



Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi

“We thought we should extend the brand and have events that are related to the magazine; hence the forum. Critically, the forum is a response to concerns raised by our political principals that the Public Service tends to shy away from the battle of ideas. When we investigate why we shy away from the battle of ideas, it’s maybe because we never have an opportunity to sit down and engage and try to understand, for example, what the NHI is all about.”

Minister Motsoaledi’s passion for his portfolio and the NHI project made for an insightful evening during which the Minister shared his vision and public servants from a range of departments were able to probe deeper with questions of their own.

The Minister’s interaction with public servants embodied the core purpose of the forum: an opportunity for public officials to interact directly with senior national leadership on key programmes and policies of government, without the commentary or interpretation with which such issues may be discussed in public media.

In this regard, the forum stimulates intellectual rigour among officials as they formulate or think about or implement public policy.

A secondary facility provided by the forum is the chance for public servants to network, share best practices or common challenges, and form supporting or mentoring relationships. The forum is a platform where challenging issues in public policy are stated and debated, but also where innovation and breakthroughs can be showcased.

Among the guests who attended was State Security Head of Communication, Brian Dube, who viewed the session as empowering to public service managers. “Such a forum is long overdue and one hopes that more people will participate in future sessions,” he said.

Mbizeni Mdlalose, KwaZulu-Natal Communication Manager of the South African Social Security Agency, said all communicators should be able to articulate government’s position on all issues.

“The forum capacitated me to understand the NHI without having to rely on the media for information. Moving forward, I will be a good messenger for this noble cause (of the NHI).”

■ **Next on the PSM Forum schedule is Advocate Sandile Nogxina, former Director-General of Mineral Resources, and current Special Adviser to Mineral Resources Minister Susan Shabangu. He will share his experience and comment on the values, ethos and practices that marked his time in the Public Service, which also included the Public Service and Administration and Energy portfolios.**

A new platform for the sharing of ideas among public service managers has been created with the launch of the agenda-setting Public Sector Manager Forum.

The forum is an extension of the still-new brand of the Government Communications-produced *Public Sector Manager (PSM)* magazine that seeks to build public servants’ own understanding of key policies of government, and to promote pride and camaraderie among officials as a community within the broader South African society.

PSM proudly hosted its inaugural forum on 29 September 2011, with the Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, on the podium at the Sheraton Hotel in Pretoria to further unpack the National Health Insurance (NHI) project, which he had discussed at some length in an earlier interview with the magazine.

As host for the launch, GCIS Deputy Chief Executive Officer: Communication and Content and PSM Head of Editorial and Production, Vusi Mona, said: “The whole aim of this magazine is to provide a platform through which we can share best practices, debate policy initiatives and profile the best among us, but also for the Executive to communicate with public servants.



1



3



2



4



5

1. DCEO of GCIS Vusi Mona, Biovac Institute Deputy Chairman Mpumi Sowazi, GCIS CEO Jimmy Manyi
2. Tasneem Carrim, Ntombi Mthombeni and Dorris Simpson of GCIS
3. Dr Kenneth Thobejane with Gcinikhaya Makholwane and Kabelo Mahobye of the Council for Medical Schemes

4. Xolani Tyilana of the Department of Human Settlements with Mrs Moloko Gantsho and her husband Dr Monwabisi Gantsho, CEO and Registrar of the Council for Medical Schemes
5. Josephine Appolus of the Department of Traditional Affairs and Barileng Dibakoane of the Department of Cooperative Governance

Leading with distinction

Professor Craig Househam

Writer: Xoliswa Zulu

One would hardly expect the man in charge of health in the Western Cape to be a free spirit. He has a stud in his ear and a tattoo, reflecting a man who is comfortable in his own skin.

A Harley Davidson is his preferred mode of transport, and it's when he's dressed in his black leather biker jacket, matching T-shirt, dark blue jeans and biker boots, that he is himself.

When he's at the office, leading over 28 000 people, power suits are his choice of attire, but the stud stays in place.

