

Festive Message from the Director-General



The silly season is upon us and the team of the OPSC has earned the right to be light, frivolous and restful! I am certain that each one of us sighs with relief as 2007 draws to an end. However, I am confident that we will look back at 2007 as one of the best years for the organization. We not only spread our wings but also pushed the boundaries of possibility! As the Director-General of the OPSC I feel a sense of overwhelming pride as I review the sheer volume and quality of work churned out by a competent and selfless team.

We have worked hard and tirelessly, and I am sure that there were many times when we wanted to throw in the towel. While we will all agree that it has been an exhausting and challenging year, I trust that we will leave on our Christmas break with a sense of deep satisfaction at our individual contributions to the achievements of the organization. It is therefore fitting to look back and pat ourselves on the back for the many successes.

It is absolutely heartening to have witnessed the positive outcomes of the hard work that went into programmes and objectives, and we can all look back at the year that was and recount numerous achievements with immense pride.

Mash and team must have glowed with pride at the Presidential affirmation of the SOPS report when South Africans logged onto the weekly newsletter of President Thabo Mbeki and saw the extensive quoting of SOPS under the theme: *Promoting Growth and Development through an Effective Public Service*.

Humphrey and team have continued to put our work "out there", not as a gesture of publicity, but to ensure that PSC's voice enriches Public Administration debate. And this job has been made easier by the substance of reports such as:

- Report on the Management of Poor Performance in the Public Service;
- Report on Grievance Trends in the Public Service;
- Report on the Investigation into the Management of Public Servants in Terms of Prevailing Provisions who are elected as Municipal Councillors in the Limpopo and Western Cape Provinces;
- Report on Financial Misconduct for the 2005/2006 Financial Year;
- Report on the Audit on Vacancy Rates in National and Provincial Departments;
- Report on the Management of Conflicts of Interest through Financial Disclosures;
- Report on the Assessment of Professional Ethics in the Free State;
- Report on the Implementation of the Promotion of

Access to Information Act, (Act No 2 of 2000) in the Public Service;

- Report on an Audit of Government's Poverty Reduction Programmes and Projects;
- Report on Senior Management Service Compliance with Performance Agreements in the Eastern Cape Provincial Administration;
- Report on the Evaluation of the Batho Pele principle for Value for Money in the Public Service; and
- Report on the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Batho Pele principle of Consultation

We reinforced our research work with commendable professional advise in projects that included:

- Inquiry hearings into the public service's inability to recruit and retain people with disabilities;
- the ongoing work pertaining to the National Anti-Corruption Forum;
- developments around the evaluation of Heads of Departments; as well as rolling out of inspections.

Every staff member involved in all reports and projects deserve a big thank you. Collectively, you are the cornerstone that drives the content of the organization. While you go quietly about your work, it does not mean that it is not appreciated and not noticed.

When SCOPA requests the PSC to conduct work, and Caroline and team deliver with such aplomb, the noted appreciation of SCOPA speaks louder than words as to their contribution to Public Administration. Dovhani, when he joined the organization did not bemoan the carry-overs inherited, but instead rolled up his sleeves, and together with his team, delivered in his usual affable way. Balungile, our newest Chief Director, found herself in a whirlwind of activity, and yet still managed, in the midst of all the pressure to see the light side of things.

The Regional Directors and their teams continued to be the champions of the work of the PSC in the provinces. Their advocacy work, together with our various projects, have seen the stature of the PSC rise in the provinces.

It was also the year in which we shed our shyness and spread our wings. We displayed the confidence to put our work "out there" and to invite robust debate. Powerful partnerships were formed with stakeholders and notable highlights include the co-hosting of:

- the first biennial Labour Relations Conference, which featured the theme *Harmonising Labour Relations in the Public Service through Dialogue*;
- the inaugural South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association conference, convened under the theme *Monitoring and Evaluation in Action*;
- the inaugural International Human Resource Conference, under the theme *Building Public Sector Human Resource Capacity in a Developmental State*; and
- the Secretaries Meeting to discuss the establishment of a Forum/Association of African Public Service Commissions and other Appointing Commissions.

The organizing teams of Mmathari and Indran, under the able leadership of Admill and Mash, deserve to take a bow. These teams worked long hours during these conferences and yet always managed to have a smile on their faces as they engaged with the stakeholders. I regularly received accolades on the professionalism

of the OPSC team, and basked in each congratulatory message.

