

Mid-term: time to reflect and refocus

November 2011 marked the middle of term of our Administration; it marked the period of reflection and review of our work and our commitment to make a difference in the lives of our people. It marked a period where we need to report back and provide an account to citizens on whether we are making progress on the mandate we have been given.

In 2009, we committed to building a performance-orientated state through institutionalising performance monitoring and evaluation through the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in The Presidency. Since then, a lot of work has been done to ensure that we put in place all the necessary tools that will allow us to measure our performance. We undertook to focus on a few areas which we believed that if done properly, will move our country towards a higher road of focused development.

The selection of the five priorities was a conscious and yet deliberate attempt to give this government strategic focus on what needs to be achieved and make an impact, rather than concentrating on activities with no due regard for the outcomes they lead us to. These were as a result of massive expenditure in, among other areas, education, health, crime and corruption and housing, but yet, these have not translated into all the outcomes we wanted and our people expected. One of the hallmarks of this Administration has been a commitment to increase the use of monitoring and evaluation to improve government's performance.



In pursuit of this objective, Cabinet agreed on a set of 12 outcomes (or priorities) to provide a strategic focus for government, building on the five priorities in the ruling party's election manifesto. The five priorities of health, education, crime and corruption, rural development and the creation of decent work became the centre of government-focus and its delivery.

Since then, the President entered into a performance agreement with each of his ministers, in which he spelt out the key results that he expected for each of the outcomes. He also requested some of the ministers to coordinate the production of interdepartmental and intergovernmental plans or delivery agreements for each of the outcomes, setting out how the outcomes would be achieved, and identifying measurable indicators and targets.

The delivery agreements were completed by November 2010. Pursuant to that, we then committed to monitor the implementation and report to Cabinet every quarter on progress with the implementation of these delivery agreements.

The year 2011 marked the full year of monitoring and reporting to Cabinet, present-

ing us with lessons and challenges we need to correct. But most importantly, we have recorded good successes against what we have set ourselves to do.

We have also now started to carry out evaluations of major government programmes related to the outcomes, with a view to assess their impact and identify required revisions to the delivery agreements. Initial evaluations have started in some areas such as Early Childhood Development (ECD), and further evaluations will start shortly on human settlements, child and maternal health, and the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme.

For example, the *Diagnostic Review of the ECD sector* is pointing to the need to increase investment in the sector due to its very high impact on the long-term prospects of people (and their children, i.e. the inter-generational effect), and the increased returns from primary, secondary and tertiary education if children have been exposed to ECD interventions. This is particularly true in the period from conception to two years old, which is neglected at present. It is also pointing to the need to expand home- and community-based provision, rather than just relying on ECD centres. Ten evaluations will be undertaken in 2012/13 as part of the National Evaluation Plan, which signifies that our evaluations are taking shape.

November 2011 was the mid-point of the 2009 – 2014 electoral term and this prompted us to conduct a mid-term review of the implementation of our system and work. The review focuses on education and skills; health; fighting crime and corruption; employment; economic infrastructure; human settlements; local government and basic services; environmental assets and natural resources; an efficient and development-orientated public service; and our work in the international relations arena. It is a comprehensive review which gives progress, challenges and what is in place to address them.

In each of these areas, we provide a short problem statement, an analysis of the causes of the problem, a summary of our 2009 commitments to address the problem and a summary of progress to date against the commitments. We also identify key challenges and make recommendations for focus areas for the remainder of the term. The review is intended to be high-level and focused on a few areas and therefore does not comprehensively cover all the work of government.

Our intention has been to provide a balanced and frank assessment of our progress with the priorities to

date, and we hope that the review makes a contribution towards developing a culture of continuous improvement and accountability, and the transparent government to which we committed.

This mid-term review indicates that there are areas where we have made good progress against the targets which we set ourselves at the beginning of the term. However, it has also identified areas for which, on the basis of progress to date, it appears that the 2014 targets are unlikely to be met. These areas will require particular attention and focus during the remainder of the term.

The mid-term review will be publicly released this month and we would want to see the entire Public Service engaging with it together with society so that we can indeed deliver on our mandate. It also provides an opportunity for reflection on the work that public sector managers are doing and how it contributes towards achieving government's objectives. It also calls on us to form partnerships with society, working together to ensure that we produce the outcomes we want and meet our people's expectations.

It is often human nature to defend what was not achieved when a critical analysis is provided of our failures and challenges. However, for us to build and improve on our performance requires a great deal of listening and reflecting on our performance to achieve better results.

When we release the report, we will encourage public sector managers to engage society, commentators and subject experts outside the Public Service on the issues in the report so that we collectively find better solutions for challenges in our country. Through dialogue and sharing of ideas we can effectively respond to our people's needs and expectations.

I believe that working together we can do more to address the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment our people are facing.

Let us all unite in our diversity and build a public service that is efficient, effective and development-orientated.®



Olm Collins Chabane

Minister for Performance, Monitoring, Evaluation and Administration

Shortly before I joined GCIS, *Public Sector Manager* Magazine came to life in a trial edition in December 2010. From there, things took off in earnest in 2011 with the team managing to put in place the systems and structures, both internally and externally, to make this magazine a permanent monthly feature on our suite of communication products.

It was not an easy task.

As with all things of good quality, it has taken trial and error, working and reworking long and hard and also a good dose of encouragement from our readers, to make this happen.

Most of all, it required of the team at GCIS to step outside of convention and aspire to produce something that could stand its own alongside other glossy magazines; a bold task, but one that I am pleased to say they have stepped up to with enthusiasm and vision.