Professor Craig Househam is no softy, though; under that playful exterior is a man who takes his job seriously and running a massive department is no easy feat.

Househam was recently named the Top Performing Government Leader at the Annual African Access Business Awards. The annual awards ceremony recognises and honours top performers in both business and government.

While accolades were heaped on him, Househam prefers to be modest, saying "it's nice that somebody thinks you're doing ok".

"I've been head since 2001 and my management team has been stable, certainly for the last five years. I think strong management, with a stable management team, makes it easier to get things done.

"I've stayed in the Public Service despite offers from the outside, simply because I believe it's something worth doing.

I enjoy my job ... I think it's a challenge, and there's never a boring moment. What you do makes a difference," he smiles.

Since becoming head of the department, Househam has come up with new and exciting ways to improve health services in the Western Cape. His brainchild, Healthcare 2010, propelled healthcare to another level in the province, something he attributes to his "hard-working team".

"We're currently engaged in developing Healthcare 2020 or Vision 2020," he says. "We did a review in the early part of the year of how much we achieved with Healthcare 2010 and we have achieved a lot, particularly in restructuring and improving infrastructure."

Currently, the province is in the process of building two new hospitals, in Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain.

"Healthcare 2020 will look at how we can reduce the burden of disease, particularly in four areas. Firstly, by reducing injuries; secondly, promoting healthy lifestyles to reduce the incidence

... continued on page 63

of non-communicable chronic disease; thirdly, reducing the impact of the burden of disease on mothers and children; and finally, looking at infectious diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis (TB)," he explains.

A discussion document will be released later in the year and the aim is to release the revised strategy for 2020 in April next year, looking at the next 10 years.

According to Househam, access to healthcare in the Western Cape is good but the attitude of staff towards patients and the load on the province's facilities continue to be a challenge.

Another challenge facing the department is the difficulty for emergency medical services to access informal settlements.

"An ambulance can drive around for hours in the dark looking for an address which they can't find, so we are looking at ways of dealing with that."

Despite all its challenges, says Househam, the department has managed to maintain a level of care.

On the issue of the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme, Househam says it will only work if the country finds adequate management capacity.

"As South Africans, we would not mind using a health service, provided that care is of quality. It will work if we can find adequate management capacity and that's the biggest challenge in South Africa.

"I think the biggest challenge is government's ability to manage and regulate what is a major change in the way health services are run in the country and that will determine the success or failure of the NHI. It's not a simple process."

Househam has been in the Public Service for over 30 years and while stress can take its toll, he has managed to keep his cool under the toughest of conditions.

"I believe in taking time off, having fun and laughing," he chuckles. "You've got to be an ordinary human being; have fun. This job will kill you if you take everything too seriously. One of the most important things in management is having a sense of humour."

His motto is simple: "I'd rather do something and make a mistake and fail and learn how to fix it," he explains. "I've made some grand mistakes, but fixed them. Learn from your mistakes, but don't do it again," he says sternly.

Focus on women's health

As October is Breast Cancer Month, the department will be focusing on women's health and, to an extent, child health.

"We have adopted in the Western Cape what we call a 'seasonal approach' where we divide the year into four quarters. In this quarter, we will be dealing with women's health and we will be encouraging screening.

"We also have a partnership with PinkDrive where women can have mammograms done. We will be focusing across

the whole department on women, particularly on breast and cervical cancer screening and also general well-being," he explains.

Fighting HIV and AIDS

The Western Cape also focuses on HIV and AIDS education through a programme called Peer Educators, where young people are trained to inform other young people about the disease. "With the HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT) Campaign of mass testing, we tested 1, 1 million people in the first year."

The HCT Campaign was launched by President Jacob Zuma last year in April, and almost 13 million people countrywide have been tested.

"I'm proud of what the department has done in terms of financial management, human resource management and service delivery. It's not perfect, there's a long way to go, but I think in the context of what we have, we haven't done half bad." 🗣️



Employer of choice

According to Professor Craig Househam, Head of Health in the Western Cape, the province provides health services to 78% of the population. "We have 28 900 employees and we have an annual budget of R13, 3 billion currently."

