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In my OPINION



From the desk of the Chairperson

Welcome to the first electronic internal newsletter, Izwi lase OPSC. This new and vibrant publication will keep you abreast of breaking news within the Office.

The new-look *Izwi lase OPSC* comes at a time when considerable milestones have been achieved towards unlocking e-Government potential in South Africa. Electronic *Izwi lase OPSC* is itself a great milestone for the O/PSC and a step in the right direction.

The distribution of our internal newsletter electronically, will ensure that every staff member utilises technology that is at his or her disposal, to the maximum. *Izwi lase OPSC* will be distributed bi-monthly. We regard our internal newsletter as a perfect vehicle to popularise the Office programmes amongst internal stakeholders. Therefore, I would like to encourage everyone to read *Izwi lase OPSC* in order to keep abreast of activities within the Office.

I also challenge everyone to take ownership of this very important communication tool.

I would like to encourage the Communication and Information Directorate to ensure that this new-look *Izwi lase OPSC* is reader-friendly, entertaining and informative.

Let me take this opportunity to thank every staff member and Commissioner for all the hard work and commitment during the year 2002. It is because of your commitment that the Office of the Public Service Commission is earning the recognition as leaders and custodians of good governance, and as the ultimate authority in the best practice in public management, at a faster pace. The 55 quality reports that we have produced to date could not have been possible without the inputs of all staff members and Commissioners. March 31, 2003 marked the end of the 2002/3 financial year. Let us start from where we left off, and approach the 2003/4 financial year with the same oomph and vigour.



FOOTPRINTS

By Mamsy Hlahane



The 'Footprints' is your window to news about recent transfers, promotions, appointments, retirement/pension, and resignations. *Izwi* welcomes the new ones, congratulates the promoted, and wishes those who have left, the best wherever they go.

Period: January 2003 - March 2003

Mr M F Makwela
Deputy Director

D: CIS

05/ 02/ 03

Transferred to the PSC

Ms K F Aphane
Snr. Comm. Officer

D: CIS

13/ 01/ 03

Appointment

Ms N V Nogxina
State Admin Officer

D: PERM

28/02/03 (Last Day)

Voluntary Resignation

* The above are the only applicable categories for the January-March period.





THE ACTING DG KNOWS HIS SCRIPT

By Manase Makwela

Following continued concerns from the media and the general public regarding government positions that are occupied by 'actors' for years on end, Izwi caught up with the most senior 'actor' closer to home, Professor Richard Levin, to find out what his actual role is, on the 'OPSC set'.

After spending close to thirty minutes with Professor Levin, whom many just fondly call Richard, yours truly left convinced that this Professor clearly knows the OPSC script. Unlike those acting managers who are "scared to take decisions", as the media alleged at a recent media briefing in Cape Town, Professor Levin is very much aware that "as the Acting Accounting Officer, there are decisions I have to take". And here he was quick to acknowledge the support he gets from the Chief Financial Officer, Mr Ndabo Khoza, who is part of the 75% of senior managers who are keeping the OPSC fires burning.

Twenty-five percent of the OPSC's senior managers have been deployed to the Eastern Cape as part of the team that is assisting to restore proper management and governance in the targeted departments. Although not using the vacuum created by this deployment as an excuse for poor service delivery, Professor Levin did acknowledge that it poses a challenge towards accomplishing the targets in the work plan and responding to adhoc issues that arise during the course of the year.

According to Professor Levin, "we should continue to develop a team that we can consolidate and use to build on our strength" despite the interruption of programmes by the Eastern Cape deployment.

Without underestimating the challenges that go with his current role, Professor Levin has set himself some goals that he believes can be achieved during his tenure as the Acting Director-General. According to him, nothing would be more pleasing than seeing both the internal and external stakeholders being able to recognise that

- Programmes are continuing smoothly;
- The OPSC is building itself as a centre of excellence within the area of Public Administration;
- New Reports are completed and published; and
- Work is going on as planned.

To help achieve these goals, Professor Levin has called upon all staff members to continue improving the quality of work or output, as others prefer to call it. He acknowledged that it is through the commitment and selflessness of all staff members that the Commission is increasingly proving to be a highly credible agency of government within the sphere of public administration and governance. As always, Professor Levin believes, staff members will take heed of this call and enable the OPSC to move even the highest mountain.

