



# GOVERNMENT DIALOGUE IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

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## On your job – or on your way

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Minister Lindiwe Sisulu: in the market for a new, committed cadre of Government

"For as long as our people languish in conditions of poverty, we will continue to give our all. It is a responsibility that we embrace enthusiastically."

The Minister of Public Service and Administration Lindiwe Sisulu delivered this powerful pledge as the closing remarks to her input in the National Assembly Debate on the State of the Nation Address.

The debate, a Parliamentary convention that follows a few days after the President had addressed the nation, gave Government an opportunity to expand on the vision and plans articulated by the President and to respond to comments, critique and contributions by the political opposition.

Though they were timed as closing remarks, Minister Sisulu's comments really set the tone for the way in which Government expects the Public Service

to position itself in pursuit of achieving the objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP).

The NDP is a roadmap for South Africa's development between now and 2030. It constitutes an "artist's impression" of the South Africa of the future; a country that will by then have overcome the problems listed in the National Planning Commission's groundbreaking Diagnostic Overview of the challenges facing all sectors of society.

From the President's address and its subsequent unpacking by various members of the National Executive, a picture emerges of a government that is committed to hiring excellence and to firing incompetence, self-enrichment and a lack of dedication.

In his address, President Zuma told Parliament of Government's plan to establish a Presidential

Remuneration Commission that will investigate the appropriateness of the remuneration and conditions of service provided by the State to all employees.

The first priority would be teachers, he said, because of education's status as an apex priority since 2009, and its standing as an essential service for the nation.

President Zuma provided the following context: "By saying education is an essential service we are not taking away the Constitutional rights of teachers as workers, such as the right to strike. It means we want the education sector and society as a whole to take education more seriously than is happening currently.

"All successful societies have one thing in common – they invested in education. Decent salaries and conditions of service will play an important role in attracting, motivating and retaining skilled teachers."

Minister Sisulu reiterated Government's emphasis



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on education in the Parliamentary debate on the State of the Nation Address.

She said education was an important pillar of the NDP, which represented the first time the country had a common plan for its development.

She added that the goals of the NDP depended on functional State machinery, something on which Government had focused in the past seven months.

“In short, the following remain serious concerns: the quality of the Public Service, corruption in the Public Service and the over-reliance on consultants to do what the State is supposed to do. These go to the core of what the NDP says about creating the capacity of the State to ensure that State machinery functions efficiently and effectively and we can deliver to the citizens of this country, the services that we promised.”

The Minister said the stability and effectiveness of the Public Sector was greatly dependent on the commitment and devotion of its staff.

“The Remuneration Commission (mooted by the President) will determine whether we are getting value for money and whether public servants are remunerated in line with their output.”

Minister Sisulu also reflected on the benefits of multi-year salary

negotiations that have secured a three-year strike-free period in the Public Service.

“The multi-year agreement creates an environment where both Government and labour can use their energies to build the State and deliver services to the people. Out of this has come an agreement to professionalise the Public Service imbued with a new culture,” said Minister Sisulu.

She said Government was “very dismayed” at the number of public servants doing business with the State. “The NDP and the Public Service Commission have recommended that we prohibit public servants from doing business with the State. We have accepted this recommendation and we are working on legislation to effect this and henceforth, no public servant will be allowed to do business with the State.”

Minister Sisulu committed Government to “building the kind of professional Public Service that we require – a Public Service served by a new cadre of Government that will serve with commitment, a motivated public servant that knows that his or her remuneration will be determined by their productivity. A public servant that knows that we care about their conditions of service as much as we care that they will deliver quality service. This is our commitment.”

This commitment was reinforced by the Ministers in The Presidency Trevor Manuel (National Planning Commission) and Collins Chabane (Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, and Administration), at a media briefing on the NDP.

Minister Manuel echoed the view that no public servant should be able to contract with Government at all – even those from different departments – and consequences should be applied to those civil servants that benefit from State contracts.

He said the Department of Public Service and Administration was working on amending the Public Service Act to make it illegal for civil servants to do business with the State.

Manuel said this legislation should trump the Constitutional provision that all South Africans are allowed to own and run a business.

“If there’s any ambiguity, it’s our responsibility with Parliament to ensure that that ambiguity is raised,” Minister Manuel said.

He said the ratcheting up of Public Sector delivery was key to

implementing the NDP, adding that it was “in the interest of democracy” that public servants who were not skilled and effective be removed.



Minister Trevor Manuel warns public servants with business interests to deliver services to the people, not to the State.