The department also has a programme called the Barrats Values Assessment. The assessment asks staff to identify values that are important to them and values that they would like to see in the department.

"This has shown that the people who work for us are inherently good," he explains. "As management, the way we've decided to look at the whole values approach is to understand the people who work for us and the kind of department we'd like to be."

Because of that assessment, the department has developed what they call C²AIR²; which stands for "Care and Competence; Accountability and Integrity; Responsive and Respect." That's the department we want to see and we want to change so people can say "that's where I want to work".



Minister Naledi Pandor

Energy options for a climate of change

Writer: Chris Bathembu

As South Africa looks to overhaul its energy sector as part of the country's response to climate change, we need to invest more in research and technology to move away from high carbon emission sources.

Just weeks before the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP17) to be held in Durban from 28 November to 9 December 2011, government and the private sector are placing the issue of climate change on the national agenda.

The Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor, told delegates at a women's climate conference in Pretoria in September that South Africa would have to become more creative in coming up with new energy technologies to replace the country's long-term dependence on coal-fired electricity.

She said researchers were working on various innovations that would lead to more investment in wind and solar energy.

"The time has come for us to become more creative and better; we have to be innovative in our research if we are to influence a new climate regime," said Pandor.

South Africa's long-term mitigation scenarios have prompted a national climate policy based on lowering green house gas (GHG) emissions and, in response to these scenarios, government has adopted mitigation strategies which focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy alternatives.

As a result of these strategies, officials say South Africa's emissions will peak by 2030 and then decline, with the focus on scaling up grid-connected solar thermal power, utility-scale wind power development, solar water heaters and demand-side energy efficiency.

Pandor said South Africa should not be harshly judged for its heavy use of coal as a source of energy as coal "will

... continued on page 67

not be there forever". The country needed to be praised for the efforts it was making to implement some of its projects, including the ambitious plan on solar energy, which promises to expand the country's clean energy landscape significantly.

Signs are that the next decade could mark the beginning of the solar power boom in South Africa, providing the country secures the funding for an ambitious project earmarked for the Northern Cape.

The Department of Energy held a solar park conference in October 2010, during which local and foreign investors were presented with a preliminary feasibility study and called upon to consider putting their money into building a solar park capable of generating 5 000 MW of power – as much as one coal-fired power station. Initial projections show that the park, to be situated in Upington, would cost about R150 billion. The State is counting on private investors to assist with funding.

In his analysis of the country's energy operations, Eddie O'Connor, CEO and co-founder of Mainstream Renewal Power, insists that private investors are unlikely to invest in coal plants in South Africa mainly due to fines associated with carbon emission. "How can they tell what the cost of production will be (fines and traded coal costs included) in 2020, 2030 or 2040? There is no clear line of sight to continuing profits so no one will invest."

"It's not enough to compare the capital costs of coal with renewable resources, or even the fuel costs. Ongoing non-fuel costs have to be considered and those costs for coal


plants are a good deal higher than for renewables. With wind and solar, what you see is what you get, one upfront price and some small annual costs related to maintenance, rates and rental payments."

Earlier this year, the Department of Economic Development announced an investment of R25 billion to support a plan to ramp up renewable energy and the green economy. The new economic growth path for South Africa also sees a possible 300 000 jobs being created in the green economy by 2020, with 80 000 in the manufacturing sector.

The green economy has been identified as one of six drivers to create five million jobs by 2020 and help bring down unemployment, which is currently running at 24%.

Cabinet announced in August that it had approved the implementation of several solar water geyser roll-out programmes and that engagements with potential funders had already started.

Eskom was granted R1,5 billion by the National Energy Regulator of South Africa for the installation of 259 000 solar water geyser systems. To date, over 144 141 units have been installed, at a cost of over R750 million.

Pandor said these investments, if they were followed up, could boost South Africa's response to climate change. She noted that countries such as India and China were investing more in technology and research, but that when it comes to sub-Saharan Africa, "you see a different picture". "We have less people with PhDs, and we are not investing as much in technology research – this will have to change." 