Having heard what Professor Levin's plans are, Izwi wanted to know what would transpire once the Director-General, Mr Mpume Sikhosana, returns from the Eastern Cape mission. The answer to this one revealed just how much interaction takes place at the management level and it was clear that the show would just go on.

IZWI
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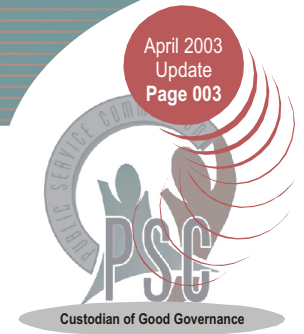
THE ACTING DG KNOWS HIS SCRIPT

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"I have always had close contact with the Director-General, with whom we also meet at Exma level, where we discuss key issues pertaining to the future of the Office, updates on projects, the work plan, restructuring and so forth.

Also, as you are aware, I am not acting in a vacant position. I therefore consult with the Director-General on certain issues before final decisions are taken. Besides, the nature of the PSC is such that the Director-General is always in close contact with the Chairperson who ultimately, takes final decisions".

That said, there is no questioning which script the Acting Director-General reads his lines from. Like a true lead actor who knows the plot of the story, he knows where the OPSC is going and he is currently at the forefront of its march to being the best in its field of operation. Izwi wishes him good health and more wisdom.



Izwi
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PROFILE ON MR ALFRED MALULEKE

By Noleen De Free

Mr Alfred Maluleke's association with the Public Service Commission started 30 years ago in the former Gazankulu homeland, when he was transferred from the Department of Public Works to take up a post of Assistant Public Service Inspector.

After a year in the position, he was promoted to Public Service Inspector, and within two years was promoted to Senior Public Service Inspector.

In 1984, Mr Maluleke was appointed as Senior Efficiency Officer and within three years promoted to Chief Efficiency Officer. In 1989, he was promoted to Secretary to the Public Service Commission of Gazankulu and within three years received another promotion as Director.

In 1994, he was transferred to the Provincial Service Commission of Limpopo, before being transferred a year later, to the post of Director at the Office of the Public Service Commission in Pretoria. He received a 30 years Long Service Award early in January this year.

On the academic front, Mr Maluleke obtained a Diploma in Organisation and Method Studies in 1979, and a BA Degree in 1990.

CRISIS Intervention PSC ASSISTS IN TACKLING SERVICE DELIVERY BACKLOGS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

By Humphrey Ramafoko and Noleen De Free

The Eastern Cape Province is faced with many challenges, complicated by its inheritance of homeland infrastructure and the unmitigated concentration of poverty.

In December 2002, the Premier of the Eastern Cape requested the National Government to deploy an Interim Management Team (IMT) to assist with tackling service delivery challenges in the Province.

The Interim Management Team was established in January 2003, under the joint leadership of the Office of the Public Service Commission's (OPSC) Director-General, Mr Mpume Sikhosana, Mr Monde Tom, Head of Department, Provincial Treasury (Eastern Cape) and Mr Robinson Ramaite, Director-General of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).

The IMT is assisted by the Joint Management Teams (JMTs), who are assisting in tackling service delivery challenges in the Departments

of Health, Education, Social Development and Roads and Public Works. These teams consist of officials from the OPSC, DPSA, and national counterparts. The teams function on an integrated model of power sharing and decision-making on critical issues in the Province.

The overall goal of the JMTs is to ensure that any service delivery backlogs in the targeted departments are addressed and also to establish sound management and leadership in these departments. Areas that the JMTs are concentrating on, are serious service delivery backlogs, finance and administration, human resources and the strengthening of leadership and management skills. The teams also hope to combat corruption effectively by addressing various cultural and ethical issues.





THE PSC RELEASES STATE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE REPORT, 2002

By Manase Makwela

"...the South African public service has undergone a series of profound changes since the political transition of the 1990s"

The Public Service Commission released its second edition of the "State of the Public Service Report, 2002", at a parliamentary media briefing on Friday, 21 February 2003, in Cape Town.