Within a short space of time, the magazine has built its brand further through mediums such as the monthly *Public Sector Manager Forums* where senior managers are given an opportunity to interact with the political principals featured in the magazine.

To this end, I wish to express my gratitude to our leadership that have shown their support for our effort and come out to address these forums.

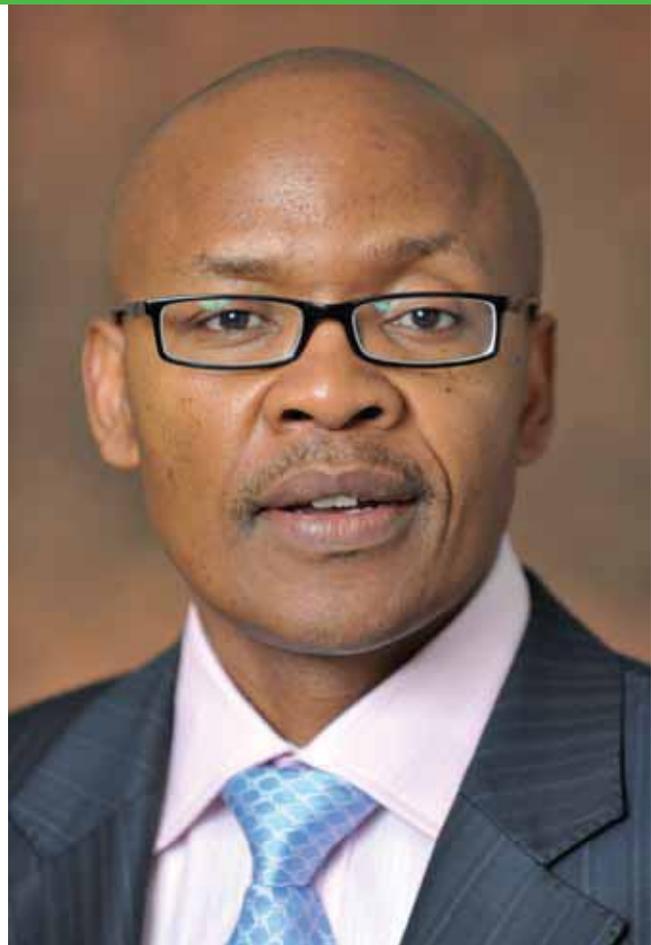
This is a milestone month for us as we formally launch the magazine. From here, the magazine will be retailed so that it can, in the spirit of innovation that saw its inception, become a financially self-sustaining platform.

I challenge more public sector managers to come out in support of this magazine by subscribing and also by continuing to share your inputs and experiences here with us, for the benefit of all senior managers.

I dwelt on the approach and model of this magazine intentionally. Taking into account that we have a people-centred administration that is real about shaping up the Public Service for the greater good and utilising resources to work smartly, I think this model is just one example of how this can be achieved.

Not only did this magazine arise out of a strategic need to mobilise and communicate with the foot soldiers of government, but in its evolution it gave expression to the kind of innovation that is required of us as public servants today.

This is in keeping with the tone of President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address and the call made by



Minister Pravin Gordhan when he presented the National Budget Speech – all of which called for greater efficiency and a more responsive public service which uses its resources wisely.

In this edition, it is particularly valuable to have the Deputy Minister of Finance, Nhlanhla Nene, spelling out what this means practically for us. It is also valuable that we have the insights of the Minister of Public Administration, Roy Padayachie, and Professor Solly Leko, the Director-General of PALAMA on how the Public Service itself will push its own boundaries.

I am always encouraged by the many profiles of young and older leaders that are featured here in *Public Sector Manager*. This month is no exception. The dynamic Commissioner of the National Consumer Commission, Mamodupi Mohlala, and the first female Chief Executive Office of South African Airways, Siza Mzimela, prove to me that everyday, we are indeed finding new talent and pushing back old boundaries.

Be inspired!®

Jimmy Manyi
GCIS: CEO
Cabinet Spokesperson

We hear your views!



Dear Editor

The "High Hopes for 2012" feature (*Public Sector Manager*, February 2012) is a really interesting piece, as it gives a better insight into what various stakeholders are thinking of in the year ahead. Ministers, councillors and the general public gave an idea of what plans they want to see implemented and ways in which they can contribute positively to these plans. South Africans would like to be positive change-makers in their communities and the country; and to do the things that they are able to do to help the country become what they would like it to be. It adds a different dimension and more insight to read what the ministers and members of executive committees say they would like to see and plan to do, and then to read what the public would like to see their leaders doing to improve the lives of the citizens. Reading what the public has to say is also encouraging, as they offer opinions and thoughts to what they as citizens living in the country would suggest as "pressure points" for themselves, families and communities. However, they also give ideas on what the focus should be on and how these things can be tackled to be made better. The hopes for 2012 are high, but realistic and encouraging.

- Phumeza Mzaidume, Facebook

Dear Editor

Thank you for the *Public Sector Manager* magazine. The publication affords us an opportunity to get closer to our public sector leaders. We get to know what they are planning and the direction our government is taking. I am happy to read about the simplified government programmes and follow-ups on them. I hope it gets distributed across all provinces and made accessible to all. The magazine presents me with a South Africa I have not seen – a

South Africa that gives me renewed hope all the time. What is more important is that government speaks directly to us and we hear the message better. I look forward to the upcoming publications in the future. I feel much closer to South African activities and developments.

- Trevor Khanyile, Facebook

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