35 years after Black Wednesday:

Did the banning of “black” newspapers tell the whole story?

Writer: Sandile Memela*

It is 35 years ago that the apartheid regime mounted its assault against the freedom and integrity of so-called “black” newspapers. In 1977, the Government silenced *The World* and *Weekend World* as publications that were mistaken for revolutionary voices simply because of the skin colour of the staff and the market they catered for.

Some of its senior journalists, including the editor, were detained without trial.

While the public misunderstood this as confirmation of their radical political nature, there has always been a need to acutely re-examine the role and relevance of black newspapers in the struggle for freedom – or put it into proper perspective.

Although some black journalists were subjected to political harassment, it would be misleading to generally bestow upon all or most black editors and journalists the status of being unsung heroes of the struggle for liberation.

To a large extent, black newspapers were, primarily,

instruments of systematic and repetitive agendas calculated to soften or dilute political consciousness among their readers.

It was a mistake to assume that the detention of a handful of their staff catapulted them to the vanguard of the struggle or to whipping up radical militancy in the communities.

A critical examination of the lives of black editors in the 1970s and 1980s, for instance, soon reveals that they were not necessarily the hard-core political activists they made themselves out to be.

In fact, the apartheid intelligence regime that was responsible for banning publications such as those referred to was not only out of touch with realities on the ground, their decisions also were not based on any particular track record papers like *The World* had in heightening political consciousness among their readers.

When *The World* was banned in 1977, big business had to quickly reinvent a substitute that would tap into the sleeping

giant known as the “black market”.

It was in this context that the strategy was developed to sponsor the transmogrification of a popular knock-and-drop into a mainstream publication that would rise in stature, influence and power.

Perhaps in its own unique way, the story of *the Sowetan* newspaper, particularly, represents an important milestone in the struggle for self-determination and freedom of thought and expression.

In fact, it punctuates the sad history of the constraints on so-called black media and its journalists to articulate the hopes and aspirations of the African majority.

Sowetan turned 30 this year

There is no doubt that in their role as self-appointed custodians of freedom of expression, a few politically conscious black journalists have exercised a powerful influence to give expression to the African majority’s demands for freedom and democracy. Significantly, this was fleetingly brought into focus this year with the celebration of the three decades of the existence of a former knock-and-drop, *Sowetan*, which has grown to be an influential publication.

However, there will always be a need to critically examine and debate the claim that black journalism served a political agenda or was founded to pursue the commercial interests of its owners.

This is an important distinction to place the role and responsibility of black journalists and media into its proper context.

Significantly, *Sowetan* and its predecessors – *Bantu World*, *The World*, *Post* and *The Mirror* – did not develop under African conception, ownership or control.

The publications were largely the result of the colonial agenda to co-opt Africans into the Western thought and lifestyle.

Their purpose, essentially, was to dilute anything that was an

expression of African heritage, history and culture or articulate it from a Western perspective.

What this means is that these publications were, in essence, imitations of European thought and cultural patterns. They were vehicles to entrench Western intellectual domination through the creation and promotion of African elite.

Bantu World was founded by a former white farmer, Bertram Paver, who had no intention to propagate the African desire for self-determination and independence.

Instead, not only did he desire for the newspaper to be dominantly English but also to propagate news proposing the standpoint that Westernisation benefited Africans.

While Africans owned 50% of the newspapers, only seven out of 20 pages of the newspaper were in indigenous languages, thus encouraging the marginalisation of African languages from the mainstream.

The first generation of editors and journalists in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s were highly educated and Westernised African gentlemen who enjoyed prestige among the African readership because they

were representatives of the white man’s way.

These black editors – including Victor Selope-Thema (1932 – 1952), Jacob Nhlapho (1953 – 1957) and Manasseh Moerane (1962 – 1973) – were, over the decades, increasingly dependent on white editorial directors who guided and shaped their political orientation and outlook.

