming more widely used. A financial disclosure system has been adopted and a performance management and development system developed. Consistent with international efforts to build learning organisations, the SMS has also helped create an appetite for new ideas, practices and approaches.

Most of these initiatives are still in progress but we are nevertheless pleased that we can show solid progress even if we still have a long way to go in some areas.

Mobilising managers

The creation of the SMS is an element of a human resource management strategy to mobilise managers around the implementation of government’s programme of action. Senior managers need to be aligned with that programme at all levels and in every way. The SMS must lead the building of improved human and organisational capacity for a developmental state. The annual conferences held by the SMS also need to be aligned in such a way that they also lead directly to improvements in government capacity to deliver on its objectives. Conference participants should achieve certain outcomes such as the building of professional networks and improvements in morale and energy levels.

The SMS conferences must build professionalism and develop a sense of community amongst leaders in the public service. The conferences should serve as a valuable opportunity to build an understanding within the leadership group of current challenges and dynamics and to muster support for the strategic approach being implemented.

Previous SMS conferences have addressed the major issues of the day. In 2002, the first SMS conference addressed the shift from policy to implementation while in 2003 the conference considered the need to move beyond discrete service delivery silos and build an integrated public service. The 2004 conference addressed the need to build a developmental state that will be able to bridge the gap between the two economies.

Implementation capacity

The 2005 SMS conference grappled directly with the need to build implementation capacity and started by considering the capacity requirements for sustainable growth and development. I want to clarify what I mean when I talk about capacity. There are various kinds of capacity including ideological state capacity (which is active commitment to government programmes), political capacity (the ability of political heads to lead and drive performance), technical capacity (the intellectual and practical ability to produce practical policies) and the one we are concerned with, implementation capacity - the skills and other resources needed to implement policies successfully.

There is a growing recognition that implementation capacity in the public service is underdeveloped and as a result this area has become a major concern to government. There are many reasons for our weak implementation capacity but they relate mainly to long-standing problems in accessing skilled human resources. Financial and computer skills are most needed, while literacy, project management, human resource and communication skills are all required.

Skills gaps include transversal skills and specific skills associated with particular jobs. Government efforts to build skills have been constrained by a range of factors including institutional weaknesses, a poor capacity for human resource management, planning and development, widespread gaps in quality and relevance of training and institutions, poor linkages and partnerships between government and training providers and an inadequate focus on norms, values, attitudes and orientation of public officials.

Another problem is the lack of credible data and a limited capacity for basic analysis and planning along with a consistent failure to monitor the cost effectiveness of training. Building effective implementation capacity requires an appropriate and sensitive public sector Human Resource Development (HRD) strategy. This should refine and accelerate implementation of Government’s comprehensive, credible and outcomes-focused programme for capacity development. It should also improve the coherence, co-ordination and efficacy of all Government’s policies, institutions and mechanisms involved in training and capacity development of the public
sector. Another challenge to the public service HRD strategy is to ensure integration between strategic planning, budgeting, HR planning and development, institutional systems and structures and monitoring and evaluation.

**Complex and contradictory**

Human resource management in the public service is a complex and contradictory area. It is often simplified and characterised as being either about personnel administration or about strategy. It encompasses both. Building HR capacity in the public service needs to take a balanced approach in which the administrative and strategic elements are both appreciated and developed, since without the one the other is rendered ineffective.

One of our original public service reforms involved the decentralization of the HR framework. This was seen as a progressive step away from the centralized control of the apartheid state and was intended to empower managers to take the critical decisions that would lead to efficiency and effectiveness by unlocking the rule-bound bureaucratic culture we inherited.

However, in hindsight, we have come to realise that there was not always the necessary competence and capacity to develop or implement HR policies and many national policy frameworks are consequently not implemented. There are no real enforcement tools or punitive measures for non-compliance and monitoring of compliance is only now starting to take place.

Decentralization without the adequate capacity has led to a number of problems. For example, decentralized job grading promotes inconsistency in the grading of similar jobs and promotes job-hopping and internal competition amongst staff performing the same functions. Decentralization in determining sectoral remuneration results in inconsistencies and unnecessary internal competition as well as inconsistencies in salary determinations for similar jobs so that the principle of equal pay for equal work cannot be realised.

Despite these problems decentralization of all HR practices is not a realistic option although some key strategic areas could possibly be partially centralised. For example, heads of departments and the SMS could be managed more centrally, particularly if people were appointed to the service rather than the post.

Other areas for consideration could include greater centralized control over sectoral salary scale determination, centralized guidelines on specific recruitment practices such as head-hunting, compulsory application of competency assessments for the SMS and a central database of competencies in SMS. However, we must be careful not to repeat the mistake by centralizing functions without building the necessary capacity first!

Another problem is that human resource planning is often done poorly and gets separated from other kinds of planning like operational and financial planning. HR planning must be practically and sensibly aligned with all other planning so that the right people are in place and can use the resources and systems provided to them.

**Challenges**

There are many HR related issues that must still be addressed if implementation capacity is to improve. I will list just some of them and you will realise the enormity of the HR challenge. The remuneration and conditions of service framework needs further improvement and gaps such as the career pathing of professionals and other specialists need to be filled. Employment practices, particularly performance management need to be improved. Internal communications must improve and workplace organisation, currently hierarchical and fragmented, needs to be more integrated.

Innovative initiatives such as Batho Pele, E-gateway, Community Development Workers and Multi-purpose Community Centres must be mainstreamed and scaled up. Current training resources must be reconfigured to provide skills needed for the developmental state as internal training units are not adequate and do not enjoy an appropriate status. Informal approaches to skills development such as mentoring must be recognized.

Links between human resource management and development must improve while the links between skills development and performance management systems also need strengthening. Departments must be encouraged to bring human resource management and development functions into closer cooperation so that recruitment, promotion and career development activities are linked to skills development planning. A public sector-wide database system is needed for storing and analysing training information as well as for modelling and forecasting.

We must also create a management and professional corps that will provide skilled professional and technical staff with attractive long-term career paths that keep them in the public service. It should be clear to you by now that there are many issues that need to be addressed if we are to succeed in improving our implementation capacity.

We have travelled so far and done so well in changing the repressive apartheid state into a developmental, service oriented one, but we still have some way to go. One of our major achievements is the emergence of a strong government programme of action that is clearly defined and planned. To achieve our objectives we need to align ourselves around this programme and focus on achieving tangible results. Our people are our greatest asset and our senior managers must rise to the challenge of using them effectively and wisely.

By aligning the skills and HR plans of their institutions and units around Government’s overarching programme, senior managers will be making a major contribution to the important task of building implementation capacity.
The foundations of the state we have today were laid in the heroic resistance against land dispossession, in the struggles for the most basic forms of economic protection, the right to unionize, minimum-wage laws, laws that give business opportunities to all, and income support programs such as unemployment insurance. All those whose lives were characterized by insecurity and discomfort, look to the state for sources of security and comfort. Today we can look at our collective record of achievement, with some measure of pride. For all of us our society has been made a bit more humane: those parts of our country that had been made scenes of interminable conflicts have been transformed into zones of peace; the overall economic outlook of the country has never been more optimistic, and we have ensured that the success of building an inclusive society is not confined to the political arena; we took steps either to introduce or buttress income support programs whose aim is to offer protection to the elderly, the young and the very poor. We have extended basic services to many who previously were denied access to such services.

These factors alone represent an enormous human achievement that must be consolidated, deepened and extended. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as well as government policy designate the terrain in which the public service carries out its task. A reflection on the macro-organization of the state must therefore also seek to understand the role and place of public servants relative to the challenges facing the country, the goals we have as a country, and the institutional framework we have established to achieve those goals. While each one of the three spheres of government has its own mandate and scope of operation, they have the joint responsibility for delivery of public goods. In other words, the distinctive functions of each sphere must fuse with the functions of the other two spheres to provide integrated and coherent governance for the country as a whole. Inadequate inter-sphere coordination and integration have tended to enfeeble growth and development.
A rule of thumb for the division of labour between spheres is that whereas national government’s primary role is to make policy and regulate to ensure equitable service provision throughout the country, and to support provincial and local government in the endeavour to give practical effect to those policies, provinces and municipalities are the spheres that actually deliver services to the people - the spheres that carry the main weight of expenditure budgets spent on providing education, social grants, public health services, and transport infrastructure, access to basic levels of water, sanitation and electricity.

Robust skills base

Several aspects of the institutional arrangement have a bearing on the macro-organization of the state. The first of these aspects is that institutions of government are not worth the paper designs they are written on unless they rest on the skills base that is robust enough to produce effective outcomes. Without appropriately skilled personnel in all three spheres, particularly in provinces and municipalities where budgets are allocated towards service delivery, projects will not be initiated, money will not be spent, and development will consequently not take place.

Current spend levels on municipal infrastructure, housing delivery and various other programmes, suggest a paucity of skills that are critical to an effectively functioning public service. The recent study by the South African Institute of Civil Engineers (SAICE) illustrates the point. It found that there is both a shortage of civil engineers and technicians in municipalities. This happens in a country with a “labour market overhang” of graduates with technical skills. The following statistics provide some insight into the extent and nature of the problem:

- 45 out of 231 local municipalities and 4 out of 47 district municipalities were found to have only one civil technician;
- 74 out of 231 local municipalities and 4 out of 47 districts were found to have no civil engineers or technicians on their staff;
- Only 45 local and 25 district municipalities had any civil engineers on their staff; and
- 50% of municipalities have sub-optimal technical capacity.

Ensuring that capacity is available for municipalities to perform their functions in the short-term must drive our immediate focus. For this reason, government introduced a hands-on programme of support — Project Consolidate. This is a national initiative which seeks to mobilize technical skills that municipalities require in order to deliver services to the communities. It is critically important for all our national and provincial service delivery departments to take advantage of the space created by Project Consolidate.

On the ground

Secondly, the high levels of interdependence between the three spheres of government means they must work in mutually supportive ways towards common goals. This requires all of us to
develop a particular aptitude for understanding the pressures facing the spheres that are in close proximity to the people and the conditions in which they live. In other words, national government departments must reposition themselves to be able to contribute to the process of optimizing the impact of policy on the local spaces where there is greatest need.

The municipal Presidential Imbizo programme gives us the best possible opportunity to reappraise the make up of our departments and, possibly, to shed those aspects of our organization that constitute rigidities that stand in the way of enhanced performance.

If policy is not based on a comprehensive understanding of the conditions in which implementation has to take place, then there is no guarantee that what we visualize will see the light of day. For instance, the latest Municipal Demarcation Board Capacity Assessment for 2004 shows that 61% of municipalities perform 50% or less of their constitutionally mandated functions. This begs the question as to whether we as national policy-makers and policy implementers are not delegating and assigning responsibilities to other spheres basing such delegations and assignments sometimes on unexamined assumptions?

In order to work effectively, our system of government requires intergovernmental coordination processes. It is these processes which will bring about stability, predictability and efficiency to the system. Greater predictability requires “joint planning” around common development targets and balancing national policy direction with local accountability. It requires national government and provinces to share more and better quality information with municipalities, to refrain from ad hoc interventions, and to clarify expenditure and revenue assignments as precisely as possible.

Several current initiatives to improve intergovernmental coordination and planning must serve as touch-points for developing the administration’s capacity to utilize optimally the resources for public investment in economic and social upliftment of communities:

- The joint planning format adopted by the July 2005 Lekgotla which saw provinces participate in the extended Cabinet for the first time.
- The Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), which was adopted in order to guide departmental planning and budgeting, as well as an updated planning cycle.
- The recently promulgated Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act which provides an overall framework for coordination between the three spheres of government and the system. Greater predictability consequently not take place

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- The harmonization of the National Spatial Development Perspective, the Provincial Growth and Development Strategies and Municipal Integration Development Plans. This harmonization aims to create a common framework for spatial and economic development choices.

Trust Among Spheres

The long-term structural changes that are taking place within South African society must shape the organizational designs of individual departments across the three spheres of government. Defects in the organizational designs, even if you have people with the right skills, can undermine efforts to produce effective outcomes at a macro-level. Given the contemporary situation and the challenges it poses for the state, organizational innovations have become urgently necessary. We need an approach and internal mechanisms, that give us the possibility to forge improvements in internal communications as well as in communication with external stakeholders.

In addition, departments and spheres of government must cultivate relations of trust, information-sharing and mutual assistance. When departments compete rather than co-operate, they produce results that are often mutually enfeebling.

For instance, departments need to work towards establishing, under the leadership of the department of Public Service and Administration, a coherent human resource development programme that will strengthen the overall capacity of the state. At the moment departments have tended to seek to ameliorate their individual plight through mutual poaching of skilled personnel. In the result, the high levels of staff turnover and the inter-departmental transfers of personnel account for the general lack of stability in critical echelons of the public service.

As I said earlier, the recent Cabinet Lekgotla decisions form an important backdrop against which to have another look at the organization and capacity of the state. We are not necessarily being asked to reinvent the wheel. Our achievements in the first decade of freedom are indeed mixed: on one hand we have inherited elements in the administration which confer a quality of mediocrity on the system; on the other hand, we have also scored successes that have come to define best practice benchmarks. This makes us an organization with an obligation to learn and innovate at the same time.
It is important to set a framework within which South Africa works, particularly around the spheres of economic activity. A number of us have referred to the need for public private partnerships and we generally know what informs the public sector. I think it is equally important for us also to understand what informs the private sector. What we need to understand is the fact that, in the global scheme of things, South Africa is a small open economy. For instance, the United States of America accounts for 25 percent of global economic activity. Economists are suggesting that India will take over from Germany to become the third biggest economy and that the People’s Republic of China will be the biggest economy in 50 years time.

Globalisation means that South Africa is part and parcel of what happens around the globe and that we are perceived in a particular light by a range of actors across the globe. What also needs to be considered in terms of globalisation is what is referred to as the “China syndrome”. China has a growth rate of 9 percent and, as already stated, is poised to become the largest economy in fifty years time. What are the implications of this to South Africa?

There are advantages — China is a huge market and consumes anything that we produce, from South African coke to steel. But one of the many challenges is the fact that local industry, particularly textiles, are beginning to feel the pressure of China’s productive activities. Even a huge economy such as the US is not exempt from this pressure. For example, Walmart supermarkets, which are South African versions of Pick and

Mr Jabu Moleketi, the Deputy Minister of Finance, outlines the challenges and prospects of economic development and investment in a changing global economic environment.
Pay, are buying cheap products from China that are consumed by Americans.