This Report whose purpose is to advise stakeholders on developments in the public service, is an annual publication released by the Commission.

The report argues that the South African public service has undergone a series of profound changes since the political transition of the 1990s, and that while these changes have generated institutional fatigue, they have also energized the service in many ways. The report points out that the public service has been reconstituted as a network of delivery-oriented public service providers, each responsible for their own management according to national norms and standards, rather than the standardized rigid procedures that characterized the previous system. This has created a foundation for future success, although major challenges remain in the areas of implementation, coordination and the integration of services to end-users.

Although the Report looks at all the nine values on Public Administration outlined in Chapter 10 of the Constitution, as a framework to measure public service performance, it addresses three of these values in more detail.

In the first of the more detailed values, the Report provides a conceptual framework for analyzing the efficient, economic and effective use of resources. The Commission proposes that a consolidated performance evaluation framework for the public service be developed in a participatory and collaborative project.

The second value considered in detail is that of good human resource management and career development. The Report argues that the use of information technology in the public service remains problematic and often inadequate, particularly in poorer provinces, while promotions and other crucial elements of career pathing have still not been adequately addressed. The PSC calls for the outstanding issues in the new Human Resource Management framework to be addressed and for the provision of more extensive training to public sector managers on this increasingly complex and challenging area, particularly in the areas of discipline, sick leave and suspensions.

The third value focused upon in the Report is that of corruption. The Report argues that corruption is a serious problem in the South African public service but that it is virtually impossible to provide accurate statistics on assessment of the state of corruption in South Africa. The Report argues that procurement of goods and services is a major risk area. Weaknesses in public administration fundamentals in areas such as filing and record keeping also create opportunities for corrupt practices. The Report highlights a number of areas in which the PSC has done research and other interventions into this important issue. The Public Service Commission recommends that departments ensure that they have a minimum anti-corruption capacity working according to standardized reporting areas. Also, a training course on integrated ethics management should be developed and should be a standard requirement for all public service managers.





In the photo from left are: PSC Deputy Chairperson, Mr John Ernstzen, Chairperson, Professor Stan Sangweni, the Acting Director-General, Professor Richard Levin, and Ms Vuyelwa Nhlapo, the then Acting DDG for Human Resource Management & Labour Relations.

THE PSC RELEASES STATE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE REPORT, 2002

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"The PSC's own Citizen's Forums have shown that much more could be achieved with the same resources if development interventions were coordinated for maximum impact."

The Report goes on to look at the following six Constitutional values in less detail. In terms of development orientation, it notes that government agencies do focus on addressing poverty and its causes but that there is a lack of coordination that characterizes these initiatives.

The PSC's own Citizen's Forums have shown that much more could be achieved with the same resources if development interventions were coordinated for maximum impact.

The Report notes that Government has instituted an impressive set of initiatives to promote fairness and equity, including the adoption of the Batho Pele principles, the Promotion of Access to Information and the Administrative Justice Acts, the promotion of codes of conduct and improved public service regulations. However, implementing these policies has proved to be a major challenge that will require consistent application for years to come. The PSC recommends that increased training be provided to public sector managers on their responsibilities in terms of the Access to Information Act and the Administrative Justice Act, both of which are sophisticated and challenging pieces of legislation.

In terms of public participation in policymaking, findings from the PSC's research suggests that while most policy development includes public participation, the depth and quality of these consultations vary widely. Clarity on what constitutes an acceptable level of consultation and public participation is required. Policy in this regard could be formulated by the Department of Public Service and Administration.

With regard to accountability in the public service, the report argues that much has already been done, especially as a result of the implementation of the Public Finance Management Act. The challenges relate to deepening compliance and implementation of these measures. A number of bodies such as the PSC, the Public Protector, and the Human Rights Commission have been created to support parliamentary democracy, while parliamentary committees and the Auditor-General contribute significantly in this area. However, there is a need to take stock of the impact of certain of these bodies in order to streamline and improve their performances.

The Report argues that while there is a distinct movement towards making use of accountability strategies, in many instances these plans are not tailored to meet the specific risk profiles of individual agencies and are not properly integrated and implemented. The PSC recommends that the performance agreements for senior officials include specific reference to their responsibilities for implementation of departmental risk management and fraud prevention plans.