Thus from the beginning, a publication like *Sowetan* was created and controlled by white money to propagate a white perspective and create an African middle class alienated from its own history, heritage and experiences.

After the banning of the liberation movements in 1960, for instance, the so-called black newspapers did not step into the

... continued on page 71



Sandile Memela

political vacuum as their primary concern was to make a profit and, at the same time, to depoliticise the African population through an overcautious editorial policy.

It was into this political void that young students like Steve Biko, Barney Pityana and others stepped to mobilise the black community through the philosophy of Black Consciousness.

African journalists who worked on publications like *The World* and *Post* were, largely, conservative types who espoused the liberal philosophy of gradualism and were reluctant to embrace or reflect Black Consciousness.

However, this did not stop journalists like Bokwe Mafuna and Harry Nengwekulu, for instance, from organising them into a politically conscious formation that awakened their political commitment.

To a large extent, black journalists were ensconced in middle-class lifestyles and outlooks that confined them to reporting on non-political stories that emphasised sports, entertainment, crime and "society".

They conformed to the role that was prescribed by white editorial directors who had more interest in using the newspaper to tap into the black market than in waging political battles to liberate the oppressed.

The dramatic change of attitude happened with the rise of Steve Biko and the rumbles of discontent among students in Soweto in the 1970s with the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction.

Much as Percy Qoboza (1964 – 1977) was an outspoken critic of the apartheid regime, he functioned under very strict white editorial control.

Thus, when the paper was banned in 1977, only to be resurrected as *Post* in 1981, Qoboza was forced to resign for reasons that may have been linked to his being "uncontrollable".

He epitomised a new phenomenon of growing struggle consciousness among young and courageous journalists who had been banned or imprisoned – including Phil Mthimkulu, Zwelakhe Sisulu, Mathata Tsedu, Joe Tlholoe, Thami Mazwai and Aggrey Klaaste, among others – for deviating from the market-oriented profit-making strategy to political activism.

The owners of *Sowetan* were opposed to the notion of using the newspaper to express support for banned organisations like the African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress or articulating political views.

It was, mainly, a vehicle not only to create a black middle class

but also to create opportunities for white business in the black market through sensational stories.

Significantly, the first editor of *Sowetan*, Joe Latakomo, was a sports writer whose beat presumably posed no threat to the political regime. Editors and senior writers of *Sowetan* were expected to conform to the interests of capital and thus protect and preserve the status quo.

Many of them were forced to ignore politics and readjust to promoting entertainment, sports, general news (crime, sex and scandals) and small business.

Although partly true, it is misleading to portray the history of *Sowetan* as primarily about being the custodian of African political aspirations and hopes.

It was an accident of history that a few of its journalists were subjected to detention, banishment and imprisonment.

Instead, it has to be understood that *Sowetan* and its predecessors were not established to pursue what could be considered an authentic African agenda for political self-determination and liberation. In fact, they were vehicles of white control and domination over African thought.

More often than not, the editorial controllers were inclined to be hostile to any African journalist who used the newspaper for political purposes. For instance, any journalist who called for the return of the land, redistribution of wealth or condemnation of racism faced serious consequences.

The fact that men like Qoboza, Klaaste, Tlholoe or Mazwai were, once upon a time, part of *Sowetan's* evolution or history does not excuse it of its role as being an instrument for white business to tap into the so-called black market.

Today, *Sowetan* has what can be considered an ambivalent relationship with the Government, for instance, which raises questions about its role in the development of an African state.

But the claim that it was more of a political newspaper than a commercial institution on the side of capital needs to be debated. The true history and role of so-called black newspapers and their editors and journalists still needs to be critically re-examined. 🗣️

*** Sandile Memela is Chief Director: Marketing and Public Relations at the Department of Arts and Culture. His book, *Where Angels Fear, on power dynamics in newsrooms, will be published by Gecko in this month. He writes in his own capacity.***

Communicating compassion

The number of people in need of food relief due to drought, conflict and high food prices in Somalia has reached a staggering four million. This is more than half of the country's population.