Quietly working in the background was Dumisani and his team. The effects of such effort were several notable achievements, namely:

- the wide and positive media coverage around the work of the organization;
- setting service standards for the implementation of the Service Delivery Improvement Plan;
- institutionalizing our performance management; and yet again ensuring an Unqualified Audit Report during 2006/07 financial period.

As the DG, I can take a bow because each one of you has made me look good. Without the team work and sacrifices made by both management and staff none of these achievements would have been possible. Once again, I wish to express my sincere appreciation for all the hard work and dedication shown by all officials. To the guys in my office (Connie, Morris, Juice and their teams) who feel the heat most, a big thank you! I would also like to thank the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners for their guidance and support throughout the year.

Let me take this opportunity to wish everyone a fun-filled, safe and restful festive season. Selfishly enjoy quality time with your families and for a short time forget that the OPSC exists!

African Public Service Commissions and Other Service Commissions Converge for a Historic Meeting

By: Thembi Nkuna

On 4 September 2007, a Record of Understanding was reached by African Public Service Commissions and other Service Commissions at a meeting held in Swaziland, proposing the establishment of an Association of African Public Service Commissions and other Service Commissions.



A strong consensus emerged that a technical team be established to consider the structure of the Association and the legal and other implications involved in the establishment thereof. It was resolved that this technical team will consist of all Secretaries of the Commissions present at the meeting.

Emanating from this resolution, a meeting of African Public Service Commissions and other Service Commissions took place on 20-22 November 2007 at Sandton Sun Hotel in Johannesburg. The

meeting was co-ordinated and chaired by the Director-General of the South African Public Service Commission, Ms Odette Ramsingh.

The meeting saw over 20 representatives from various African Commissions focusing and deliberating on the name, objectives, structure, format and resources of the Association, where ultimately "A Draft Founding Document on an Association of African Public Service Commissions and other Service Commissions" was developed.

The Deputy Chairperson of the South African Public Service Commission, Mr John Ernstzen delivered the opening address. In his address, he expressed his appreciation for the good attendance and stated that the level of attendance was indicative of the commitment and shared vision to the promotion of good governance in the continent. Mr Ernstzen also mentioned that through a process of cooperation as envisaged through the establishment of this Association, respective members would be able to strengthen their capacity to give effect to the principles of sound public administration in their respective public services.

The meeting agreed that the Association will be called the "Association of African Public Service Commissions and other Service Commissions", with the acronym "AAPSOCs".

The purpose of the Association will be to collaborate, share experiences and best practices among Public Service Commissions and other Service Commissions in order to promote good governance and improve service delivery in the public services of the continent.



In the interim, a coordinating committee comprising of representatives from five geographical regions in Africa has been formed. This committee will be led by the South African Public Service Commission. The coordinating committee will take forward the matters identified during the meeting and prepare a draft Memorandum of Understanding to be signed by the Commissions. The draft founding document will be tabled at the envisaged meeting/session of African Public Service Commissions to be held on 17-21 March 2008 in Kampala, Uganda.

After all the hard work, delegates were entertained with a cocktail function and taken on a tour of Soweto's historical sites which included a visit to the Former President, Nelson Mandela's home and the Hector Pieterse Museum.

PSC Celebrates World Aids Day & International Day of People with Disabilities

By: Tinyiko Maluleke

To reinforce its commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS and support for people living with disabilities, the PSC celebrated World AIDS Day and the International Day of People with Disabilities on 27 November. The celebration was aimed at improving understanding, appreciation, sensitivity, care and support for the two designated groups.



This special occasion saw staff members actively engaging with guest speakers on these two critical issues. One of the guest speakers, Ms Rhulani Makhubela, Chief Director: Diversity Management at the Department of Public Service and Administration, shared her personal experiences

as a person living with a disability. She educated the audience about barriers often placed to limit access to opportunities for people with disabilities. She further elaborated on effective methods of interacting with people with disabilities.

Quizzing the audience, Ms Makhubela said: "Most people regard themselves as able-bodied; while in fact they are temporarily enabled. In reality every individual is a minute away from disability, as accidents do happen and one can suddenly find himself/herself disabled due to an accident. The big question is 'should it happen to you, how would you like to be incorporated back into your workplace'? How would you like to be treated by your employer and your fellow employees?"