Europeans are facing similar challenges and are devising ways of setting up policies to protect their domestic goods. Although there is an argument that consumers are benefiting from these cheap goods, those very consumers also argue that jobs are only created in China because these goods come from China.

These are some of the dilemmas of globalisation - benefit on the one hand and disadvantage on the other — which places challenges in terms of South Africa’s trade and macro economic policies that are designed to both benefit and shield us from the impact of globalisation.

What is the paradigm that South African business operates within? We all know that, to a large extent, business exists to make profit. It operates from the paradigm that assumes that it is the shareholders who determine business policies and strategies in the context of shareholder capitalism, which is based on the logic that shareholders carry the financial risk. Beyond market orthodoxy

The question that arises is whether this profit maximising thesis could form a partnership with government and other stakeholders to resolve the socio-economic challenges that confront the country? As an optimist, I would say the answer is yes, especially in the context of a developmental state that is underpinned by an assumption that the market is not in a position to resolve all the socio-economic challenges facing South Africa. The issue of market orthodoxy does not apply, because the market or business always pursues areas or points where profits could be made as opposed to areas where there is need for infrastructure that could possibly make it possible for people to have a better life. It is for this reason that we have an agency of the developmental state to deal with the socio-economic deficit.

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The other issue that needs to be highlighted is that the concept of a developmental state is not uniquely South African. The Japanese government, for instance, emerging from the devastation of the Second World War, set up institutions that drove development. The so-called Asian Tigers adopted a similar approach. The key thing is that these governments did not leave anything to chance - and you are not talking about Cuba or the Soviet Union of the past, but capitalist countries.

Another model is that of the European Union (EU) infrastructure programme that, to a large extent, ensures that member countries access grants and soft loans to improve on infrastructure — not just roads and bridges but also the capacity of financial institutions. It is this model that has been successful throughout the globe. It is a model that does not lend itself to market fundamentalism, but state intervention.

Good story

Now that the background has been sufficiently covered, it will be much easier to appreciate the story of South Africa’s economic turnaround. It is a good story. The economic growth rate between 1984 and 1993 was around 1 percent and the average growth between 1994 and 2004 was 3 percent. South Africa also had a double-digit inflation that has been brought down to below 6 percent. Some people question the efficacy of inflation targeting because of a belief that inflation targeting is something that is practiced by developed countries. The fact of the matter is that inflation targeting is meant to ensure that people get their money’s worth at the supermarket. If what one buys for R100 is getting less and less, that becomes a problem, particularly for the poor. Inflation targeting is meant to make it possible for people to increase the volume of goods in their shopping basket.

Then there is the issue of the deficit. Simply put, managing our deficit means putting our finances in order. In other words, our balance sheet must enable us to attract investors and borrow at better rates. Some people argue that South Africa can afford an 8 percent deficit, which may well be the case. However,
because we all borrow from the same financial market, the reality is that if government borrows as though it is the only player in the market, interests rates are going to shoot up, and a whole range of players will be affected, including small businesses and consumers.

What's important is that South Africa has gained valuable experience and scored some achievements. We have gained confidence to undertake the major challenges that confront us. It is confidence born out of ten years of managing the South African economy and our ability to provide basic social services to our people. This means that we can refute those who tell us that we have not achieved anything during this period. Of course there are still challenges - but these should not be confused with an inability to achieve something.

Black middle class

Also forming part of the economic picture is the increase in the middle strata, particularly by Africans, as a result of growth in terms of income over the past ten years. This has been spurred through employment in the public sector and BEE, among other factors. The phenomenal growth of the middle class within a very short space of time is remarkable. What makes the growth of the middle class significant in terms of economic growth is its consumptive nature—from furniture to cars. This is not only an indication of the performance of the economy, it is also an indication of the fact that a lot of people “have arrived”.

But as we all know, averages hide a story because poverty is still a serious challenge. It is a moral dilemma for this democratic government. What has happened is that the income gaps are increasing and these income gaps are no longer defined in racial terms only but are also beginning to have an impact within the Africans.

There may be differences in putting a figure to poverty, for example using the Gini-coefficient, which is a measure of income disparities. This can vary between 0.4 percent to 0.7 percent depending on where you stand in the debate. However, there is agreement that the bottom part of our society is trapped in poverty and these are largely marginalised people with less education and thus fewer possibilities of escaping poverty. This is one of the issues that the public sector must begin to attend to.

Business and consumer confidence have grown because of low interest rates and as a result some of us have more money in our pockets. Although many are in a jolly mood, we must always remember that we are part of the global economy and susceptible to external shocks such as the price of oil. This means that we have to look at our debt overload because things can change overnight and make life very difficult. Households consumption has increased, creating a whole range of demand for goods and services.

But this poses a number of challenges as it is not sustainable to grow an economy on the basis of consumer spend only. As a result of consuming a lot of imports, a gap is emerging between what we produce and what we consume, which affects our current account deficit. And once you have a current account that is not sustainable, something has to give, which is why infrastructure investment and sustainable growth are essential.

Public sector investment

South Africa has set itself a growth target of 6 percent from an earlier 4 percent target. The change of targets is informed by the fact that if we continue to grow at only 4 percent, average income in households will only double after 25 years, unemployment will stay at 20 percent plus and we will be unable to half poverty by 2014. A 6 percent growth rate is likely to resolve these challenges, namely, doubling the average household income in 15 years, reducing unemployment considerably and halving poverty by 2014. We have no option but to reach the 6 percent growth rate not only to meet domestic targets but also international obligations such as the Millennium Development Goals.

Achieving the required 6 percent growth target, in a sustainable way and not just a flash in the pan, means a whole range of actions need to be taken. But for now, let’s look at the issue of investment, which is lagging behind. A question that arises is the role of public sector investment. In other words, what investment activity is government engaged in to stimulate growth?

Many people stand on public platforms accusing the private sector of being on an investment strike, but the fact of the matter is that the public sector is glaringly lagging behind while the private sector has been upping its investment. For South Africa to achieve 6 percent growth we need investment injections of more than 23 percent of GDP, which is why the activities of the public sector are important to achieving this target.

More importantly, rapid economic growth will stall over time in the absence of public service delivery improvements. The Infrastructure Development Programme, or IDP, is aimed at addressing some of the problems that stand in the way of achieving the 6 percent growth target by looking particularly at the need for technical assistance. This is to address the issue of the skills deficit and thus open up delivery bottlenecks. Although the public sector can boast of the quality, qualifications and commitment of its senior managers, the challenges remain because there is a lack of project management and planning skills, which explains why there have been many rollovers and why some projects have not taken off. The programme has already placed Technical Assistants (TAs) in all nine provincial education departments, two in health and two in roads/transport departments.

What can we, as government, do to eliminate bottlenecks and spur further growth and development?•
Communicating with Civil Servants

Government has made great strides in communicating with the public — in particular around government’s programme of action — but it has become clear that there’s a need to complement public communication with a major effort of internal communication to inform and mobilise public servants in all spheres to play their part fully in implementation.

The need is highlighted by the current focus on the organisation and capacity of the state, but equally by communication experience around some of the major current interventions to expand socio-economic opportunities, end social exclusion and eradicate poverty. That experience emphasises that mobilisation for implementation requires communication of government’s vision and programme both to the public and to the public service so that all can play their part in the People’s Contract.

So, what are some of the key questions around communicating with public servants?

The focus of communication in any period derives from what is needed to achieve our objectives in the prevailing environment. Two factors are critical in defining the prevailing environment, over and above issues shaping the immediate environment that evolves from year to year, month to month and day to day.

The first is that the start of this period was marked by both the beginning of the term of a government elected with a new mandate and the beginning of the Second Decade of Freedom. This has given decisive weight to the imperative of aligning communication with the policy process.

Exciting possibilities

Secondly we are experiencing “an unprecedented confluence of encourag-
ing possibilities”. Public mood is as positive as it was in the euphoria of the transition in 1994. Polls on the sense of whether the country is going in the right direction as well as the various economic confidence indicators reflect this. This is in part an effect of the Ten Year celebrations — and elections — as people reflected on the country’s progress. Sustained positive economic trends have played a major part.

The Ten Year Review itself drew conclusions with critical relevance for communication. The first concerns partnership and derives from limitations in the capacity of the state. Progress was greatest in the first ten years in areas directly under the control of the state — changing laws, providing social services, transforming state institutions.

Where there was reliance on partnership with others, or on their leadership, progress was more limited — such as investment, job-creation, and empowerment. So, building partnership, a people’s contract, is a priority for this decade. For communications this puts emphasis on articulating a vision that can harness all of society in united action around common development objectives. It implies also the importance of building communication partnerships that can promote such a vision, consolidate pride in our country and a positive image of our country abroad.

A further conclusion of the ten year review was the need to improve state performance. This applies naturally to better performance of the government communication system. A third conclusion relates to the key role of economic programmes in the coming period, informed in part by recognition of the persistence of two economies in one country, with emphasis on measures to promote the integration of all of society into a growing economy that benefits all. This places particular weight on communication to promote the success of “Second Economy” interventions.

To these communication priorities emanating from the Ten Year Review should be added those arising from the positioning of the new government as one committed to faster implementation of a detailed programme to fulfil a mandate emphasising job-creating growth and reducing poverty. In particular this requires popularising the programme of action with emphasis on implementation.

Reviewing progress

What follows is not an exhaustive statement of priorities, but a look at the most recent major initiatives that have brought significant advances in the form, content and impact of communication.

Popularising the programme of action with emphasis on implementation: This
The annual campaign to disseminate the programme of action following the President’s State of the Nation Address has grown in scale and in the range of multi-media products.

There has been greater use of broadcast media and at the same time innovation into more popular print formats - such as a photo story version of the Programme of Action, for the first time last year, serialized over five weeks in newspapers with the greatest reach amongst the poor. Dissemination of this information has become integral to the Imbizo Focus Weeks held each year.

An important innovation introduced last year is the publication on the government web site of the detailed decisions and timeframes that define the Programme of Action and the regular update of its record of progress. This element of government’s move towards a government-wide monitoring and evaluation system has had a significant impact on media coverage — and therefore on what the public knows — about government activities. It provides a frame of reference for media reporting and analysis that is available to all, a framework defined by what government has committed itself to doing.

Broadly, public awareness of the content of Programme of Action has increased compared with several years back. On the other hand it has not changed much over the past two or three years. We need some way of further extending that awareness, if South Africa is indeed to be a nation of citizens actively engaged in improving their own lives and the well-being of the nation.

Promoting partnership around common development objectives: If one enduring theme has defined democratic government’s message, expressed in different words at different times, it has been that of unity in action for change, the partnership which remains a priority of the current period. This includes cooperation both between government and sectors of society and within government.

Imbizo brings public and government — in all spheres — into interaction around implementation of the programme of action. It has proved a very popular and steadily growing platform for social mobilisation and building partnership for development.

Informed by the experience of the first years of imbizo, it has now become more integrated with municipal processes, in particular by alignment of the Municipal Imbizo Programme with Project Consolidate. Cabinet has just agreed on a detailed programme in which all Ministers and Deputy Ministers will be engaging with local municipalities identified by Project Consolidate, complementing and feeding into the work being done by the President and Deputy President in District Municipal Imbizo. This new phase reflects the evolution of imbizo from interchange of concerns and programmes to social mobilisation and administrative engagement for implementation and solution of problems.

Seminal events like the Tenth Anniversary of Freedom provide moments of great potential for advancing national unity around common goals. They demand special efforts of government to provide a compelling communication framework for the expression of a shared vision. The hosting of the 2010 world cup brings similar opportunities.

The development of communication partnerships has relevance also to particular departments and policy initiatives. Those sectors of society, experts and stakeholders who have an interest in policies are often very effective in communicating the issues.

Of special importance, and impacting especially on the work of departments concerned with international economic marketing, is the work of the International Marketing Council established as a partnership of government and private sector to bring coordination into those efforts.

Strengthening liaison amongst such departments and the IMC is currently receiving attention, intensifying communication around economic and other opportunities. Unless those who could benefit from programmes expanding economic opportunities are aware of the opportunities, the policies will fail.

In the case of our Second Economy interventions, the challenge is heightened by the fact that those who are marginalized from the main-stream economy have least access to information. Add the complexity of many programmes and their sometimes fragmented nature, the need for a single communication campaign to present all such opportunities in a single vehicle and popular form becomes compelling.

Such a campaign on economic opportunities was initiated in 2004 by the FOSAD Economic Cluster — possibly the first cluster funded programme. The publication is being revised and turned into a TV serial to be broadcast by the SABC. The response indicated both the need for such campaigns and a need to extend it to all areas of socio-opportunity, not just economic. The government magazine to be launched shortly will similarly have a focus on practical information people can use to improve their lives. This area of work can be considered a successful innovation — but it has also been one that has emphasised some of the challenges of mobilising public servants for implementation.

Critical to the dissemination of this kind of information is an infrastructure of platforms and intermediaries able to reach people who need the information. In particular that would include MPCCs, CDWs and others in provincial and municipal government, all drawing on the back-office resources of the Batho Pele Gateway and relevant structures in national departments. They need to work with one another, in alignment with local integrated development plans and provincial growth and development strategies, as well as the organisations relevant to implementation of Growth and Development Summit commitments.

Such structures therefore define a ter-
rain of strategic importance for communication to mobilise for implementation.

So what have the improvements been in government’s communication system?

Before GCIS was established there was a debate whether it should be a service — doing the communication of departments, for departments — or a system — bringing coordination, integration and coherence to the communication of departments by departments. Those who said “S” is for “System” won the day. The communication approach that resulted is informed by a few basic principles. There is considerable progress in applying them, but with some unevenness creating a constant need to strengthen and maintain the system:

• Each department/ministry should have one integrated communication component, headed by a senior official — preferably a chief director — with access to the senior management deliberations of the department — responsible to the political principal but managed by the accounting officer.

