



MINISTRY
PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PUBLIC PROTECTOR CONFERENCE – REMARKS BY MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION HON. INKOSI MZAMO BUTHELEZI, MP

Theme: “Professionalised and performing state institutions as the core of basic service delivery of basic services”

Radisson Hotel & Convention Centre, OR Tambo International Airport
18 November 2024

National Assembly Speaker, Miss Thoko Didiza,

Public Protector of South Africa, Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka,

Deputy Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Fulgencio Garrido Ruiz,

Chairperson of the Commission for Gender Equality and Chairperson of the Forum for Institutions Supporting Democracy, Advocate Nthabiseng Sepanya-Mogale,

National Director of Public Prosecutions, Advocate Shamila Batohi

Auditor General, Ms Tsakani Maluleke

Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Ms Refilwe Mtsweni-Tsipane

The Director-General of the DPSA, Ms Yoliswa Makhasi

All Ombudsman present

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good Morning

It is a privilege to remark on this gathering of leaders, experts, and practitioners who are committed to strengthening the foundation of good governance in South Africa.

I must extend my gratitude to Advocate Kholeka Gcaleka for her remarks that set a firm tone for our discourse today.

As we are to deliberate on the role of oversight and compliance bodies, we are reminded that professionalised and performing state institutions are not only the bedrock of service delivery but also the guardians of democracy.

It is therefore crucial to reflect on the state's role in meeting the needs of our people, particularly in a society as diverse and dynamic as ours.

Our citizens entrust us with the sacred duty to ensure that public resources and institutions serve their needs equitably, transparently, and effectively.

Oversight bodies such as the Office of the Public Protector, Parliament, Chapter 9 institutions, and other Ombudsman offices embody the principles of accountability and ethical leadership.

They are not just abstract entities, **but** they are the engines that drive the hopes and aspirations of millions of South Africans who rely on their effectiveness for basic services, economic empowerment, and social justice.

The Office of the Public Protector exemplifies the essence of oversight in its ability to hold the state to account and reinforce the trust between the government and its citizens.

We, as government leaders, must support such institutions and ensure they have the resources and independence necessary to fulfill their mandate without fear or favour.

Your work as the office of the Public Protector, safeguards the rights of South Africans in ensuring that state institutions operate within the bounds of legality and fairness.

While on the other hand, compliance is the backbone of this process – and not merely about adherence to rules - but about fostering a culture of responsibility, where institutions prioritize the public good over personal gain.

The relationship between oversight and compliance is fundamental to the performance of state institutions and the realization of our development goals.

So, in order to build a capable and developmental state, we must prioritize the professionalisation of our institutions. This entails implementation of competency-based recruitment process, continuous training, and the establishment of ethical leadership across all levels of governance.

Professionalisation in that context will ensure that those entrusted with public responsibilities serve with integrity, competence, and an unwavering focus on the needs of the people.

The Department of Public Service and Administration has been working to embed these principles into our public service framework to ensure the delivery of quality public goods and services.

To achieve this, it is therefore essential to attract and retain quality public servants who are committed to rendering excellent service. This approach will undoubtedly restore the public sector to its esteemed status as a noble employer of choice.

However, this effort extends beyond state institutions, and we must also strengthen private sector compliance through entities like the Tax Ombudsman, Press Ombudsman, and Ombudsman for Banking Services.

Their role in upholding accountability and protecting citizen rights complements the work of public oversight bodies thus creating a holistic compliance ecosystem.

Advocate Gcaleka and esteemed guests, building a developmental state requires collaboration between government, oversight institutions, civil society, and private sector – and conferences such as this one provide a critical platform for sharing best practices and mapping out actionable solutions.

Therefore, a key outcome of this conference must be the development of a blueprint that enhances oversight and compliance measures.

This blueprint will guide us in addressing systemic inefficiencies, empowering citizens to engage with Ombudsman institutions, and ensuring that state institutions consistently meet their constitutional obligations.

Ladies and gentlemen, the true measure of any government lies in its ability to deliver. Performing state institutions are the cornerstone of a responsive governance. Yet, performance is not solely about meeting target but about achieving outcomes that enhance the quality of life for all citizens, especially the most vulnerable.

A truly responsive government is one that creates a society where all citizens confidently agree in unison and say, “the vision of an ideal government is fulfilled” – because they can see that government institutions have advanced in efforts to promote personal growth, protect human dignity and have ensured that the potential of every citizen is fulfilled.

We must adopt innovative approaches to service delivery by leveraging technology to streamline processes, enhance access, and improve efficiency. The role of partnerships with the private sector, civil society, and global stakeholders cannot be overstated in ensuring sustainable and impactful service delivery.

Likewise, ethical leadership is a cornerstone of a professional and performing state in such that oversight bodies must model the values they seek to enforce, fostering a culture of trust and respect for the rule of law.

Ubuntu values – which are being rooted in community, compassion, and mutual respect - should guide our oversight practices and ensure we remain people-centered and contextually relevant.

In closing, I call upon all of us to reflect on the immense responsibility we bear as stewards of public trust.

Let this conference be a catalyst for innovation, collaboration, and accountability.

Together, we can build a South Africa where every citizen benefits from a transparent, capable, and developmental state.

Thank you.