Although many organisations from across the world are reaching out to help Somalia, aid to date has not nearly been enough. The people there are still in desperate need of food, water and medical treatment.

Government Communications (GCIS) embarked on a donation drive to extend a helping hand to the victims affected by drought and famine in Somalia.

The drive was the brainchild of a group of 38 inspired female GCIS employees who gathered at a recent Women in Management workshop to commemorate the Annual Public Service Women Management Week in August.

Their inspiration came from a story conveyed by the Deputy Chief Executive: Government and Stakeholder Engagement at GCIS, Nebo Legoabe, of an old man who religiously visited the ocean every morning to throw back the starfish that had been carried ashore by the waves.

One day, an intrigued young boy approached the old man and asked him, "What are you doing?"

The old man replied, "I am throwing the starfish back into the ocean before the sun rises."

Curious, the young boy asked, "But why?" The old man replied, "If I do not throw them back before sunrise, they will burn in the sun and die."

Fascinated, the young boy said, "There are a lot of starfish out here, how many of them are you going to throw back into the ocean in time?"

The old man simply responded, "it doesn't matter; I am saving one starfish a day."

Touched by the generosity of the old man in the story, the women in GCIS decided they, too, wanted to lend a helping hand to those in need.

"As an organisation and Africans at heart, we were deeply touched by the images shown. We are now trying to unify our efforts as GCIS through organising a collection of donations for the affected people in Somalia to help them overcome this ordeal," says Mavis Tshokolo, Director: Human Resource Development at GCIS.

Through GCIS' Employee Health and Wellness Programme, staff members were encouraged to make donations to the Somalia Relief Mission through the Gift of the Givers Foundation. The donation drive ran from 24 August to 16 September 2011.

"Volunteering is a great way to advance a cause, support an organisation and make a difference in our communities. We recently celebrated Mandela Day, which highlighted extending a helping hand to others. I would say whenever possible, let us use our time and talents where they are really needed. Let us all get involved," says Tshokolo.

GCIS' Deputy Chief Executive for Corporate Services, Phumla Williams, was excited about the staff's generosity.

"In order to assist the dire humanitarian situation in Somalia, GCIS Management saw it fit to pledge solidarity by way of gathering donation items aimed towards the alleviation of the position of the Somalis. We appreciate the interest and hope shown by our staff members." 🌟



Land reform starts with office reform



Minister Gugile Kwinti

Ensuring that all South Africans, particularly rural black people, have reasonable access to land with secure rights to fulfil their basic needs for housing and productive livelihoods is at the core of the recently released Green Paper on Land Reform, says Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Kwinti.

"The objective is to create a new trajectory for land reform that will attempt to break from the past without significantly disrupting agricultural production and food security. This will also avoid land redistribution that does not generate livelihoods, employment and incomes," adds Minister Kwinti.

Releasing the draft Green Paper in late August for comment, Minister Kwinti said the Green Paper was seeking a single reconfigured four-tier system of land reform.

The Green Paper proposes a recapitalisation and development programme to ensure that all land-reform farms are optimally productive.

To achieve, the department believes that only a committed, compassionate and aggressive new public service cadre will be better placed to implement government's

The recently released *Green Paper on Land Reform* has expectedly unleashed a flurry of reaction. The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform firmly believes that only a conscientised public service will help government realise its long-term objectives on land reform, writes **Mbulelo Baloyi.**

long-term land reform policy.

Rural Development and Land Reform Head of Communication Services Eddie Mohoebe says land reform public service officials are strategically placed at the cutting edge of service delivery.

"Land reform public service officials and project officers have to be imbued with the three characteristics of commitment, compassion and aggression, as they are to play an increasing role in the wake of the mooted reforms as laid out in the recently released Green Paper on Land Reform."

Mohoebe says it is important that the Public Service understands the department's vision and accompanying imperatives.

Land reform in South Africa remains a thorny and sensitive issue that is at the heart of the nation's transformation agenda.

"This will ensure that all South Africans, particularly rural black people, have reasonable access to land with secure rights to fulfil their basic needs

... continued on page 75



for housing and productive livelihoods.”