• Communication processes should be aligned with policy processes and cycles of governance. Thus we have an annual strategizing cycle aligned with the Lekgotla and State of the Nation Address (and then State of the Province Addresses). Out of these come national, cluster and departmental communication programmes for the year, informed by (and deriving from) the national framework, as well as strategies and programmes for particular campaigns or policy processes; Cabinet’s two-monthly monitoring and evaluation of the Programme of Action; monthly FOSAD cluster meetings; and fortnightly cabinet meetings defined further communication cycles.

Within departments, it is strongly recommended that departments’ communication components meet weekly to monitor implementation of strategy and identify action to be taken, in the context of the department’s current imperatives and the communication environment.

• A major current initiative is the extension to the municipal sphere of this communication methodology — building the communication system started in 1998 at national level then extended to provinces. Its extension to the local sphere brings in sight the completion of the task of creating a national communication system.

From this brief review it is clear that there is a wide repertoire of communication with the public, still evolving and not without problems, but making progress. It is common cause that we do require an intense campaign of internal communication to mobilise the public service for implementation.

The Batho Pele revitalisation is part of the response. Government does also communicate with its public service in the same ways that it communicates with the rest of society. Public servants are members of the public; they read newspapers, listen to radio and watch TV. Publishing the Programme of Action is also communication that mobilises for implementation, as any of us could testify who have had the experience of an approaching public deadline?

And there are of course many circulars and many workshops. The question is whether this is sufficient to mobilise for implementation? When we plan the implementation of programmes, and attend to supporting communication, do we give to “internal” communication the same systematic attention that we give to communication with the public? Do we draw on the same rich repertoire of products, media and platforms?

The experience of the Economic Opportunities campaign suggested that we need to supplement communication on the ethics of public service with more communication that builds understanding of the content of our programmes in the implementing structures.

An illustration of how we sometimes assume there is no need to communicate with civil servants (and a somewhat embarrassing one) was the recognition that our information products, such as those on the programme of action, have generally been distributed entirely outside of government leaving no copies for those who work in government.

What are the communication requirements for mobilising the public service to meet those challenges? What would it take, by way of products, platforms and media, to meet these requirements? If these questions become routinely part of what we ask whenever we are approaching implementation, it would indeed build our capacity for implementation and strengthen the People’s Contract for Growth and Development.
Towards a Common Ethos

The key role of the public service is effective implementation and delivery. Without implementation capacity, policies are but good intentions. I would like to offer my own perspective about some of the challenges facing the public service in Singapore. My proposition is that in seeking to build service-wide capacity, the key challenge and role of central government today is to align public agencies to deliver on national outcomes.

Many governments face common challenges today: globalisation is driving up public expectations, intensifying state competition for talent and investments and compounding pressures on social cohesion. At the same time, the volatility, the interconnected and complex nature of many issues make the business of government more demanding than ever.

The pressure on government to be more responsive to citizens and the expertise required to deal with complex issues has driven many governments towards greater decentralization. In Singapore, over the past 20 years, the number of Statutory Boards has grown from 27 in 1985 to 68 today. (Statutory boards are autonomous agencies created by an Act of Parliament to fulfill specific operational functions.) In many ways, this has been an adaptive, evolutionary response to a changing policy environment. Policy implementation has been decentralized to give agencies more flexibility and autonomy so that they can better respond to the customers and citizens they serve.

At the same time, since the mid-1990s’ authority over many human resource policies and decisions on the allocation of financial resources have been progressively devolved from the centre to give Ministries and Statutory Boards the freedom to manage their own resources. For example, we moved from line item to block budgeting to give agencies the flexibility to allocate resources to new programmes and areas of priority — without having to seek approval from the Ministry of Finance.

In such a decentralized structure,
Secondly, we seek to manage our systems better for greater effectiveness by cutting the beaurocracy, promoting organizational excellence and driving efficiency. Thirdly, we want the Singapore public service to focus on customers and citizens — to delight customers and engage the citizens we serve. I will not go into all the details of the PS21 movement here, but allow me to highlight one initiative, which has been to encourage the adoption of modern management tools across the service.

We encourage all public sector organizations to put in place organizational excellence frameworks, and attain nationally recognized certification such as the Singapore Quality Award (which is the Singapore equivalent of the European Quality Award), ISO 9001, and the People Developer Standard. If well implemented, these standards can build organizational capacity for consistently better performance.

The Singapore Quality Award allows our agencies to be compared with the best organizations in both the public and private sectors, as it is the national business excellence benchmark. It encourages agencies to take a structured approach to aligning an organization’s leadership, strategic planning, customers, key information, core processes, and people development in order to obtain sustainable results.

Today, 70% of all public sector agencies in Singapore have obtained the Singapore Quality Class, so the current PS21 focus is on organizational peer learning, to encourage progressive agencies to blaze the trail and for the rest of the service to level up.

We see the public sector reform movement as the collective responsibility of the entire public sector leadership to build service-wide capacity. This is not a programme that can be delegated or pushed by a single office. Thus, all Permanent Secretaries and CEOs participate in various committees to set the priorities for the PS21 movement, develop initiatives, oversee their implementation and report to the Committee of Permanent Secretaries.

**Networked government**

A key strategic challenge that we see is how to align public sector agencies to enhance implementation of whole-of-government outcomes. In Singapore, government is still organized primarily along vertical lines of accountability with limited formal incentives for inter-agency cooperation. We need to watch out for duplication of efforts, agencies working at cross-purposes, or worse, failing to envision, drive and optimize outcomes at the national level.

Again, our approach seeks to balance the flexibilities, expertise and responsiveness we want in a decentralized structure with the vision, coordination and coherence required to serve national interests and outcomes.

Many governments have swung back and forth over the years between decentralization and centralization of powers. In recent years, many Commonwealth countries have moved to strengthen the role of the Cabinet Office, Treasury or...
the Prime Minister’s Office to improve horizontal management and delivery on government priorities.

In Singapore, the role of the centre continues to be debated, and while our approach is still evolving, we have as yet resisted growing the centre or making significant structural changes to increase central command and control. Instead, we recognize the need for a small but active centre, which pro-actively builds the organizational software required to get people from different agencies to work towards common purposes. Our approach is more about aligning key organisational elements — vision, leadership, mindsets, perspectives, ideas, relationships, values, structures, strategic planning processes, funding and human resource levers, — than it is about formal structures and central directives.

Leadership and accountability

The key to alignment lies in leadership. Ultimately, in a democratic parliamentary system, the elected political leadership provides the national vision and direction to inspire and unite state and non-state players. The Cabinet remains the key working forum to set long term strategic priorities, coordinate and decide on strategic trade-offs.

Accountability structures at the political level are also needed to drive and clear roadblocks for strategic national issues which involve several agencies or may not even be “owned” by any one agency. In Singapore, these issues have been taken up by inter-ministerial committees. One such committee is currently looking at the issue of the widening income gap. Other committees look at demographic issues such as the low birth rate and the challenges of an ageing population. Another cross-agency problem, terrorism, saw the pooling together of experts and efforts under a National Security Coordination Secretariat. This comes under the Prime Minister’s Office, headed by a Coordinating Deputy Prime Minister.

Structures and processes

At the level of the public service, we have traditionally had the Committee of Permanent Secretaries which meets regularly and serves as a platform for alignment among the public sector leadership. We are also evolving new structures and processes aimed at aligning strategic planning with resources and implementation capacity.

Finally, we have developed strategic issues groups which are coordinated by the Strategic Policy Office in the Prime Minister’s Office. These are inter-ministry teams sponsored by Permanent Secretaries that study strategic cross-agency issues and make policy recommendations. They are a vehicle for the government to think ahead and drive policy development on emerging cross-cutting issues. Permanent Secretaries of economic and social ministries and agencies also chair the Economic Forum and Social Forum respectively. These Forums serve to resolve cross-agency issues and clear obstacles to implementation.

Leadership

Finally, Singapore has always held the belief that leadership is the key to doing the right things and doing them right.

We believe that the public sector must have its fair share of top talent. We have ensured this through competitive remuneration and a strong talent management system. We award government scholarships, identify the most promising civil servants and other candidates from the private sector for absorption into the premier Administrative Service and develop them systematically through a series of postings across agencies and key milestone training pro-
Apart from developing leadership and management competencies, our leadership development programmes have several objectives. Firstly, to foster a common ethos we focus on building a common understanding of the principles of governance which underpin economic, social and security policies in Singapore and strengthening commitment to our core Public Service Values of integrity, service and excellence. Secondly, through postings to different Ministries, and various policy forums, we seek to develop among public service leaders, a shared perspective of national interests, rather than take a narrow, agency-centric view. Thirdly, by bringing people from different agencies together, we cultivate the informal relational networks which enable them to work effectively across boundaries.

While we have a strategic focus on developing the Administrative Service and public sector leaders, we recognize that training and developing all public officers is an important part of capacity building. Under the public sector reform movement, all public officers, from the counter clerk to the permanent secretary, are entitled to 100 training hours a year. While it is the responsibility of each agency to equip their officers with the functional competencies required to perform their jobs effectively, we now recognize that building the implementation capacity for networked government demands that we take a broader view of talent management and develop competent leaders. We are thus extending milestone programmes to managers at all levels across the service, where we bring supervisors from different agencies together to give them a sense that they belong to the wider public service.

To sum up, state institutions must adapt and change the way they are organized to deal with the more unpredictable and complex world. Except in certain contexts such as emergencies, traditional hierarchical structures which rely on central directives alone will not be adaptive. Instead a decentralized, horizontal network of partners and stakeholders which provide diverse perspectives, resources and expertise will be required to deal with complex national challenges. However, it remains the role of the central agencies and the collective responsibility of the public sector leadership to drive service-wide capacity building and to align the many agencies and stakeholders behind a common vision and coherent strategies.

In Singapore, our approach to developing implementation capacity has been to align key organizational systems and to pay attention to soft issues like organizational and people development in order to obtain sustainable results. We have evolved new structures to deal with cross-cutting issues and sought to align our strategic planning and budget processes towards whole-of-government outcomes. But we see that developing competent public sector leaders, who share a common ethos and have shared perspectives as well as strong relational networks, are what give life to a networked government.
We are a nation that tries a lot of things. We learn from other people. If something seems to be working, we stick with it for a while until it causes problems and then we change.

Botswana has gone through major transformation ever since it became independent in 1966. The major achievement for the country has been the development of the National Vision 2016, which sets out in detail strategies that we will enable us to realize our national aspirations.

In addition, we have national development plans, which are embarked on every six years when priorities are set and refined. We also have public service reforms that are critical because we use them to enhance service delivery.

Research conducted in Botswana suggests that we are good at developing policies and plans, but more often than not, implementation and delivery elude the entire government system. So the reforms are trying to drive us towards improving service delivery.

I will dwell on the performance of the delivery system which is one of the many public service reforms we are engaged in. We consider this one to be a key reform initiative in the sense that it tries to focus the entire government system.

The performance government system was brought in because there were serious problems in the delivery of government services to Botswana citizens. There are four primary problem areas:

- Firstly, we had the plans and resources, but we could not deliver on the promises that the government made to the constituency;
- Secondly, the public service had become so insensitive that civil servants were the masters instead of the servants. The Director-Generals, Directors and Supervisor’s offices were no-go areas to the public. The public did not know where to go and who to contact when they had problems. Citizens did not think they were getting their money’s worth;
- Thirdly, we needed to align planning with the budgeting process; and
- Lastly, we had to ensure that there is effective performance in delivery by the whole organization and individuals.

As a result, for the first time in the his-
Managed performance

Every director and above, in Botswana, manages his or her human resources. Of course they work with the HR department, but it is the director’s responsibility to make sure that he or she has the right people in his or her department and ministry. Clearly defined outputs and measurements are important especially when delivery is reviewed. That is why targets and measures that are to be taken to meet the targets have to be agreed on from the onset. When performance is reviewed, the discussion is about what I have done. Here, there is a need to eliminate “stories” and focus on the actual work done.

Lastly, there are quarterly reviews that can be done as frequently as possible depending on the type of work and the amount that is produced from it. The head of the civil service should know what should be achieved at specific quarters of the year. If a senior manager has not met the targets, he or she should state what she is going to do in order to make sure that the targets are met.

Senior executives are directly involved with issues of internal corporate management. They are managing sub-warranties of budgets, people, and dealing with information on a regular basis and managing resources. If senior managers do not understand these processes, they have not understood their business or what they are doing to make sure that they improve their performance and enhance delivery.

What happens during a performance review? During these reviews we focus on agreed outputs. The conversation is not on the target. Rather, we look at what is supposed to be done and assess the progress. We ask, “are we on track or not?” The review tracks performance. Secondly, there is a form that is used at the highest level that we call the Assessment Form for directors and above. This is when you recall decisions, observations and what you, as the owner of the performance agreement, are going to do as well as what your superiors are going to do to make sure that you perform better. There might be a need to enhance certain skills. It is not only my responsibility to ensure that I get those skills; it is also the responsibility and prerogative of my supervisor to make sure that for me to deliver, I must have those skills. If I do not perform my supervisor does not perform. This is how performance management system works in Botswana.

A week or two before I meet with the head of the civil service, I must have submitted a report on what I have done during the review period. He or she must have read it by the time we meet. This saves time because when we meet we do not waste time discussing things that are going well. It is mostly the red and yellow areas that are discussed – areas where there are problems. If I am experiencing problems, I must go to the review with solutions on how I am going to deal with those problems. The meeting is not the forum to start strategising about how things will be done. I have to have thought about what I am going to do and the head of the civil service must either approve or turn down my proposals. By doing performance reviews this way, we have cut the time for these meetings from 30 minutes to between 5 and 10 minutes.

Emphasis on measurement

When we started this process, even the lawyers, the Attorney General, did not believe that performance can be measured. Now when we talk about effective prosecution of cases, we are talking numbers. To the common person on the street, it is not justice if I am arrested and only brought before the court 24 or 36 months later. The emphasis on measuring is the only way that you can track
performance.

There are five areas that we focus on during the review. The first involves programs, policies, projects and implementation. The focus is on how far is one in terms of implementing policies and programs. The second is strategic leadership. Because we are going through transformation, we felt it necessary to include this in the review process. Here we look at how you manage teams, performance, and how you delegate. The third focus area of the review is financial management. Ever since I was a student at the University of Botswana, I have not seen the Public Accounts Committee Reports and the Auditor-General Reports that spoke about the public service and the accounting officers. The key question is whether the official whose performance is being reviewed has followed the necessary processes and whether the functions are working effectively. So we are holding senior officers accountable for the management of resources.

