



GOVERNMENT DIALOGUE

July 2013

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE



Making every day a Mandela Day in the Public Service

By Phumla Williams*
Acting Government Spokesperson and Government Communications Chief Executive



Across the Public Service, hundreds of thousands of officials of all ranks and backgrounds will leave their day-jobs for 67 minutes on July 18 as a living tribute to former President Mandela.

Declared Nelson Mandela Day by President Jacob Zuma in 2009 and Nelson Mandela International Day by the United Nations in 2010, Madiba's birthday serves as a call to action to people around the country and world to do good in their communities and help inspire long-term change.

In 2013, July 18 is particularly poignant in view of

Madiba's extended hospitalisation and the outpouring of love and support by South Africans and citizens of the world alike.

The former President's illness has inspired a broad range of reflections on his life and legacy and provoked the challenge of how to sustain the legacy of justice, human rights, equality, peace, compassion and care for fellow human beings that President Mandela championed throughout the nearly a century of his life.

Since the advent of democracy, successive administrations have worked with great dedication and continuity

to ensure that the South Africa envisioned during the liberation struggle and by the first democratic administration of President Mandela would be realised over time. The current administration has every reason to be proud of its own contribution to this legacy; a legacy that brings Madiba's humanitarian values and leadership to life in the improved social and material conditions of all South Africans.

Addressing South Africa's heads of diplomatic missions abroad in April, President Zuma said: "Our country has a firm foundation in its Constitution and a firm foundation



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GOVERNMENT DIALOGUE

for the next 20 years in the National Development Plan. That is the message we would like you to impart to the world.

“We must communicate the beauty and the successes of our country.

“We must communicate the beauty of the South African people, who were able to move beyond hatred, pain and divisions and began building a new country and a new society.”

President Zuma’s words in 2013 provide a fitting response and sequel to the observations and calls to action President Mandela articulated on August 18, 1994 – a month after he turned 76, and 100 days after he became President.

Reporting to Parliament on his 100 Days, President Mandela said: “Many opportunities have opened up for Aouth Africa to exceed even our wildest expectations. But this requires that we all take up the cudgels and consciously change our paradigms.

“For instance, it is not enough for business to concern itself with how its interests are protected under the current dispensation. Rather,

business should be part of the process of determining policy, with the full realisation that this entails both gearing business towards the objectives of growth and equity and ensuring active participation in the socioeconomic programmes to uplift the disadvantaged.

“In the same vein, workers do have to advance their interests through the collective bargaining system. At the same time, the new situation obliges all of us to take on board the broader questions of increased investments, investor confidence and the requirements of economic growth and equity.”

It is instructive to note how this message born out of the Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994 lives on in the South Africa of 2013, as government seeks to facilitate the involvement of all sectors of our society and economy in realising the National Development Plan’s Vision 2030.

Once again, President Mandela’s urging carries currency today: “There is no doubt that we have the capacity as a nation to realise these objectives.

The people want real change for the better and they are prepared to work for it. They expect of representatives in community structures and in parliament and government, leadership that meets the requirements of the times we live in. They have elected us into office because they trust that we will meet their aspirations. ... Let us harness the nation’s energies to more rapidly develop and reconstruct our country. In this way, our society will experience meaningful and lasting reconciliation.”

In Mandela Month 2013, the Public Service ought yet again to recommit itself to creating a legacy of progress and development each and every single day.

67 minutes of community service should be sustained with hours, days and years of similarly caring and responsive service to citizens from behind the service counter. Let’s ensure that that special hour of service lives on in the way we relate to citizens, colleagues, clients, service providers and our international partners.

Make Every Day A Mandela Day!

The building of the new country has laid more than a firm foundation, as the facts attest.

For example, since 1994, government has housed more than 11 million people, and built over 2.65 million houses.

Census 2011 – which incorporates two years of the current administration’s record – shows that the proportion of households living in formal dwellings increased from 65,1% in 1996 to 77,6% in 2011.

During the same period, the proportion living in traditional and informal dwellings decreased (18,3% to 7,9% as far as traditional dwellings are concerned and from 16,2% as far as informal dwellings are concerned).

The proportion of household using electricity for lighting increased from 58,2% in 1996 to 84,7% in 2011 while those

using paraffin and candles decreased over the same period. The proportion relying on paraffin decreased from 12,7% in 1996 to 3,0% in 2011.

The proportion of households using electricity for cooking increased from 47,5% in 1996 to 73,9% in 2011. The proportion that was using paraffin, wood and coal as sources of energy for cooking decreased.

The proportion of the population that does not have any formal schooling has reduced twofold from 17,9% in 2001 to 8,6% in 2011. The percentage of the population who completed a higher education (includes certificates, diplomas above Grade 12, degrees and postgraduate qualifications) increased from 7,1% in 1996 to 8,4% in 2001 and slightly increased in 2011 to 12,1%.

All this unfolded as the South African economy expanded by 83 percent over the past 19 years.

The national income per capita increased from R27 500 in 1993 to

R38 500 in 2012 - an increase of 40 percent.

Disposable income per capita of households has increased by 43 percent.

Total employment has increased by more than 3.5 million since 1994, and we have extended social grants from 2,5 million people in 1994 to about 16 million to date, to alleviate poverty for the unemployed and the vulnerable.

These achievements caused President Zuma to declare the following as he presented The Presidency’s Budget Vote for 2013/14 to Parliament: “South Africa is indeed a much better place to live in than it was before 1994. Each year we move a step further towards achieving our ideal society.

“South Africa is a much better place to live in since the dawn of freedom in 1994 and that message should not be drowned by negativity.”