Mr Naresh Singh, a motivational speaker from the Department of Labour, emphasised the need to be sensitive to people with disabilities as well as those living with HIV. He cautioned against the tendency to focus efforts only during the campaign or celebration days.

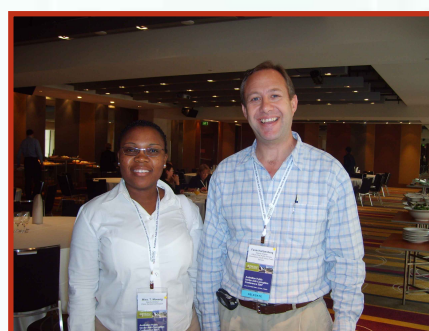
The Careways Group also provided staff with the opportunity to take a voluntary HIV/AIDS test. The Director-General, Ms Odette Ramsingh, challenged all managers and supervisors to take disability into consideration during the recruitment process.

In order to 'keep the promise', it is up to us as individuals to remember the commitment pledge we made about HIV/AIDS and disability.

Two PSC Officials Attend the Inaugural Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption Conference

By: Tinyiko Maluleke

Two PSC officials, namely, Thato Moeeng and Fanie Hartzenberg attended the inaugural Australian Public Sector Anti-Corruption (APSAC) Conference, which was held between 23 and 26 October 2007 in Sydney, Australia.



The Conference was a joint initiative of leading anti-corruption bodies in Australia, namely, the Independent Commission against Corruption, the Crime and Misconduct Commission and the Corruption and Crime Commission. Being regarded as Australia's premier anti-corruption event, the APSAC was also endorsed by a

number of prominent Australian state entities. The main aim of APSAC was to promote public sector integrity.

The Conference was attended by, among others, public sector officials and executives, corruption prevention practitioners, policy advisors, local government and planning specialists, senior police officers, academics, investigators, internal auditors and human resources specialists.

The content of the Conference was tailor-made to cater for the diverse audience, and included a series of workshops. Some of the workshops focused on pertinent issues such as:

- gifts and benefits;
- planning and conducting an internal investigation;
- managing risks around relationships between the private and public sectors;
- safeguarding against the misuse of confidential information;
- regulatory licensing and associated corruption risks;
- strategies for managing and combating conflicts of interest; and
- best practice for managing whistleblower complaints and investigations.

The presentations also looked at strategies and techniques used by governments to combat fraud including: policy, risk assessment, deterrence, prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and recovery. Case studies and practical examples were also used in order to drive the message home.

"Given the content of the various workshops and presentations, and the fact that case studies and practical examples were used, I am of the firm view that the Conference was a unique opportunity for me and likewise the PSC to get familiar with the latest in anti-corruption trends and strategies. I feel privileged that I had a chance to enhance my knowledge and understanding of corruption risks and the relevant and up-to-date information on how to improve capacity to respond effectively to these threats", said Thato Moeeng.

"The fact that the duties and responsibilities of both Thato and I include the investigation of complaints and grievances lodged with the PSC, the knowledge and experience gained at the Conference will definitely augment our input into investigations or projects that the PSC normally undertake," concluded Fanie Hartsenberg.

Six PSC Officials Complete the Accelerated Development Programme

By: Simon Letanta



Following their successful completion of the Accelerated Development Programme, six PSC officials received their certificates during a graduation ceremony held on 8 November 2007. The proud recipients of the certificates were Charmaine Govender (DD: PAI), Thato Moeeng

(DD: LRI), Phume Khumalo (DD: HRM), Annette Pool (D: LRI), Joyce Khunou (DD: PSL), and Rose Nelwamondo (DD: Limpopo Regional Office).

Coordinated by the South African Development Management Institute, commonly known as SAMDI, the Accelerated Development Programme (ADP) is designed to equip participants with both theoretical and practical knowledge and skills required to function effectively in senior management positions.

The Programme follows a Cabinet decision to introduce a sustainable pool of middle managers on salary level 11 and 12 as one of the measures to address the skills shortage in the public service. To fulfill this objective, departments had to nominate individuals with a high potential to step into senior management positions, to participate in this Programme, which is still at a pilot phase.

No walk in the park...

All participants had to complete a Portfolio of Evidence - proof of practical work-based assignments. In addition, they were exposed to formal mentoring and coaching, as each participant had to attend a formal mentorship training sessions with appointed mentors.