The official being reviewed should also inform the head of civil service of the efficacy of knowledge retaining strategies, whether they work or not. We are also keen on how people are managed to enhance their collective energies for the benefit of service delivery.

Customer focus

As a result of the performance management system, even the grand parents in the villages can go to the post office and demand a service. It is the public that can make the public service work. Batswana people are known to be very humble. But if you do not give them a service they have learned to demand it. The key thing about the customer is the way we behave. You may not provide the service that the member of the public wants, but the manner in which you treat that individual can make them feel happy even if they did not get what they wanted. This is what we are trying to achieve, even though we have not achieved it yet — we aspire to it.

You may not provide the service that the member of the public wants, but the manner in which you treat that individual can make them feel happy even if they did not get what they wanted.

We have projects as ministries, particularly development projects which cost the government a lot of money. They are building houses, offices and so forth. As they build these, the manner in which they supervise those projects has always been a problem. A 15 million Pula is usually double the original cost by the time it is completed. This is what used to happen in Botswana. It is still happening to some extent, but they are putting systems in place to start managing that as a result performance management system.

Challenges and solutions

The permanent secretary to the President reviews all the director-Generals on the quarterly basis. At the beginning, it was not a pretty sight, but it has improved. People are beginning to understand why they have to go through such processes. The permanent secretary provides reports half-yearly to Cabinet on the performance of the public service. The Cabinet discusses these reports and can identify institutions that need assistance. The same reports go to the vice-president whose role it is to manage the public service and government. The vice-president reviews the performance of ministries and meets cabinet ministers on a quarterly basis to find out how are they doing and what are the major challenges. The focus here is mainly on development projects — those that are delivering services to primary schools, hospitals, and so forth. The ministries, the Director-Generals, the permanent secretary of the President and the Vice-President all produce their reports. Also the Deputy Director-Generals, heads of departments produce reports.

We link these reports to the National Development Plan. So we can begin to tell whether the government is on track in terms of delivery or not. We also have a District Development Plan. The same process is done with the District Development Plan.

What works?

For you to monitor implementation and performance you have to have systems that will enable you to track it. It is even better to develop a system that makes sense to you as an individual, as a department, or as a section. You have to tell us how long it used to take you to deliver a service and how you will cut short that delivery process.

Also important is the issue of timed intervention. Performance management has enabled us to identify departments that need assistance and provide them with necessary support.

What seems not to be working? The priorities of the cabinet have to be the priorities of government and the public service. More often than not the cabinet comes in the middle of the year and says we are going to do this and they put a directive out that these are the things to do without looking at the availability of resources. They add this to the other priorities that they have given you. There is never a conversation that says “we have given you these priorities and how are we juggling them” which is more important. Last year we had the first Cabinet retreat with a focus on public service to ensure that government works as a unit.
I want to explain what the Department of Education (DoE), Department of Labour (DoL) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) are doing to build a solid skills base for sustainable development. In my experience, many Senior Management staff as well as other public servants tend to talk either about being glad that their children are going to escape the new curriculum or, that they are going to send their children to private schools. This is horrifying. Here, I intend to make sure that you have a deeper understanding of what we are doing in education to build the solid skills base and to make you advocates of what it is that the government is trying to do.

Current public discourse suggests that skills development is something that you can do very quickly and that it will then be able to lead quickly to the accelerated growth of the economy. When people talk about the skills base, they tend to focus on vocational skills. The way that the DoE with DoL and DST approach this, is that we need to start by laying the foundations for skills development.

The Deputy President indicated this in her introduction to the Accelerated Growth Strategy when she said she saw skills development in three levels, namely the basic foundation level, the intermediate level and the higher education level.

I want to concentrate on the area of laying the foundations and the intermediary skills. I will start by looking at the goals that government hopes to achieve and the interventions that we will introduce over the next 5-10 years. It is to the credit of the South African government that we have managed to reach the targets for primary school and university enrollments well ahead of the 2015 deadline set out in the millennium goals for developing counties. In fact, in 2006 it looks as though we will have a million children, aged 16, in Grade 10.

The other two foundations, the integrated and child development strategy and enrolling all five year olds at Grade R, are not so much about quality but are questions of access. We have a long way to go. I want to disaggregate them because I think it is important to say that
the ECD strategy is an integrated strategy with the Departments of Health and Social Development. This is targeted at children of up to 4 years of age. This is not a strategy that aims to institutionalize children. It is much more about health, safety and cognitive development than putting all children into a childhood centre.

Nonetheless, we do have to expand access of the 0 to 4 year olds to childhood centres. Perhaps more importantly, those that are involved in looking after children need to know that their role is not just about looking after the baby. This is especially in working class families. It is important here that cognitive development takes place. One of our strategies is to ensure the correct stimulations happen in the 0 to 4 age group. That is what happens in many middle class families and childhood centers.

The second strategy is enrolling all 5 year olds in Grade R. Unfortunately, the data is not good. It seems to us that there are 3,000 children in Grade A out of 1 million, but at the same time there are many independent childhood centers and many independent Grade R centers.

Little centers of 5 to 10 children also focus on the same function. So you cannot talk about specific data here, we need to get more.

Like the ECD strategy, this is about getting all learners into an extra year of schooling. It is a time when they are very amenable and able to absorb. It is important for us to know that 5 year olds get an extra year of schooling which provides the pre-literacy, the pre-communication skills that gives children a good start when they get to school. The goal we have set for ourselves in Education is to have all 5 year olds enrolled in Grade R classrooms by 2010.

Improving the quality of primary schools provision

The results have not been good in many of the international studies that South Africa has participated in. Many people are concerned about the reading and calculation levels of our Grade three and Grade 6 learners. I think that concern is well founded and that we have to do something about it. There are studies that say that the reading and calculating capacities are not determined by the environment. You will find kids who are taught in poorly equipped rooms being able to read, write and calculate like the most privileged children.

The point that we need to make is that we cannot allow our teachers and our children to be in overcrowded classes, in schools where there is no water, electricity, toilets, not enough desks, chairs.

So the capitalization of our poorest schools which started this year seeks to make sure that every young person from 6 to 9 years has the basic facilities to learn to read and write. The most important thing we want to do is to make sure that every child has a hundred reading books in their own language and classroom. This hope can change the love of reading and the ability to read. Of course this is not the total solution, it begins with what the teacher does, but at the same time it is a necessary condition for improving reading and writing capacity. No-fee schools are a controversial decision, but aimed at making sure that our poorest people are able to access quality education. These three interventions provide basic resources for our schools.

There is a strong emphasis on reading, writing and calculating and testing them to see whether there is improvement, both against our curriculum and internationally. It is important to see if we have laid the foundations.

Intermediate skills

What is important in the intermediary skills is to improve the throughput of Grade 9 to 12 and to increase the enrollment and throughput to vocational programmes in FET colleges. As I indicated earlier, next year we will have 500,000 people who will write the national senior certificate. This has been a trend for the last 8 to 9 years. Currently we have 600,000 Grade 10s which drops dramatically to 550,000 Grade 11s. Clearly there is a drop-out trend and we are certain that those young people are not going out to FET
colleges. They often cannot afford to access FET colleges.

**Interventions for development**

We have to do three things. Firstly, we have to ensure the basics — reading, writing and numeracy skills have been put in place in the first 9 years. Many of those who drop out have just not attained the necessary skills for learning. The second thing is that many young people do not have access to career guidance, to choosing the correct subjects. We will go through a campaign (using the Sunday Times newspaper) with the Grade 9s to make sure that they choose the right subjects, that they know about FET colleges and that they know that the decisions they take in Grade 9 can affect their lives. So the second thing that we need to put into place other then the basic skills, is to make sure that there is good career guidance for all our young people in Grade 9.

For the children who are unemployed and out of school, we would also like to establish a student support unit at every FET college. While there are only 50 FET colleges, they have multiple sites. So there are 210 sites available to us. We believe that the student support unit can provide career guidance, not only to the learners who are there at the colleges, but also to unemployed youth. We would like to have a big centre at each of the sites so that the unemployed youth can also come in to get some IT skills, develop curriculum vitae’s and find out what courses are on offer. They can also find out what labour market opportunities are available to them.

The third thing is improving the throughput of Grades 9 to 12 is to introduce a new curriculum. What we have currently is out of date. It has a very small focus on Africa and South Africa. The idea is that young people who leave the system in 2008 have much higher skills and knowledge levels.

**Interventions**

Improving throughput to professional programs in FET colleges will require the same care. FET college lecturers say that the young people who are accessing the FET colleges do not have mathematics and languages to participate meaningfully in the vocational courses. There is a misconception that the FET courses are vocational and low level. This is not true. Mathematics and high language skills are important requirements for participating in vocational programs.

The second big thing that we want to do is double the numbers of learners in higher grade mathematics by 2008. In 2004, 24,000 young people registered to do higher grade mathematics and science. They were largely white learners. We want to double the number by 2008 and change this profile. We have discovered an exciting thing — that there were 480 schools in 2004 who had more than 30 African learners doing standard grade who achieved more than an E. If you get more than an E (46%), it means that you have the potential (with lots of hard work and a good higher grade teacher) to move those learners from standard grade to higher grade. In other words, to give them access to higher education. So we have chosen the 480 schools very carefully. There are a range of schools, but the minimum criterion is that they have a history of good performance in standard grade. We will then provide these schools with resources.

**FET re-capitalisation**

The development of FET colleges has been given huge impetus by the recapitalisation of colleges. The DoE, in collaboration with the DoL, has been given R50 million to plan for the spending of R1.5 billion, which is the recapitalisation budget. Many people, including National Treasury, sometimes thought that by recapitalisation we meant constructing buildings and buying equipment. The recapitalisation that we are talking about will be in line with quality programs.

So when the 50 colleges put in their proposals to access this money, the first thing we are going to look at is what programs they intend to offer, what is the current enrollment on those programs, and what the local labour market survey shows the possibilities of uptake in those areas is. It could be that some programs will require more recapitalisation, including recruitment, support for poor young learners and support for lecturers. In other cases, such as niche areas, engineering, we will spend a lot of money in providing workshops.

Planning here is very important. There is a need to do research in order to have useful data. We will use some of the R50 million to do this so that we have reliable data, to defend the decisions that we make.

There are five aspects to the planning and these have to run at the same time to make sure that the presentation to Treasury takes account of all the things that we need to go through in the recapitalisation. The first three are the research aspects, the labour market survey and to make sure that what we do is not just narrow skills development that will disappear in two or three years time as the South African economy and the labour market changes. We must provide long-term skills for sustainable development.

The fourth aspect of the planning process involves a detailed audit of the 210 FET college sites and the infrastructure and ICT that they have. We have doubled the number of young people from 200,000 to 400,000 in FET colleges in the last four years. We want to reach 1 million young people in 2010. We have also provided intellectual and financial support to 50 colleges. All of them have submitted their draft plans. We are working with the provinces to make sure that these plans address the skills need.

If we are going to take all the obstacles out of skills development, we have to make sure that we re-look at the FET efforts (now in its fifth draft) to be taken to parliament in 2006. There is a lot of work to be done to make sure that skills development takes place.
Our current head of state, when he was the deputy president of South Africa, spoke about African renewal and the African Renaissance. He began to ask questions as to why it is that the African continent is marginalized in global processes? He asked why it is that Africans are killing each other? Why is it that we are repressing each other? He asked many other questions relating to problems of Africa, including diseases, poverty, malaria, HIV/AIDS and cholera. He then began the process known as the African Renaissance. It was in the context of addressing the conditions that would lead Africa to sustainable development.

In 1999 the chairperson of the non-aligned movement in the extraordinary summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), together with president Olusegun Obasanjo as the chairperson of the group of 77, were mandated to engage Africa’s developmental partners on the African debt crisis. At the very same time, Mbeki was working on what was then called the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan together with Obasanjo. In 2000 it became quite clear that the Millennium African Recovery Plan had to give economic content to Africa’s renewal. Then proposals were made to the OAU Summit. It was agreed that these plans should be met. A process of merging the two plans began. Those who understand the political consideration and the diplomatic geometry of the continent understand the difficulties in doing so.

Finally, in 2001, after marathon sessions in various capital cities of the continent, a plan was adopted during the seventh session of the OAU in Lusaka in July 2001 called the African Initiative. When the document was negotiated among various stakeholders coming from diverse backgrounds — it was sort of a convoluted document. However, the OAU had mandated the five initiating African states to supervise the
implementation of the African Initiative and ensure its functioning. The first meeting of the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee met in Abuja in October 2001. The document was reworked and became known as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD).

Objectives and principles of NEPAD

NEPAD seeks to accelerate the eradication of poverty in Africa and address the inequality between Africa and the developed world. It also seeks to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development. Lastly, NEPAD intends to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process.

The Principles that underlie NEPAD are:

• African ownership and leadership of the development programme.
• Anchoring the development of the continent on the resources and resourcefulness of the African people.
• Accelerating and deepening of regional and continental economic integration.
• A new partnership among Africans and between Africans and the international community.
• Comprehensive, holistic and integrated development programme for Africa adopted by the AU.

NEPAD as a strategic framework

NEPAD as a strategic framework is anchored on three principles. The first principle is creating conditions for sustainable development. Central here is peace and security, integration; strengthening capacity of conflict resolution; democracy and human rights; political, economic and corporate good governance; and accelerating regional economic integration.

The second principle is accelerating policy reforms and investment in high priority sectors. Here, infrastructure, agriculture and nutritional food security, health, education, environment, tourism, Information Communication Technology (ICT), science and technology, and diversification of production and exports and so forth.

The third principle is mobilizing resources and altering the relationship with developed countries and multilateral institutions in overseas development assistance, foreign direct investment, debt relief, and market access.

Progress to date

NEPAD has strengthened political leadership in conflict resolution and is championed socio-economic transformation in Africa. When NEPAD was born it energized the establishment of protocols of peace and security in the AU. The
South African President has played a leading role in this. NEPAD developed policy frameworks and detailed plans for transformation of key sectors such as agriculture, health, infrastructure, ICT, science and technology, political, economic and corporate governance, and capacity building in the public sector. NEPAD has also completed preparations for the African Peer Review process to address issues of democracy, political economy, and governance.