Mohoebi says for government to realise the envisaged objectives as set out in the Green Paper, Public Service officials have an added responsibility to implement whatever decisions have been taken at an executive level.

“This legislative initiative that the department is taking emanates from the material conditions of existence that our people are experiencing in rural areas where poverty is a daily existence for our people,” says Mohoebi.

“We are faced with a situation where on a daily basis the things that we take for granted, such as having access to clean, drinkable water, our people in rural areas do not have. You talk about having sanitation, they do not have; the same with economic opportunities. In rural areas, unemployment is a daily monster that our communities have to face day in and day out.

“Now, Rural Development wants to change that because we are saying in rural communities there must be vibrancy, there must be equity, the same opportunities that we see in urban centres must be there in rural areas.

“There must be sustainability. People who do not understand and who have not experienced the hunger and frustration that the people in rural areas experience on a daily basis cannot have the determination and commitment that we are referring to as well as compassion,” says Mohoebi.

Some of the principles underlying land reform include the de-racialising of the rural economy, the democratisation and equitable land allocation and use across race, gender and class. In addition, there is a need for a sustained production discipline for food security.

Mohoebi says the political will is there and all that is needed is a new kind of activist public service official.

“If someone in administration does his or her work with commitment, compassion and aggression, that person will understand why we are doing the Green Paper and why we want to de-racialise the rural economy so that we can also avail business opportunities to up-and-coming service-providers.

“Now, when an invoice comes, she or he would not sit on the invoice, go on lunch, take leave, take sick leave, go home early while the invoice is sitting on their table and the emergent supplier is not paid and by the time the supplier is paid after 60 days, the supplier has already been liquidated,” remarks Mohoebi.

Mohoebi says this goes further – if there is a commitment, compassion and aggression among the Public Service, it will not be an anomaly to have an observant supply chain management official querying the delay in payment of service-providers, particularly the small, medium and micro-enterprises.


“You will, even, as a supply chain management official, say to somebody: ‘This order number for this particular service was generated 15 days ago; I have not seen an invoice on my desk in the last 15 days, and has this service been provided; if not, why not?’ In enquiring about this, one sees the aggression in the relentless follow-up and pursuing of the payment for that service-provider.

“In a nutshell, we should not have a public service that is time-bound, seeing that they get paid from being in the office from eight to four. We need a civil service that says ‘I am here to serve and I am given an opportunity to change somebody’s life out there and for doing this I am being remunerated, I am not happy to go home unless and until such task has been executed’.

“What we envisage is that there should be no gap between the leadership, the management and the people at the lower level because the leadership may understand the imperatives that we are trying to achieve and the urgency of the issues we are dealing with - but this urgency and understanding is not being disseminated at lower levels,” says Mohoebi.

“The aggression I talk about implies that when a task is at hand, people should be so committed and compassionate that they approach their work with a ‘can be done attitude’.

“That compassion that I was talking about should be that even the cleaners sweeping the floor understand to say, ‘I am keeping this place healthy and clean so that the people who are implementing these government projects have an environment that is conducive so as to enable them to deliver what is expected of them’.

He says a public service official must consciously know and be aware at all times that his or her contribution through his or her work has changed somebody’s living condition for the better. 



Vusi Madonsela

DGs must work together for common good

Directors-General (DGs) should become as adept at building networks and camaraderie among themselves as peers, as they are at building teams within their departments. This was part of a call to action presented to the Forum of South African Directors-General (Fosad) recently by Social Development DG, Vusi Madonsela, one of the longest-serving heads of department in government. **Mbulelo Baloyi** reports.

We all work for a living. However, it is significant that as we toil every day for that living, we also derive some job satisfaction from it, DG Vusi Madonsela modestly advised his counterparts and compatriots at a recent Fosad gala dinner in Tshwane.

The occasion was a welcome function for newly-appointed DGs at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation's impressive campus along Soutpansberg Road.