The coursework was presented by the University of Pretoria. Lectures began in September 2006 and ended in January 2007. This was followed by an SMS Competency Assessment undertaken in March 2007.

In addition, participants were required to come up with Action Learning Projects, which entails working on real problems. Action Learning compels participants to learn and then implement

solutions. In essence, it is a process of inquiry, beginning with the experience of not knowing 'what to do next', and finding that answers are not available through current expertise. Action Learning therefore provides a platform for participants to demonstrate that they can integrate the competencies acquired during the management development programmes. Action Learning Project Proposals were submitted to the Steering Committee in June 2007.

"Not only was the programme demanding time-wise, it was also challenging intellectually. I found it to be more valuable than the normal conferences or workshops. In a nutshell, ADP provides the best learning and development opportunities for participants," said Phume Khumalo. These sentiments were echoed by Thato Moeeng.

Ready for the next phase...

After successfully completing the Accelerated Development Programme participants can then precede to the next level of the project, namely, the Executive Development Programme (EDP) - scheduled to continue until May 2008. Should participants successfully complete the EDP, they will obtain a Masters in Public Administration, which is level 8 according to the National Qualifications Framework.

As we wish our six ladies the best of luck, there is no doubt that they will once more fly the PSC flag high!

Cheers to a great 2007!

By: Simon Letanta

With 2007 coming to a close, there could not have been a better way to celebrate what was a great year than with a thrilling year end function. The event was held on the premises of the PSC. A great idea indeed, as this accommodated everyone. Well, the turn out by staff did not disappoint either. We also congratulate Kabelo Ledwaba, Deputy Director: External Communication, for winning the coveted title of OPSC Sexiest male for 2007.

One must commend the organizing committee for a job well done. From the decoration of the venue to the delicacies on the menu and the refreshments, one could tell that the organisers wanted to 'thank' staff for their hard work during the course of the year.

The mood was enhanced by good music courtesy of the DJ who made sure that everyone danced or at least bounced their heads and tapped their feet - after all not everyone has the gift of rhythm. Overall, the function was a blast! And as the saying goes... a picture worth a thousand words. Have a look...



And with that we bid 2007 FARE- WELL!!



Management didn't see it coming...

Submitted by: Kabelo Ledwaba

When the management of a certain company sent out a memo informing staff that there will only be one drink per person at the Year End Function, and that everyone should bring their own cup; they probably underestimated the ingenuity of their personnel – as depicted by the picture below!



Reasons Why I Stopped Visiting Rich People

Submitted by: Musa Siboto

Question: "What would you like to drink... fruit juice, soda, tea, milo, chocolate or coffee?"

Answer: "Tea please"

Question: Ceylon tea, herbal tea, bush tea, honey bush tea, ice tea or green tea?"

Answer: "Ceylon tea please"

Question: "How would you like it? Black or white?"

Answer: "White please"

Question: "Milk, whitener or condensed milk?"

Answer: "Milk please"

Question: "Goat milk, camel milk or cow milk?"

Answer: "Cow milk please."

Question: "Warm or cold?"

Answer: "Warm please."

Question: "Full cream, low fat or fat free?"

Answer: "Umm.... I'll rather take it black please."

Question: "Would you like it with sweetener, sugar or honey?"

Answer: "With sugar please..."

Question: "Beet sugar or cane sugar?"

Answer: "Cane sugar please."

Question: "White, brown or yellow sugar?"

Answer: "Just forget about the tea. I'll have a glass of water instead please."

Question: "Mineral or tap water?"

Answer: "Mineral please."

Question: "Sparkling or still?"

Answer: "Sparkling please."

Question: "Flavoured or non-flavoured?"

Answer: "Haai man! Just get me tap water... I don't wanna know whether it is from the garden or inside tap, or whether it is from the kitchen or bathroom, and stop asking me too many questions. NXA!"

Till death do us part!

Submitted by: Musa Siboto

When Muzi, a nice man married for over 50 years died, his wife, Thando was devastated.

A couple of months later, Thando also died. Once in heaven, Thando anxiously looked for Muzi. Suddenly, behind a cloud, she could clearly see him.

She ran towards him, calling his name: "Muzi... Muzi... Darling... darling..."

On noticing her, Muzi said: "Hold your horses woman, and don't 'darling' me. The deal was very clear!! "Until death do us part!"

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