The capabilities of the Regional Economic Communities (REC) to lead effectively in the implementation of the NEPAD programme have been strengthened. REC members hold quarterly meetings. NEPAD has also engaged the multilateral development finance institutions and development partners on the nature and scale of development support. The biggest of these institutions is the World Bank and the G8. The engagement of the G8 was an initiative of NEPAD’s Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee. Now it has become an annual engagement and there is structured engagement through the African Partnership Forum. Lastly, NEPAD has also mobilized the private sector and civil society.

Challenges

NEPAD was born at a particular historical context in the continent, when the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was being transformed into the African Union. The OAU was moving from political organization to union, from non-interference to interference. It was also moving from separation in terms of work, to integration.

The other challenges facing NEPAD include broadening the ownership of NEPAD and strengthening African political leadership. Furthermore, the Development Bank of Southern Africa is leading a process of establishing a network of development finance institutions and building capacity for the development of financial institutions on the African continent.

Strengthening the NEPAD Secretariat is another major challenge. NEPAD also faces the challenge of strengthening and enhancing international partnerships with a view of maintaining focus on Africa ownership by Africans. Increasing resource flows such as overseas development assistance, foreign direct investment and engaging multilateral development institutions. South Africa is the number one investor on the African continent. It even outstrips the United Kingdom and the United States combined.

I conclude by outlining three critical issues that are facing the Senior Management Service (SMS). The first issue facing the SMS is concretizing the link between policies and activities. This will require strategic alignment between planning processes across government spheres (national, provincial and local) and actual delivery activities. In other words, we must ensure alignment between NEPAD commitments and objectives, South African foreign policy framework and departmental mandate (sector specific) with actual activities. Critical in this is having a clear and common understanding of the policy imperative — that is South Africa’s agenda for the African continent. We need to have a vigorous and critical engagement with issues. In addition, there is also a need to strengthen the coordination and relevance of activities between departments.

The second issue entails strengthening our abilities to make strategic choices and leveraging our international engagements. The focus should be on actual activities within the context of bilateral processes, memoranda of understanding and other international engagements such as exchange visits. Within our respective sector and departmental mandates we should ask: to what extent are our collaborations and co-operations relevant, feasible and adding value to South Africa’s Africa agenda? Are senior managers going around the African continent as tourists or are they having a critical and strategic agenda that they communicate throughout their travels? SMS should also ask if it is equipped with the requisite skills to negotiate and engage on substantive and strategic issues, especially when engaging in international forums? Are we clear about what we should come home with when engaging in these forums? SMS should also make a major contribution to building confidence in African institutions. This can include encouraging their use and support in terms of strengthening their capabilities. Here there is a need to establish the balance between our use of African versus non-African institutions when we engage in capacity development.

The last critical issue facing the SMS is understanding their role as senior managers in relation to South Africa’s African Agenda. Here, SMS need abilities to identify opportunities and give guidance in choices that should be made versus micro management. They also need to maintain a balance between efficiency and efficacy. Are we doing the correct things in the most effective manner? Linked to this, is the need to create clear linkages between individual performance measures and institutional priorities. SMS should also engage in activities that add concrete value to the overall departmental mandate. Lastly, providing thought leadership should be central to SMS.
The theme of the fourth Senior Management Service (SMS) conference, “Building Implementation Capacity for Sustainable Growth and Development: Implications for the Public Service”, sought to deal with what Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi referred to as “the single most important question that the Executive has been grappling with at the beginning of our second decade in government”, namely: Do we really have the capacity to implement our developmental programmes?

Professor Richard Levin, Director General of the Department of Public Service and Administration, reminded the conference that there are different kinds of capacity. These include ideological state capacity, political capacity, technical capacity and implementation capacity. He indicated that implementation capacity, the focus of the conference, refers to “...the skills and other resources needed to successfully implement policy and achieve their intended objectives”.

In a similar vein Minister Fraser-Moleketi pointed out that capacity is multi-dimensional and dynamic. It is therefore necessary to acknowledge both its internal and external dimensions. Internal dimensions of capacity include financial and other resource support, structures, systems, processes, culture, leadership, coordination mechanisms, etc. The external dimension is primarily about the capacity to manage participatory processes between the public service and external actors and stakeholders. Such participatory processes help improve the quality of policy and programme decisions.

It is thus important to acknowledge the multi-dimensional nature of capacity, or as the President put in his 2005 State of the Nation Address, the notion of “all-round capacity”. This is an important departure from previous discussions on capacity which were largely dominated by issues of skills development. Although skills are an important dimension, they alone will not be enough to address the capacity challenges that the public service faces.

In the absence of implementation capacity, even transformation instruments such as decentralization are unlikely to yield their intended outcomes. For example, the public service
human resource framework was decentralized as part of the initial set of public service reforms in democratic South Africa. Although this was done with the good intention of empowering managers to make critical decisions, departments have not always had the requisite capacity to implement, thus leading to, among other things, inconsistencies in the application of the policy.

Such inconsistencies are evident even in the way different departments do job grading, where similar jobs are sometimes graded differently depending on the department/province. Therefore, decentralizing without considering and attending to capacity issues is undesirable. Against this background, Minister Mufamadi emphasized that the national and provincial spheres of government should ensure that they do not decentralize to local government based on untested assumptions of what exists on the ground.

How do all these debates on capacity relate to sustainable growth and development? The theme of the conference was quite clear that the challenges of implementation capacity would not be discussed in a vacuum, but rather within the context of implementing government’s developmental programmes. Accordingly, speakers reminded the conference of the developmental orientation of the South African state. Deputy Minister of Finance, Jabu Moloketi, pointed out that the concept of a developmental state needs to be understood not just in terms of growth, but also in terms of creating a balance between flexibility and responsiveness (or PS 21). The country actively seeks to create a balance between flexibility and responsiveness (done through decentralization), and vision, co-ordination and cohesion (to meet national cross-cutting objectives).

Although South Africa has experienced economic growth (relative to pre-1994), there are still many people who are trapped in poverty. Income gaps continue to increase, but this time the gaps are no longer along racial lines. Thus, Deputy Minister Moloketi pointed out, is the moral dilemma of the democratic government. The country’s focus cannot therefore just be on economic growth. It has to include conscious efforts of ensuring a better life for all in a manner that is sustainable.

Currently, the country is enjoying the benefits of its economic turn around, reflected in, among other things, an average economic growth rate of 3%, increased investment spending, reduced deficit, and improved credit ratings. There is a serious increase in consumer spending, but this is unfortunately not sustainable, especially in an environment where there isn’t an accompanying increase in production to meet consumer demand. It is therefore necessary to increase investment spending, an area in which government has been lagging behind relative to the private sector. A number of presentations unpacked this challenge further and highlighted current initiatives that seek to improve the situation.

For example, the Transnet Case Study showed how their aging infrastructure results in huge transport costs for the South African economy and raises risks of losing important economic opportunities. The parastatal’s turn-around plan thus includes, among other things, a sizeable investment in infrastructure. Similarly, in outlining efforts to unblock the implementation of the Growth and Development Summit priorities agreed to two years ago, Herbert Mkhize from NEDLAC reminded the conference that addressing the investment challenge was one of the key themes around which agreements of the summit were clustered.

However, this is where the capacity issue rears its ugly face again. As Jabu Moloketi pointed out, there are serious capacity problems in terms of meaningfully planning for and managing the implementation of infrastructure projects. It is against this background that government has introduced initiatives such as the Infrastructure Delivery Improvement Programme (IDIP), primarily to address these kinds of capacity problems.

**Key issues**

The following are some of the key issues that seemed to stand out during conference deliberations:

- The advent of globalization means that South Africa is part of a community of global actors. It is thus affected by external factors.
- Discussions on building implementation capacity should not be divorced from the broader processes of restructuring and developing Africa.
- Capacity problems in the public service are often aggravated by a lack of integration of key processes such as strategic planning, budgeting, human resource planning, human resource development, human resource management, organizational structures, and monitoring and evaluation. The case studies from Botswana and Singapore shed some light on how, among other things, the two countries deal with some of the integration challenges. In Botswana, there is a process of ensuring clear linkages between the country’s National Vision 2016, the 6 year National Development Plans and the Annual Performance Plans of departments. In Singapore, the guiding vision is called the Public Service for the 21st Century (or PS 21). The country actively seeks to create a balance between flexibility and responsiveness (done through decentralization), and vision, co-ordination and cohesion (to meet national cross-cutting objectives).
- Building solid human resource capacity requires a sound human resource development strategy for the public sector. The education sector has a profound role to play to ensure that the right foundations are laid and that appropriate intermediary skills are developed at the level of schools and FET colleges.
- There are high levels of interdependence between the spheres of government. They are therefore required to work together if they are to achieve government’s objectives. For this to happen, there is a need to move away from a narrow understanding of and debates on mandates.
- Implementation capacity is also affect-
ed by the dynamics of the interface between administrators and the Executive. The administrator, Minister Fraser-Moleketi argued, has an important role in providing sufficient information to the Executive, outlining all policy options and their full implications, and making informed recommendations. Unfortunately, some administrators do not fulfill this role. Instead, they embark on what may be referred to as ‘bureaucratic sabotage’. Hiding behind the veil of ‘professionalism’ and ‘managerial autonomy’, such managers opt to distort information communicated to the Executive as well as engage in other rent-seeking and self-serving tendencies.

The conference acknowledged that a lot is already being done to build implementation capacity. Existing initiatives include Project Consolidate, instruments for strengthening intergovernmental relations (such as the IGR Act, the Medium Term Strategic Framework), the Expanded Public Works Programme, etc. In addition, the following were some of the key areas that seemed to need attention:

- Strengthening the Human Resource Development Strategy of the Public Sector
- Reviewing conditions of service and ensuring creative staffing solutions. These could include appointing senior managers to the service and not to a post, promoting increased application of competency assessments as a selection tool, ensuring the retention of professionals, leveraging resources from outside the public service (including retired professionals), and revisiting the ‘non-return’ clause for public servants who had earlier opted for the Voluntary Severance Package (VSP) scheme.
- Enhanced training and development, including the creation of better internship opportunities for young graduates, ensuring better alignment between university programmes and the country’s skills requirements, promoting the notion of training/development that produces job-makers and not job-seekers, and embracing talent management strategies (drawing from the experiences of Singapore and Transnet)
- Promoting a mindset shift among public servants, including embracing the attributes of a ‘Delta Type’ civil servant. These attributes include super-professionalism and a strong sense of mission
- Improving coherence in the macro-organisation of the state. This would involve adopting innovative approaches to structure, and optimizing resource utilization through improved departmental/cluster collaboration
- Improving communication. A key question that needs to be asked is whether the government’s communication plan pays enough attention to public servants. Government communication should not only be directed at the public but at public servants as well. Indeed, by doing this government would actually be mobilizing internal capacity. It was pointed out, for example, that because of not being sufficiently informed about developments elsewhere in the Continent, a lot of officials show reluctance when they are expected to support government’s programme of consolidating the African agenda, including post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

- Promoting innovation. Given the capacity challenges, the public service has an obligation to innovate and learn simultaneously.
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation. This would not only ensure improved accountability for policy outcomes, but would also support informed decision-making and promote learning.

A strong message that emerged was that public service managers dare not fold their arms and expect the Department of Public Service and Administration to follow up on these issues and ‘report back’ at the next SMS conference. As Minister Fraser Moleketi reminded delegates: “You are, after all, the SMS”, and for those who may still have wondered what that meant, the SMS should take this work forward because, in the words of Professor Levin, senior managers “are leaders, pace setters and role models”. •
In the first decade of democratic governance, we democratized all institutions of government. We made major departures from Apartheid bureaucracy and ensured that resources of the country would benefit all citizens, without regard to colour, creed, race or gender.

To ensure that all spheres of the public service were adhering to the same standards and credo, we developed and introduced the Senior Management Service (SMS) Framework in 2001. A year later we held the first conference called “Moving the Public Service from Policy to Implementation”. These conferences have been taking place annually ever since and each year, the theme has been different.

In view of our goals for a market-oriented economy, government has the obligation to see to it that our markets function efficiently and that the playing field is level for all participants in our economy. The success of government’s role in market regulation is dependent on operating rules that do not discriminate between economies, individual participants or interest groups.

Given the role of government as the economic development manager of South Africa, the public service, more specifically, you, senior managers and leaders as delegated economic development managers therefore, share government’s unequivocal responsibility and accountabilities. Government’s policy choices have been made and, the best provincial growth and development strategies developed. Now responsibilities need to be followed. It is my hope that this conference will further your recognition of the importance of leadership and management.

Good governance is demanded to make sure that implementation is effective and consistent. The term ‘Good Governance’ will be used quite often. It means different things to different people. It is then perhaps useful, therefore, to clarify the sense in which I understand its meaning. I am sure you will agree with me that from the viewpoint of government’s policy it means: “The manner in which power of leadership is exercised in the administration and management of government’s economic and social resources for development”.

On this meaning, the concept of governance is concerned directly with your management of our policies. It encompasses the functioning and capability of the public service, the rules the conduct of both public and private business, including accountability for economic and financial performance, and regulatory frameworks relating to companies, corporations and partnerships.

The capacity of management and leadership is important for our economic and development because it helps
determine the impact achieved by the economic policies adopted by the government.

Not alone

We have in our recent discussions and deliberations in the Gauteng Provincial government compared ourselves to developing countries with whom we have both good international relations, but who are potential economic competitors or perhaps, collaborators on a limited scale.

These countries, among them India, the People's Republic of China and Brazil, face large-scale development challenges in relation to unemployment and poverty and have even larger "Second Economies" and "First Economies" than ours.

Nevertheless, they have made great strides in the past many decades, particularly in the past decade with consistent sizeable increases in GDP, for instance, India 8.1 percent, China 9.5 percent and Brazil 5.2 percent. These are 2004 figures.

They have done so using a variety of strategies. The Chinese government had made ‘low cost’ money available to entrepreneurs in state owned businesses to buy up firms in the West. One common theme for all these economies is that they have defined themselves as “knowledge economies”. The intensity of knowledge vested in products and in services, including public services, has become so significant that this ‘new knowledge’ is having very positive spin-offs for their respective economies.