Among the new members welcomed by Fosad were the DGs of Arts and Culture (Sibusiso Xaba); Communications (Rosey Sekese); International Relations and Cooperation (Jerry Matjila); Labour (Nkosinathi Nhleko); Trade and industry (Lionel October); and National Treasury (Lungisa Fuzile). The DGs from the Eastern Cape Provincial Government (Mbulelo Sogoni) and Limpopo (Rachel Molepo-Modipa) were also introduced.

Madonsela pointed out that between them and their political principals, DGs had a collective responsibility for the overall efficiency and efficacy of the systems of government in the management of public affairs.

As chief accounting officers, they retain primary accountability for the soundness of the policy outputs of their individual departments as well as the vigour of each department's administrative systems and integrity in the management of public financial affairs, he said.

Having been inducted into Fosad in July 2003, Madonsela recalled how he felt like being thrown into the deep end of a pool in the months that followed his joining the Public Service.

"As I recall, when the newly-appointed cohort of my time were welcomed, it took only an announcement of our names at the beginning of the July 2003 Fosad workshop and us taking a bow in our acknowledgment of our reception into the (Fosad) ranks."

Madonsela said he and other DGs appointed way back had learnt the hard way as they navigated their new roles, adding that induction had taught them its inadequacies when welcoming new DGs.

"Crisply put, what followed our introductory workshop, as we returned to our individual departments, was a succession of many unhappy episodes of trial and error by new DGs. Many of my contemporaries, especially those like me, who were fairly new entrants into the Public Service, felt quite akin to being left alone at sea to swim and observe

the flow of the tidal wave to propel you as you throw your best strokes to find your path ashore," he said.

Now in his ninth year as a Fosad member – four years more than he had originally planned – Madonsela said he often asked himself why he had almost doubled his original intended contract in the Public Service.

"There are only two possible answers. The obvious one, of course, is that I could not get another job. The alternative answer, which I greatly prefer, is that I do not want another job. I very much like it here in government."

government's work since these forums led the charge in the implementation of the Government's Programme of Action.

He added that this was relevant in the wake of the advent of the outcomes-based performance approach of government.

"The real purpose of the proposed induction is to aid colleagues to each identify their spot in the matrix and to appreciate their individual and collective role as an important link in the chain that is the juggernaut of managing public affairs."

Madonsela also encouraged the forum to foster a culture of camaraderie among themselves to share experiences on the development and management of a sound administrative political interface.

"Up to now, the camaraderie I speak of has not been consciously cultivated, but left to chance," noted Madonsela. He said he was particularly fortunate to be granted the opportunity to impose on the good nature of the former DG of Health, Thami Mseleku, who took him by the hand and mentored him.


"I realise that some of the issues I raise here are complex, controversial and perhaps even provocative. Worse still, they could be unmandated and untimely to be raised on an occasion such as this gala dinner but I hope that the merits or the lack thereof of the proposal shall be carefully examined on a platform specifically created to deliberate on the matter."

He added that he had come to know of many an anecdote shared by some DGs regarding the idiosyncrasies of the job.

"While those among us with strong personalities are able to bear such idiosyncrasies and, as the cliché goes, 'take them on the chin', as a mere test of character in the Public Service, some of our colleagues crumble in ways that not only affect them alone, but also send shivers down the spine

of the institutions or departments they manage."

Fosad, according to Madonsela, should be like a good sports team that works together for the common good.

"We have a considerable semblance of that spirit at Fosad. All we need to do is to nurture it and encourage the sharing of it widely throughout our ranks. Teamwork should mean loyalty to one another, to our principals and to those we manage – in reality, to the whole of government and the citizenry." 



Vusi Madonsela and Tom Moyane of the Department of Correctional Services

He added that Fosad had to give serious consideration to an induction programme covering the methods of work of the various structures of government with particular emphasis on the workings of the Cabinet with its committees and the cluster system.

This induction should also demonstrate the interconnectedness with Fosad as part of the overall matrix of coordinating government's work.

Madonsela said it was imperative for DGs to understand the role of implementation forums as part of a system of coordinating