In concluding one of his many media interviews that followed the release of this Report, the Acting Director-General, Professor Richard Levin, acknowledged that the public service values set out in our pioneering Constitution set a very high and demanding standard. However, "The PSC is committed to contributing to the growth of a public service that can meet these demands. It will do this by undertaking practical research that allows it to provide useful, thoughtful advice to public service entities, and will continue to make its findings known in publications such as the Annual State of the Public Service Report".



THE STATE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE REPORT PRESENTED TO THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

By Manase Makwela

Ever heard of 'jumping from the frying pan into the fire'? This is what happened to the OPSC's Acting Director-General, Professor Richard Levin, when he made a presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Public Administration, on February 26, 03.

This was a week after making a presentation to the media, which one would normally regard as the fire and not the frying pan as it turned out to be in the case in point.

Professor Levin, addressing the Committee for the first time as a Professor, was put in the information oven by the Committee, to see in the words of its Chairperson, Mr John Gomomo "how the public service is performing and how we can intervene".

Despite his sore throat on the day, Professor Levin was equal to the task. Whenever he wanted support, loads of it came his way, as the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, Mr John Ernstzen, who represented Professor Sangweni at this briefing, drew generously from his information reservoir. Also present to help make the Portfolio Committee see the bigger picture, was the PSC's Western Cape Commissioner, Mr Bernard Wentzel.

Following the discussions, the following became clear

If there was a more systematic approach to managing discipline, corruption could be curbed.

Our country needs to come up with a mechanism through which the accurate state of corruption in the public service could be measured.

There need to be proper management support to whistle-blowing initiatives.

Although Letsema has introduced a spirit of partnership, we have to take care of the volunteers in order to sustain this spirit.

Poor filing systems contribute towards maladministration and corruption and also delay investigations.

Although relevance and efficiency of government policy has improved, there is still some challenges when it comes to implementation in certain sectors.

The issue of ethics should be put into the performance agreements of senior managers.

At the end, the Committee asked the Commission to "See what can be done about the abuse of child support grants, foster grants, and pensions, as well as Doctors who give false medical certificates to would-be pensioners", while the Commission asked the Committee to help in ensuring that its reports and recommendations make a difference to Public Administration.

The PSC panel that made presentations to the media consisted of the Chairperson, Professor Stan Sangweni, his deputy, Mr John Ernstzen, the Acting Director-General, Professor Richard Levin, and Ms Vuyelwa Nhlapo, the then Acting DDG for Human Resource Management & Labour Relations.

"If there was a more systematic approach to managing discipline, corruption could be curbed."

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PSC CONFERS LONG SERVICE AWARDS TO ITS STAFF

By Kedi Aphane

It was a sentimental afternoon when staff members, including senior managers, witnessed the conferring of long service awards to colleagues who have given out 20 and more years of their lives to the public service.

The awards were conferred at an award ceremony held on January 31, this year. The following staff members were the toast of the day.

20 years' service award:

Mr Loyiso Mgengo, Director - Eastern Cape Regional Office.

Ms Lindi Qithi, Senior Administration Officer - Free State Regional Office. Ms Qithi's award was conferred in absentia.

Mr Francis Podile, Chief State Administration Officer - North West Regional Office

30 years' service award:

Mr Alfred Maluleke, Director of Corporate Services - Head Office.

These awards were conferred by the Chairperson of the PSC, Professor Stan Sangweni, who also had a word or two to say. The keywords in his speech were maturity and reflection.

He regarded 2001 as the year of maturity - the year in which the PSC defined its strategy and the business plan. According to him, the real foundation for the success of 2002 was built in 2001. Although acknowledging and proud of such successes, Professor Sangweni was also quick to point out the challenges facing the PSC today.

He sees 2003 as the challenging year for the PSC, as manifested by the President's request for "us to participate in a central government intervention in the Eastern Cape province", as reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

Professor Sangweni identified the following as key challenges:

The need to strengthen the existing good partnership with major stakeholders and clients.

Refining our business plan, vision and mission.

Approaching the next 2-3 years with a sense of mission to entrench the Office and the Commission as leaders and custodians of good governance and as the ultimate authority with regards to the best practice in public management.