India and China are noted for their focus on innovation in computer software and automotive manufacturing. But these countries are not only introducing innovations in their economy. They are determinedly introducing innovations in their public services, using technology in health, education and support for small business to ensure efficient and high quality services to their citizens.

Although policy aspects are important for development, my concept of good governance focuses essentially on the ingredients for effective management. In other words, irrespective of the precise set of economic policies that government and provinces have set, good governance – your leadership and management is required to ensure that those policies have their desired effect. In essence, it concerns norms of behaviour that could help ensure that governments actually deliver to their citizens what they say they will.

Developing a competitive edge

How can we in South Africa utilize our public servants and their knowledge to ensure that we change the current reality of poverty and inequality? Especially for the 44 percent of households who live on incomes under R10 000 per year?

In order to answer this question, we have developed an interest in the concept of the Globally Competitive City Region because the City Region perspective is a new way in which we look at economic and social development. It requires an understanding of the significance of the city-region as an economic motor of the country and the African continent, and its ranking among global cities.

If Gauteng is to be competitive among its global peers, we must accept that an increasingly global economy places extra responsibility on governance and leadership to deal with high development costs, inefficient urban environments, barriers to growth, underused or mis-placed urban assets and infrastructure, as well as low social capital and human development. We have defined 'competitive' as more than just being economically efficient, but as reflecting the need to balance both social and economic progress.

The development of the Gauteng City Region is complex by its very nature, and a long-range project. Amongst other things, we need to establish a city region observatory that will strengthen our emerging partnership with higher education institutions within the province. This will act as a channel to harness urban social and economic development research to inform policy, strategy and programme development of the city region.

Learning from our peers

In our study tour of how other international city-regions functioned, we visited Tokyo, Randstad in the Netherlands and London. Some of the issues that we focused on included:

- Practical examples of how cities cooperate and compete at the same time
- Good practice at a city-regional level in public transport, regional branding and membership-based development associations
- Practicalities of alignment of development strategies within multi-jurisdictional city-regions
- Leadership and governance issues in large city-regions

Gauteng will be adopting a “knowledge for development” focus. This will see us invest in building capacity of in our people, knowledge institutions, and in innovative financing models to benefit the close to 9 million inhabitants of our province.

The many and varied innovations in public service/sector activity that we have introduced in the past several years such as, Folateng in the health sector, GautengOnLine, the Gauteng Shared Service Centre, innovative Blue IQ projects, the Gauteng Automotive Cluster, the Gautrain as well as the exciting developments at the Cradle of Human-kind, where we have renamed Mohale’s Gate to an indigenous name ‘Maropeng’.

We are learning that capacity in the public service can be built through innovation. Had we not initiated the projects that we did in the past few years, we would have had less capacity and poorer quality of provincial government institutions than we have today. These can become the subject of discussion and learning at Future meetings of the National Management Service.

This is an edited version of Premier Shilowa’s opening speech at the fourth Senior Management Conference (SMS) held in September 2005.
Infrastructure carries a huge potential for individual, societal and national development. It does so through the creation of economic linkages, reduction of business transaction costs, job creation, the boosting of economic demand, the creation of wealth and so forth. Infrastructure delivery also enables the provision of basic needs while stimulating economic activism. It also has a great potential for directing and influencing business investment decisions due to the comparative advantages it provides for different countries.

There is also a growing consensus among economists that infrastructure is an integral part of growth and development. It is being viewed as part of a programme for eradicating poverty, reducing income inequality and enabling employment creation. This approach to infrastructure prioritises the understanding of social, economic and human development linkages in infrastructure delivery.

Prior to undertaking an assessment of the extent to which infrastructure delivery enables or disables development the term ‘infrastructure’ requires some clarification. There are two types of infrastructure, economic and social, which are explained below.

**Economic infrastructure**

The economic infrastructure is that part of the economy’s capital stock that produces services to facilitate economic production or serve as inputs to production (e.g. electricity, roads, ports) or are consumed by households (e.g. electricity, water, sanitation). Economic infrastructure can be divided into three categories: public utilities (electricity, gas, water, telecommunications, sanitation, sewerage, solid-waste disposal), public works (water catchments in dams, irrigation, roads), and transport (roads, railways, airports).

**Social infrastructure**

The social infrastructure is concerned with the delivery of services to citizens especially the poor. These services include health, education, sport and recreation, and have both a direct and indirect impact in the quality of life. As Khosa puts it, directly, social infrastructure supports the production of trade.
Indirectly, social infrastructure streamlines activities and outcomes such as education, health and safety.

**Basic infrastructure**

A third type of infrastructure category that has emerged, at least in the context of South Africa and other developing countries, is that of ‘basic infrastructure’, which includes electricity, water, sanitation, housing, roads, transport, telecommunications, health, and education.

All people have certain basic needs without which life would be impossible. These life-sustaining human needs should always be present for a condition of absolute underdevelopment not to exist. As Todaro contends, human beings are born with certain potential capabilities. The purpose of development is to create an environment in which all people can expand these capabilities, and opportunities can be enlarged for both present and future generations. However, human potential can only be tapped and unlocked for economic progress and development when people’s basic needs are met. The basic infrastructure facilitates the progression of the people from a condition of poverty and helplessness towards a more humane life and freedom of choice.

While the three types of infrastructure are interconnected and intricately linked, they seem to serve different purposes regarding societal and national development. This requires immediate rethink on the conceptualisation of development in a modern-day South Africa.

**Rethinking development**

The focus of development is on people and their needs. The provision of infrastructure to facilitate development should, therefore, locate people and their needs at the centre of infrastructure delivery programmes, rather than relegated them to the periphery, regarding people as mere long-term beneficiaries of infrastructure outcomes. This emerging approach in the measurement of infrastructure provision focuses on the conceptualisation of development in a modern-day South Africa.

The potential of infrastructure to stimulate economic growth and facilitate development is generally accepted by scientists and practitioners globally. A number of studies have pointed to the following benefits of infrastructure delivery:

- **Lowering of transaction costs:** Infrastructure lowers transaction costs by facilitating easy flow of information and goods, and interaction between markets.
- **Creation of economic linkages:** Infrastructure investment creates the potential for economic linkages. In particular, the ability to move goods from one point to another makes investment viable.
- **Concentration of economic activity:** The provision of infrastructure concentrates economic activity spatially, thus supporting backward and forward linkages.
- **Improvement of productive capacities:** Access to infrastructure services can improve the capacities for producing goods and services in communities.
- **Creation of wealth:** Irrigation systems, transport routes and other infrastructure outcomes hold the potential for creating viable assets and markets.
- **Creation of jobs:** Infrastructure expansion creates jobs during the construction phase and for continuing maintenance.
- **Boosting of demand:** Infrastructure provision boosts demand in the economy, thus supporting forward linkages.
- **Responsiveness to change:** Depending on the quality of infrastructure delivered, economies undergoing restructuring are able to respond to shocks and competitive pressures.

Over and above the points made above, infrastructure delivery also has a redistributive effect on the economy. For instance, Black Economic Empowerment and Affirmative Action Policy Frameworks are aimed at integrating the historically-disadvantaged individuals into the economic mainstream through accessing economic opportunities in infrastructure delivery and asset ownership. The above points further
Transport plays an important dual role in the economy, both as a direct provider of services and as a catalyst for economic integration, redistribution and development. Roads promote an effective transportation system; rural development through ensuring social cohesion; access to economic opportunities; encouraging growth potential in minerals and their beneficiation; agriculture; agri-business; and tourism.

Public transport
The legacy of Apartheid is still reflected in the transport sector. The location of Africans, Coloureds and Asians further away from their work-places than White people resulted in longer traveling distances for the disadvantaged. People in rural areas have been the most disadvantaged in terms of access to roads and transportation due to the spatial distances resulting from Apartheid planning. The working poor spend a large amount of their meager wages on transportation. Much time that could have been used productively elsewhere is spent traveling.

Electricity and energy
For many South Africans, electricity is a primary service requirement. Improved access to electricity enhances the quality of life which often has positive economic spin-offs.

Housing
As the majority of citizens in South Africa attempted to escape rural poverty by moving to the urban areas, more informal settlements grew up. Housing has since become a human right in South Africa, the provision of which must involve and empower communities and promote gender equality. Land for housing must promote access to economic opportunities and social amenities, as such the spatial location of the housing infrastructure lies at the centre of sustainable development thinking.

Water and sanitation
The absence of portable water and sanitation services makes people vulnerable to poor health. In this way, the costs to the state are the increased pressure for community health and social welfare services, and the loss of the productive capacity of the members of society. The time spent by women in rural areas collecting water represents a significant opportunity cost as well as physical burden.

Telecommunications
Telecommunications is an information infrastructure and plays a crucial role in South Africa’s health, education, agriculture, policing, safety and business development. An effective telecommunications infrastructure which includes universal access is essential to enable the delivery of basic services and facilitate social and economic development.

Tools of trade
Public infrastructure needs also include health, education, agriculture and welfare facilities, referred herein as “Tools of trade.” They are the means to the production of ends — the trades, which lie at the centre of the social and economic development of a nation. Communities should participate in the delivery of the schools, clinics, hospitals, drinking tanks etc. The Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic policy framework (1996) envisages the use of infrastructure delivery as one of methods of creating jobs and income generation through the promotion of small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs).

Conclusion
Consensus has emerged among economists and development scholars and academics that infrastructure is an integral part of economic growth and development. However, a proper comprehension of the impact of infrastructure on social and economic development requires a prior disregard of a notion that infrastructure delivery is about a mere meeting of service delivery needs and targets. We should promote the school of thought that prioritizes the understanding of social, economic and human development linkages in infrastructure delivery.

Roads
Transport plays an important dual role support the RDP contention that infrastructure delivery provides both basic needs and economic multipliers. The development of policies in South Africa reflects both senses of the basic needs approach. On the one hand, some policies seek to link infrastructure delivery to improving capabilities and opportunities (e.g. White Paper on Housing). On the other, certain policies prioritize a need to meet the basic needs and commit government to meet basic service levels within a stipulated timeframe (e.g. Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework). These two points of policy emphasis require of us to re-look the infrastructure mandates for South Africa, and their effects on the improvement of the quality of life to the citizens. While much progress has been made since the 1994 democratic elections, the impact of infrastructure development on social and economic wellbeing of the society requires an assessment. However, some caution has to be exercised in the treatment of social and economic development as dichotomous entities. The distinction that is drawn between the two outcomes is made for purposes of analysis. This notion of “no-real distinction” is supported by Amartya Sen (1993), who argues that:

“Ultimately, the process of economic development has to be concerned with what people can and cannot do e.g. whether they can live long, escape avoidable morbidity, be well-nourished, be able to read and write and communicate, take part in the literacy and cultural pursuits and so forth. It has to do, in Marx’s word, with replacing the domination of circumstances and chances over individuals by the domination of individuals over chance and circumstance.”

The assessment of infrastructure contribution to the ability of individuals to dominate over chance and circumstance is considered below through a dry-run of the infrastructure categories as applied in various economic sectors.

Issues

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The assessment of infrastructure contribution to the ability of individuals to dominate over chance and circumstance is considered below through a dry-run of the infrastructure categories as applied in various economic sectors.
During 2004 the Commonwealth Secretariat committed themselves to support the Department for the Public Service and Administration on various projects. Two of these projects approved were on the Senior Management Service and on Learning and Knowledge Management.

After consideration of the priority areas in the Governance and Administration (G&A) cluster, it was proposed that the delegation and the scope of the study tour be expanded to include the areas on Monitoring and Evaluation and Macro-organisation of the state.

As both the Commonwealth Secretariat and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) were unable to arrange the study tour due to capacity constraints, the Public Service Commission of Canada and the South African High Commission in Canada compiled and finalized the programme for the study tour.

The aim of the study tour was therefore to gain insight in terms of best practices from the Canadian federal government system, in order to relate their experiences to current issues faced by the South African government. Issues for consideration included the macro-organisation of the state (MOS), centralization versus decentralization of HR issues; the senior management service (SMS), monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and service delivery innovation (SDI).

Canadian governance

Intergovernmental relations are as much a challenge for Canada as it is in the South African context. The Canadian Constitution sets up a system of government with a separation of powers between two levels of government; the federal and the provincial. Municipal institutions come under the jurisdiction of the provinces and have the powers that the legislatures assign to them.

There are more than 500 intergovernmental meetings a year involving federal and provincial councils of ministers and committees of officials. Almost all of the meetings are “departmental” and focus on issues that specifically relate to the co-ordination of policy positions or program delivery mechanisms. These

Lessons From Canada

Eight managers* from the DPSA undertook a study-tour of the Canadian public service and the following is a summarised report back on lessons learnt.
inter-governmental meetings deal with as diverse a range of subjects as law enforcement, tourism and budgetary policy.

Service delivery

The Government of Canada is committed to serving Canadians better and building a citizen-centred government. Services Canada was recently launched to help Canadians access the full range of government services and benefits they want and need.

The overall goal is to provide Canadians with one-stop shop, easy-to-access, personalized service. Services Canada brings Government of Canada services and benefits together in a single service delivery network. Services can be accessed by phone, Internet, mail or in person. Thus, commonly accessed services are put into a virtual environment that allows for a single point of contact.

Services Canada has over 20,000 staff dedicated to serving Canadians. There are 320 centres in communities throughout the country; a national 1 800 O-Canada call center; a range of online services offered through www.services-canada.gc.ca and outreach or mobile services. Services Canada also works in collaboration with other federal departments and other levels of government to explore innovative and efficient ways to serve Canadians better.

Services include: Canada Student Loans Program; Child Tax Benefit; Customs; Disability Benefits; Education Savings Grants; Employment Insurance; Health Information; Immigration; Indian & Northern Affairs Canada; Passports; Pensions; Savings Bonds; Social Insurance Number Survivor Benefits; Taxation; Travel Assistance for Canadians Abroad; Veterans Affairs Canada; Youth Employment Strategy. Over time depending on citizen’s needs,
these services will be expanded.

This is a new initiative where services to citizens will be delivered by a central agency which will eventually have 45,000 employees. This initiative was started without a legislative mandate and is an incremental model.

Implications for South Africa: Despite impressive improvements in the provision of access to government services through a range of platforms such as Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs), Gateway, Call Centres, Mobile Services (limited), there remains a need to address access to services in an integrated and holistic manner. This is to ensure integration of efforts that ultimately leads to improved service delivery. The goal of ‘seamless service delivery’ is still to be achieved. Whilst the use of IT as an enabler to deliver services is part of the Gateway and eGovernment strategy, more needs to be done to translate that strategy into an implementation plan. The Canadian experience has clearly showed that an incremental process that reaches perfection over time is key to achieving this goal.

Modernisation

Significant changes have, over the past two to three years been made in terms of issues of governance in Canada. These include the country’s commitment to working with the provinces, and its citizens in particular, to ensure that the Canadian federation is modernised to meet the needs of the 21st century through partnership and dialogue with the provinces, while respecting diversity. Putting impetus on the need for realignment of relationships between spheres of government are ongoing concerns over public perceptions of wasteful overlap and duplication service delivery efforts between federal and provincial and local governments.

Just to illustrate the extent of the complexity of the relationships between these various spheres, there are, for example, close to 5,000 municipal structures which provide a range of services, from roads to airports.

How do Canadians navigate and negotiate through this maze of complex relationships?

Service delivery contracts

A mechanism option for enhancing intergovernmental collaboration and coordination is the conclusion of agreements within specific sectors. An example of such an agreement is The Vancouver Agreement, which is a five-year agreement, signed in 2000. It commits the three orders of government to “work together, within their jurisdictions and mandates, and with communities in Vancouver to develop and implement a coordinated strategy to promote and support sustainable economic, social, and community development.”

Another example is the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI), which is a three-year, multi-million dollar tripartite partnership established by the governments of Canada, Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg to address homelessness and declining housing stock in designated inner-city neighbourhoods in Winnipeg.

A joint single-window office was established in 1999 to coordinate and deliver programs that support inner-city revitalization. The City’s funding assistance is delivered through this office.

Implications for South Africa: The South African government is doing much to ensure better inter-governmental relations across the three spheres of government. In accordance with the requirements of the Constitution, a legal framework has been created that puts in place mechanisms to allow for improved intergovernmental relations as well as processes and procedures in the event of disputes. The Canadian approach is to formalise collaboration and coordination arrangements through agreements.

Managing human resources

There is a need to study human resource management and development systems in order to strengthen HR in general in the public service. It was envisaged that the Canadian HR model would assist with this process. The focus was therefore on HR-related matters including amongst others, performance management and development systems applicable to all levels of employees. An SMS review is currently underway, therefore the study was meant to assist with, and inform the development of recommendations and the way forward in terms of the existing SMS dispensation.

The Canadians believe in the HRM reforms that are streamlined and flexible and that support replenishment, development and management of executives as they regard them as both corporate and departmental assets.

Their major challenge was to determine the competency gaps and the willingness of feeder groups to assume executive and higher level responsibilities, which was unknown; their systematic gathering of corporate intelligence and feeder groups was also limited. They identified an array of corporate programmes (not single) source to identify
and develop future leaders.

They gave this responsibility to
Central Agencies and to Deputy
Minister (DG equivalent in South
Africa) to aggressively spot, assess talent
and train and develop feeder group for
leadership. Out of this process an
Accelerated Executive Development
Program (AEDP) was created. The
programme commenced in 1997 and its
objectives were to identify a representa
tive group of executives at EX-1 to EX-
3 (Director to Deputy Directors-General
South African equivalent), who demon
strate strong leadership potential and
may become Assistant Deputy Ministers
and to invest in their development and
progression. The programme focuses on
14 leadership competencies.

Lessons Learned: At completion of
the programme, an evaluation of the
programme is done. The following is a
summary of the lessons learned:
• Not all strong performers benefit
from a developmental programme, but
those who are willing to challenge
themselves for developmental purpos
es and those who have the ability to
acquire what is needed for future situ
ations benefit more from the pro
gramme.
• Not all competencies are equally
amenable to training therefore a rig
orous framework is required to assess
competencies.
• Demonstrated senior level commit
ment is a key leverage.
• Principles that ensure success are:
developing skills in real time and real
action, individual and collective com
mitments, promote a continuous
action-reflection cycle; balance indi
vidual and collective needs; promote a
continuous action-reflection cycle;
balance individual and collective
needs; promote a continuous learning
culture; maximize learning partners
ships.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Canadian Government is widely
acknowledged as a leader in the area of
government monitoring and evaluation.

The Centre of Excellence for Evaluation,
Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada
have developed and implemented a
Management of Accountability Frame
work, which will assist greatly in the
development of the government wide
M&E system. The Faculty of Public
Affairs and Management at the Carleton
University in collaboration with the
World Bank’s Operations Evaluation
Department (OED) through the
International Programme for Develop
mental Evaluation Training have built
up extensive knowledge on development
evaluation.

Learning and knowledge
management

The department has established the
Learning and Knowledge Management
(LKM) Programme that is being appre
ciated across the country. There was a
need for the LKM Component, respon
sible for driving the programme, to
expand it, have it institutionalized,
ensure sustainability and establish path
ways for monitoring and evaluation.

The department is recognised as a
leader in this area of learning and
knowledge management and govern
ment departments rely on this depart
ment for guidance on various related
issues. It was essential to bring the LKM
Component up to speed in terms of
international best practices and the
Canadian model is one of the best from
the respective areas studied, will be
emulated and applied with care, caution
and in a gradual and step-by-step way.
However, some areas which can easily
be replicated need to be prioritized,
namely, formally establishing the SMS
department, inviting some officials from
the IKMP to come

International Case Study

The study tour to the Canadian federal
government departments and agencies
was very valuable. Although Canada is
in many respects advanced than South
Africa and has a federal system of gov
ernment, it experienced similar chal
lenges to us and their system of govern
ment has evolved almost in a similar
way as ours.

The observations made, lessons
learned, and recommendations made in
the respective areas studied, will be
emulated and applied with care, caution
and in a gradual and step-by-step way.
However, some areas which can easily
be replicated need to be prioritized,
namely, formally establishing the SMS
department, inviting officials from the
IKMP to come and share with the SA
government departments practices in KM
processes and systems. Others will require a
fundamental policy review process, consul
tation, and so forth, and that will be
much prolonged. •

* Richard Levin, Sipho Ntombela, Beryl
Rankin, Lynette Sing, Dipsy Mereetlhe,
Henk Serfontein.
Subsequent to the third democratic elections in 2004, and the change in the political leadership in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, Premier Ndebele approached the Minister of Public Service and Administration (MPSA) for assistance with the assessment and review of the service delivery readiness of all provincial departments. The exercise was completed and a report was submitted to the Premier in October 2004. The report made a number of recommendations that can be categorised into four themes:

• Leadership and Management
• Work ethics and Professionalism
• Planning and Implementation
• Human Resources Management

In April 2005, after the MPSA granted approval for the assistance, a team made up of DPSA and Office of the Public Service Commissioner (OPSC) officials was deployed in KZN. Seven departments were identified: Agriculture and Environmental Affairs; Education; Health; Housing; Local Government and Traditional Affairs; Social Welfare and Population Development; and Works. This article on the provincial Department of Health is the first of a series of case studies from the KZN Support Programme.

State of provincial health

The KZN Department of Health is the biggest provincial health department in the country. With 51 000 employees and a budget of R10.5 billion per annum, it supports a network of 3 tertiary hospitals, 14 regional hospitals, 49 district hospitals, 450 fixed clinics, 14 community health centres and 123 mobile teams. Its services are critical because the majority of the population cannot afford private health care and are therefore totally dependent on the Department. Given the challenges that the province is facing in fighting the twin challenges of poverty and unemployment, the Department of Health has a key role to play in providing a better life to all through its health promotion and curative services. HIV and Aids and related diseases are threatening to reverse the gains that have been made in the first 11 years of democracy, hence the need to build a coherent and integrated health system that makes best use of available resources both within the public and private health care sectors.

Elements of support

The DPSA and OPSC support programme was developed after an intensive process of consultation that culminated in an agreement with the Head of Department, Prof Ronnie Green-Thompson and Member of the Executive Council, Ms. Neliswa Nkonyeni, on the following focal areas:
• Review of the Department’s organisational structure
• Finalise the Department’s human resource plan
• Strengthen performance management

The department’s organisational structure had been the subject of several reviews in the past, that have not succeeded in comprehensively assessing and fully re-aligning the department’s strategic priorities and service delivery requirements. Developing appropriate lines of accountability and reporting, as well as establishing effective management forums, were some of the issues that required the urgent attention of the project team. What also needs to be noted is that the review and the subsequent support programme came about in the context of the President’s concerns over the ability of government to implement the mandate of the People’s Contract.

Management model

The project team found that there was wide agreement that the existing management layers in the department should be retained, namely, Head Office, Area Management, District Management, and Institutional Management. Interviewees were equally clear that the roles of the first three layers required clarification. Their suggestions on the complementary roles that these three layers should play were incorporated into the report and subsequently informed the functional analysis and institutional capacity review.

The Organisational Review report proposed a considerable reconfiguration of the Head Office structure. As far as the department’s core functions are concerned, the key recommendation was to introduce two health clusters - the one focusing on health-systems development and the other on health service delivery.

The latter is to be headed by a Chief Operating Officer who will oversee all health institutions and the integrated implementation of all health programmes. Because of the critical importance of clinical support, infrastructure development and facility management for the effective running of health institutions, and due to their operational nature, it was suggested that these func-
Implemention process and staffing strategy

To implement the macro structure it was agreed that priority attention would be given to the development of the job descriptions and job evaluation of key management positions (General Manager and higher). New senior management posts were subsequently advertised. The absorption and appointment process will now unfold with the objective of having the top management team in place early next year.

A selection committee that will take into account the results of competency profiling of both serving managers will oversee the filling of posts and absorption process and short-listed candidates for advertised posts. It was decided upfront that only a limited number of new posts will be advertised — all the others are reserved for filling by serving managers.

The sub-structures will be developed in consultation with serving and newly appointed managers. This will focus on all levels of the organization and should be completed by end March 2006.

Other projects

At the time of the writing of this article, the HR planning and performance management projects were under way.

An integrated strategy to recruit, retain and develop the department’s human resources is yet to emerge. While a final draft of the Integrated Human Resource Plan is in place, it has never been concluded because of concerns that it does not adequately forecast the Department’s staffing requirements. It also became clear to the project team in their brief interaction with health and HR managers that more work is needed in:

- Synchronising human resource and financial planning processes and linking these with the Health cluster’s long term planning to achieve equity in resourcing the health districts,
- Sequencing infrastructure & HR planning processes, and
- Curbing the high attrition rate of bursary holders, particularly medical interns.

All provincial health departments are faced with similar challenges, hence the priority at national level to develop an integrated human resources strategy and plan of action. This was recently released. The document makes it clear that each provincial department is required to develop its own human resource plan. The provincial plans would need to complement and link to the national strategies. The development of a provincial health human resource plan is in any event a legal requirement in terms of both public service and national health legislation, not to mention the more detailed plans that are required in terms of the country’s skills development and employment equity legislation.

The devolution of human resource planning even extends to health district level given the need to address “push” and “pull” factors that are very specific to the health facilities in these geographical areas.

The Performance Management project will focus on getting the basics in place. Priority will be given to refining the performance management arrangements for the Senior Management Service (SMS). Consideration is being given to introducing the Balanced Score Card in the province. The challenge, however, is to customise the scorecards for each department; to translate them into individual performance agreements and to refine the assessment procedure.

A dedicated unit that will provide Strategic Co-ordination, Inter-governmental and Inter-sectoral Collaboration services. This is to be headed by a General Manager who will be answerable to both the MEC and HOD, given the responsibilities that both have in terms of developing strategic and performance plans and tabling regular oversight reports. The unit will also assist with the stakeholder liaison function of both the MEC and HOD.

Another key feature is the upgrading of the Communication function given the need to promote healthy lifestyles and proactively communicate with the department’s many stakeholders. The Head of Communications will have a direct link to the MEC, in keeping with national guidelines.

All Counter-corruption, Security and Investigative functions will be clustered together to eliminate the duplication and lack of focus that characterised the previous organisational arrangements.

Provision has also been made for a dedicated unit that will provide Strategic Co-ordination, Inter-governmental and Inter-sectoral Collaboration services. This is to be headed by a General Manager who will be answerable to both the MEC and HOD, given the responsibilities that both have in terms of developing strategic and performance plans and tabling regular oversight reports. The unit will also assist with the stakeholder liaison function of both the MEC and HOD.

The report furthermore suggested that Head Office financial and human resource functions should be purged to foster strategic resource management as opposed to the many operational functions that are still performed at Head Office.

Although the team conceded that the human resource function lends itself more to decentralisation than the financial function, there are certain support functions, even in the financial domain, that continue to be performed at Head Office without sufficient justification. Since capacity has been created at institutional level for the execution of these functions these should be devolved while building the required capacity. Head Office support units should concentrate on planning, policy development, monitoring, and providing the required technical support to institutions. In line with this thinking a Head Office Corporate Support Service Centre was proposed that would serve the same function one would find at a hospital.

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The Performance Management project will focus on getting the basics in place. Priority will be given to refining the performance management arrangements for the Senior Management Service (SMS). Consideration is being given to introducing the Balanced Score Card in the province. The challenge, however, is to customise the scorecards for each department; to translate them into individual performance agreements and to refine the assessment procedure.

The report furthermore suggested that Head Office financial and human resource functions should be purged to foster strategic resource management as opposed to the many operational functions that are still performed at Head Office.

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Critical mandate

The Department of Home Affairs is absolutely critical to government’s programme to create a better life for all. It is at the centre of government’s ability to deliver on key programmes as it provides all the documents that entitle people to access housing, education, healthcare, social grants, pensions, jobs, financial services and to exercise their right to vote.

The department also facilitates the entry of scarce skills, investment and tourists into our country to build the economy; ensures that people who wish to visit, sojourn and work in our country do so legally and that criminals, terrorists, drug-peddlers and human traffickers are prevented from subverting our democracy.