Identifying training needs of staff and ensuring that they are properly trained.

Despite these challenges, according to Professor Sangweni, there is a significant progress in key performance areas, where the profile of the Commission has been built into a highly respected and effective organ of the State in South Africa's new democratic dispensation. As for where we stand today, Prof pointed out that out of the PSC's key performance areas, several programmes, which have become or are becoming brand products of the O/PSC, have been developed. He cited the following as examples;

The evaluation of Heads of Departments

Monitoring and evaluation

Processing of Grievances and Complaints

Ongoing Investigations

Citizen's Forums

Anti-Corruption Programme

In his concluding remarks, Professor Sangweni gave credit to all Commissioners and staff members, irrespective of their ranks, for their contribution towards placing the PSC where it is today. Having attended the ceremony myself, I must say, it was indeed, a worthy and fruitful occasion.



JUST THE TWO OF US

By Manase Makwela

"Just the two of us' attempts to address the stigma associated with seeking treatment for suspected STIs, and disclosing one's STI status to one's partner/s."

It is Valentine's Day, and into your office comes Ms Lolla Human, the Special Programmes Officer. She places a 'Sexually Transmitted Infections' (STIs), and a 'Condoms' brochures as well as a female condom, in your in-basket. You look at her, hoping she would give an explanation, and what she does is to give you a key holder that says "Just the 2 of us". You look at her with a reserved smile, but she responds by smiling back broadly. Before you can ask if this is a request to be her valentine, she says, "together, we can stop the scourge of HIV/AIDS", and then waits for you to say something.

The only thing you manage to say is "thank you". What do you do next? Do you spend the whole day trying to figure out what she meant or do you really take action? Yours truly, followed the latter and took the uncertainty out of Valentine's Day. However, I cannot stop wondering how many more people spent the whole day wondering what Lolla was really up to. If you are still wondering, Izwi has the answer for you.

Each year an STI Week is held to raise awareness about sexually transmitted infections and promote the use of condoms as a preventative measure. Given the hype around Valentine's Day, the STI Week is planned in such a way that it would include this day for lovers. The purpose is to entrench an association between Valentine's Day and positive sexual behaviour, encourage seeking prompt treatment, and raise awareness on the importance of partner notification and treatment.

'Just the two of us' attempts to address the stigma associated with seeking treatment for suspected STIs, and disclosing one's STI status to one's partner/s. This concept speaks of confidentiality and trust between health worker and patient, and between sexual partners. Asked to elaborate on this concept, Ms Human said "It is based on the assumption that persons who are assured that knowledge of their STI status will be restricted to a health worker who treats/advises/counsels them, and/or their sexual partner/s to whom they disclose their STI status, are more likely to visit a clinic or speak to a health worker or notify their partner/s".

THE JOLLY GOOD FELLOWS

By Mamsy Hlahane

The following people celebrate their birthdays between April and May. Izwi wishes them good health and many more fulfilling birthdays to come.

April

Provinces:

01 Ms R O M Mmutle
16 Mr A T Masondo
22 Dr R R Mgijima
23 Ms L N Khumalo
24 Mr O M Marumo

Head Office:

07 Ms K F Aphane
10 Mr N Khoza
12 Mr S J Pitsi
14 Ms J M Khunou
18 Ms S J Selloe
24 Ms N L P Sithole
27 Ms N N Nzimande

May

Provinces:

08 Ms L V Martin
22 Mr K L Mathews
29 Mr J Malan

Head Office:

01 Mr J S Noome
04 Mr S Buso
04 Ms K Grobler
06 Ms O R Ramsingh
06 Mr T M Sefuba
09 Dr D M Balia
09 Ms B P Mokgoantjane
11 Mr P S Lefoka
17 Ms A E Kruger

18 Ms G E van der Merwe
20 Ms J A Coetzer
22 Mr M D Madaka
25 Mr N M Ramashiya
27 Ms P T Khumalo
29 Mr T B Mdletshe
31 Ms K S Mahlangu

Congratulations!

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EVENTS

Inform us about any upcoming events in your divisions by sending information to Ben De Villiers at BenD@opsc.gov.za on or before 15 May 2003.