Perceptions of government are often linked to the performance of Home Affairs service delivery as the department is the window through which our people and our guests often see government and our country. Since all South Africans and all foreign visitors are our clients, their frustrations of standing in long queues, being exposed to often dilapidated and badly equipped offices and receiving poor service is for them the only way in which they interact with and see our government. Against this background, it was realised that without dramatic service delivery improvement, the objectives of Batho Pele cannot be substantially realized, hence the need for a turnaround strategy.

Turning around

After thorough introspection, it was realised that the Department of Home Affairs is terminally under-resourced. Substantial additional resources had to be secured and the department had to embark on a serious programme of serv-
Case Study

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Consensus exists that there are three areas of critical capacity that have to be addressed to effect our decisive intervention in turning Home Affairs around, namely: people, infrastructure and technology. The department embarked on a comprehensive turnaround programme to create decisive interventions in all areas of work in the department: to address the shortage of personnel; the inadequate reach and poor condition of offices; the deficiencies of IT systems; the corruption in the department and the poor service delivery that limits the department’s ability to achieve our vision of a world class service.

A total of 64 Departmental projects were identified from the turnaround strategy. These projects related to service delivery improvement, infrastructure, information systems and focused on issues related to service standards and corporate image, extended working hours, signage, name badges and mobile services. These initiatives also dovetailed with the following 27 July Cabinet Decisions:

- Departments with high level of public interface, such as Departments Home Affairs, Labour and of Justice and Constitutional Development should extend office hours until 17h00 during the week and be open on Saturdays.
- All Public Service Departments, institutions, service centres have proper signage booths outside and inside their buildings.
- All Public Service staff interfacing directly with the public should always wear nametags when on duty.

An analysis of current service delivery complaints centre around the long queues with poor process flows; signage and form design; high error and return rates; long and unpredictable times to receive critical documents; accessibility and staffing not matched to the high demand for DHA services and a high level of corruption. The introduction of flexible working hours, signage, name badges and mobile services forms part of broader initiatives with the aim to transform the Department of Home Affairs into an effective 21st Century provider of services to our citizens and visitors.

Progress thus far

Flexible working hours: The Department has started to implement a flexi-hour system that made it possible for our offices to open on weekends and extend our office hours during the week. The majority of DHA offices extended their office hours during the week (between 16h00 and 17h00) and are rendering services on Saturdays from 8h00 until 13h00. It should be noted that there are differences in the implementation of extended working hours are due to the severe lack of staff at some offices.
Signage: An infrastructure audit was conducted of the location, condition and equipment of each office and a national basic standard for all offices in relation to client-management, workflow and signage has been developed. The worst offices were identified and an emergency plan to attend to these offices has been developed. This included the National Volunteer Campaign to bring offices to a reasonable condition while we work on longer-term interventions. The National Volunteer Campaign was utilised to launch work towards a new Corporate Image, which included the implementation of standard signage that will form part of the Department’s corporate identity. As part of the final stage, 16 offices will be painted in corporate colours. As specified in the Cabinet decision of 27 July 2004, departments should have proper signage both outside and inside their buildings. The standard signage was refined and rolled out at the new Head Office building. Signage (interior and exterior) will be rolled out to all Home Affairs offices.

Name Badges: To ensure that the image of the Public service portrays the caliber of people who are caring and responsive to the needs for the Country’s citizenry, the Cabinet decision of 27 July 2004 requires that all Public Service staff interfacing directly with the public should always wear name tags when on duty. In line with this decision, officials in the Provinces immediately implemented “makeshift” name badges. Name badges reflecting the coat of arms, the official’s name, the details of the Department and the official’s photo, were designed to ensure uniformity.

Mobile Services: In an attempt to address some of the infrastructure problems, the Department unveiled 10 of the 67 state of the art mobile units at the official launch on 13 May 2005 in King Williams Town. The mobile units are equipped with computers and satellite connectivity. They operate with the necessary client interface, filing and storage facilities, office furniture and equipment. Their link to the mainframe enables officials to record all applications on the system immediately and issue the necessary documents on the spot. The mobile units can access all types of terrain (including remote areas), and will operate during normal office hours, as well as outside these hours for specific projects and campaign. They are deployed to provide Home Affairs Services to clients in remote areas and in areas insufficiently covered by existing fixed Home Affairs offices.

Challenges and solutions

Flexible working hours: Resources remain a serious problem within the Department. A new organisational structure and establishment has recently been approved but most of the vacancies are not yet filled due to the lack of funds. As a result, initiatives like the introduction of flexible working hours threaten to further over-stretch limited resources. Current staffing models also fail to take into account significant variation in work volumes. A model has been developed to assist managers with the determination of the additional working hours. This model highlights the minimum number of staff members required to be able to introduce flexible working hours at an office. It also provides a guideline of the additional staff requirements in the Provinces as a result of this initiative and the prioritization of the filling of critical vacancies. For the interior, flexible office hours (especially at the smaller offices) are also determined around the customer requirements that provides for some flexibility and variation between the different offices. Factors like the availability of transport and peak hours are also utilised as a guideline to consider the working hours.

Signage: As standard signage forms part of the Department’s corporate identity, it should be rolled out quickly to ensure that it contributes to a positive image with the public. The signage should include interior and exterior signage as well as directions to Home Affairs offices. The key challenges are funding and standardization. A corporate identity manual has been developed to ensure that the signage is standard and uniform. In spite of the manual there were still differences, which resulted in a decision to produce the signage centrally and distribute it to the provinces.

Name Badges: The challenge is to ensure that, in spite of a high staff turnover, pro-active measures are in place to issue new staff members with name badges on acceptance of duty and that name badges are retracted once staff members resign. As it relates to the appointment and resignation of staff members, the solution to this problem is to manage this as part of the Human Resources processes.

Mobile Services: Due to the high cost factor involved with mobile services, the main challenge is to ensure integrated, detailed planning by all role players. These role-players should include officials from the various support functions as well as the line functions to address all issues like the tender specifications, risk management, dispute resolution mechanisms with the service provider, the provision of support services (e.g. the appointment of staff, training, security), logistical arrangements (e.g. transport of staff if the number exceeds two that can be transported in the cab, petrol cards, ablution facilities and the disposal of waste, overnight facilities for staff and secure parking for the vehicles, etc) and a sound implementation strategy (deployment plan). These issues can be addressed by means of a cross-functional project team to ensure that all issues have been addressed. Another challenge is the provision of immediate assistance and maintenance on high tech mobile services, especially if assistance is needed in very remote locations. A national network of service centres must be available if the vehicles are to be properly maintained. As with the issue of flexible working hours, initiatives threaten to further over-stretch limited resources. Dedicated posts should be created in line with the operational requirements of the mobile services and these posts should be filled before the deployment of the mobile services.
bers commence with their duties, special development and training needs should be addressed through a training programme to include technical training and trouble-shooting.

Visible impact

Although all of these projects have not yet been fully rolled out, the impact is already clearly felt by the department and its clients. It also highlights the need for expediting the rollout of these initiatives and future projects to make a real difference in the lives of ordinary citizens.

The four initiatives already benefit the clients of the Department and other short, medium and long term benefits are envisaged, including the following:

- **Adherence to service standards**: The turn-around time of applications are decreasing, especially rural communities. Some documents can already be issued on the spot due to the communication and satellite connectivity in the mobile units. The Department is also in the process of integrating all IT systems. The medium to long-term effect is that applications will be processed in real time to ensure that more documents can be issued within a very short timeframe.

- **Accessibility**: The benefit with the highest socio-economic impact is the accessibility of Home Affairs services to the public. With the introduction of flexi-hours and the mobile services, communities in especially remote rural areas can access improved Home Affairs services. On Saturdays, large numbers also visit Home Affairs for services, which means more convenience.

- **Counter corruption**: The Department has to contend with two kinds of corruption — syndicated corruption, where the Department is the target of criminal syndicates because we provide them with an essential service, and convenience corruption, where clients get a better service out of Home Affairs officials by bribing them. The identification of officials by means of name tags plays an important role in the fight against corruption.

- **Improvement of service delivery**: Although these initiatives will have a more profound effect in the medium and long term due to extended Home Affairs services, some of the benefits can already be felt. This will entail the rendering of improved services (lower return rates, predictable timeframes to receive critical documents, shorter turn-around times), the provision of clear directions to access Home Affairs services, a clear indication of the tariffs in respect of services and the type of services rendered. The identification of the officials will make it easier for the public to make enquiries and to lodge complaints in cases of poor service delivery.

- **Staff morale**: Another benefit from these initiatives is the positive impact on staff morale. By bringing the working conditions at the offices to an acceptable level and through the identification of officials by means of name badges it contributes to a positive attitude towards clients. A culture of professional behavior can be incorporated in the value system of the Department and service excellence can be recognized and rewarded.

Experiences and lessons learnt

Flexible working hours: With the introduction of the flexible working hours, it was observed that at some offices, very few people visited the office after hours. This was due to several factors like the unavailability of public transport after a certain time, safety concerns from the clients and the public not being aware that office hours have been extended. This highlighted the need for the Department to have a proper customer profile available at the different offices to align planning accordingly. It was also found out that some staff members were reluctant to work shifts and on Saturdays. It is essential that implementation be properly managed in line with relevant acts and policies to minimise labour tensions. While implementing a new flexi-hour regime, it was also experience that, at especially the larger offices, officials are more specialised in performing certain functions. To be able to utilise staff members more effectively, all staff should be multi-skilled, and, ideally, comprehensive training programmes should be rolled out before the implementation.

Signage: When the Department started with the national volunteer campaign, problems were experienced with especially the corporate colours. In spite of detailed specifications, the different service providers could not provide exactly the same colour paint. Even with the manufacturing of the signage, there were slight differences. This highlights the need for specifications to be very clear. In terms of signage, the production was centralized and it is currently distributed from Head Office to the provinces. A decision was taken that installation should be done by professionals to minimize damage and fruitless expense.

Name Badges: The name badges reflect the photo and personal details of the officials. As the photo is very small in size when the name badges are manufactured, it is essential that the photos be of a very high quality to ensure that it remains clear on the name badge.

Mobile Services: With the launch of the first 10 Mobil Units, certain problems were experienced, for example, the noise levels cause by the generator, the stability of the vehicles when there are a number of clients inside the vehicle and connectivity problems due to the size and weight of the satellite dishes. Although these problems were addressed with the service provider, it should be considered that the first prototype must be thoroughly tested in normal working conditions to identify all the related problems.

In addition, ablution facilities remain a problem when mobile services are rendered. These facilities are currently provided by means of a rental contract with a service provider. These facilities should form part of the deployment plan for mobile services.
Perspectives in Learnerships: South African Case Studies

Author: Sarah Babb and Terry Meyer
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Youth unemployment looms large in South Africa. Meanwhile, the South African economy faces a critical shortage of skills. The economy's growth and development hinge on the availability of skills in both the public and private sectors. The generation, retention and expansion of skills in a modern economy require a complex human resource development (HRD) system. Learnerships play a critical role in a systemic approach to HRD. Success in a learnership programme in turn requires an effective, multistakeholder, collaborative framework. Yet there is little operational knowledge available in this regard. It is not thus surprising that South Africa's learnership initiative has left much to be desired since its inception in 2003. Perspectives in Learnerships offers invaluable insights and managerial measures that are essential for making a success of our learnership programme in South Africa.

Dr Iraj Abedian (PhD) Chief Executive, Pan-African Investment & Research Services (Pty) Ltd

Stating is the new speed limit as far as growth is concerned. It is not access to capital or technology that will constrain the growth of enterprises or the South African economy, but rather the lack of adequate skills to support organisational growth plans. The traditional channels of education and training are no longer providing skills in sufficient numbers, nor are they necessarily aligned to organisational needs. Organisations must participate in the development of relevant skills if they are to survive. This book on learnerships is an invaluable guide for executives and HR and training practitioners on how to succeed in growing skills for the national economy and for their own organisations. Perspectives in Learnerships is practical, informative, insightful ... and long overdue!

Italia Boninelli Group HR Director – Network Healthcare Holdings Ltd (Netcare)
Performance appraisals are used in the overwhelming majority of workplaces. Yet, ninety percent of organizations that use appraisal and a similar percentage of givers and receivers of appraisal are dissatisfied with the process. Many are beginning to deeply question whether appraisal is necessary and consistent with the work culture espoused by progressive organizations. Abolishing Performance Appraisals provides an insightful, well-documented look at the flaws of appraisal including its destructive, unintended effects and offers practical guidance to organizations that want to move on to more progressive approaches to coaching, feedback, development, and compensation. While many books prescribe cures for appraisal, this is the first to focus exclusively on eliminating appraisal altogether and creating alternative, non-appraisal approaches based upon progressive and healthier assumptions about people. The authors expose and dispel the widely accepted myths and false assumptions that underlie common management strategies surrounding the five key functions of appraisal: coaching, feedback, development, compensation, and legal documentation. They then offer step-by-step practical guidance on implementing alternative non-appraisal strategies that deliver the objectives of each function. And they suggest ways to give supervisors and managers the freedom to choose for themselves the most effective ways of working with people.

Filled with real-life examples, resources, tools, and detailed practical advice, Abolishing Performance Appraisals is an entirely fresh and radically different view of performance appraisal and its functions that will help people start over and discover new and more effective approaches.

About the Authors
Tom Coens, a labor and employment law attorney and organizational trainer, has thirty years of experience in human resources, quality management, and labor law issues. He has done training with hundreds of organizations, including Chem-Trend International, Detroit Edison, and Mead.

Mary Jenkins is founder of Emergent Systems, a consulting firm that assists in developing progressive human resources systems. Her clients include Saturn, Shell Oil, Kodak, Compaq, Coca-Cola, Oldsmobile, and the U.S. General Accounting Office. Jenkins was previously Director of Human Resources at General Motors GM-Powertrain Division.

Abolishing Performance Appraisals
Why They Backfire and What To Do Instead
Author: Coens, T., & Jenkins, M.
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HOW TO STAY YOUNG AND HEALTHY!

1. Throw out non-essential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay them.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down. (keep this in mind if you are one of those grouches!)
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain get idle. “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.” And the devil’s name is Alzheimer’s!
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. And if you have a friend who makes you laugh, spend lots and Lots of time with HIM/HER.
6. The tears happen: Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is our self. LIVE while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love: Whether it’s family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don’t take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county, to a foreign country, but NOT to where the guilt is.
10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.