

SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE: AN OVERVIEW FROM 1994 TO 2003

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the issues and debates of service delivery in South Africa since 1994. The dialogue generated in this paper attracts so much intellectual and political interests and these must also be viewed from the practical realities, which impact on the delivery of goods and services in South Africa. At the same time, the present debate in the South African public service on the methods of improving service delivery, takes place in the context of a changing public service. Both politicians and stakeholder analysts argue that service delivery is not being addressed at the pace that is needed in South Africa to redress service backlogs. This paper examines service delivery initiatives and the outcomes of the South African public service from 1994 to 2003 in order to determine whether the public service has achieved the service delivery objectives set out by government.

INTRODUCTION

Public sectors reform across the world come about in order to bring change. In the case of South Africa, this reform process must be understood from the confines of historical perspectives and political accommodation. In South Africa, a number of initiatives are currently being undertaken by all South African public service departments to redress service delivery imbalances and inequities. However, although progress has been made, certain areas of service delivery do require improved performance by the

public service. A need exists to address factors impacting on the sustainability of the public service, which slows down service delivery. Critical issues as skills and the development of a skills audit base are important for the determination of the issues which impact on the current debate on service delivery in South Africa.

The South African public service and service delivery (1994 to 2003)

Mufamadi (2003) argues that the post-apartheid democratic government in South Africa (since 1994) has had to address the legacy of apartheid and colonialism. (Access<<http://www.gov.za/search97cgi/s97>: Retrieved: 20 October 2003). In the same vein, it should be noted that in 1994, when the new South African government came into power, it was evident that there was an absence of basic services, such as water, proper sanitation and electricity in many rural communities (Second Economic and Social Rights Report 1998/1999, 2000: 1). In some communities, however, minimal services were provided.

In 1995, it was estimated that approximately eight million people from previously disadvantaged communities did not have adequate sanitary facilities, and that only fifty percent of South Africans, had waterborne sewerage. In 1996, it was estimated that approximately fifteen to sixteen million people did not have piped water. In 1994, it was reported in the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (WTPS) (1995: 7) that urban areas in South Africa are better provided with higher levels of services. Conversely, the biggest backlogs are in rural areas, where services were virtually non-existent in 1994. If one has to compare the urban areas with the rural areas with respect to public service delivery, a number of differences become evident.

In 1994, for instance, 10,1 percent of the households living in urban areas had a below basic service level for water (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995). Similarly, 39,2 percent of the households living in rural areas had a below basic service level for water. The difference is even more marked in the case of sanitation, where 25,8 percent of urban households and 75,8 percent of rural households lacked at least a 'ventilated improved pit latrine' (the basic level). These service backlogs are reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: Service delivery backlogs in urban and rural areas at 1994

Service	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
Water	10,1%	39,2%
Sanitation	25,8%	75,8%

(Source Naidoo: 2004)

In the light of these urban-rural differences in South Africa, it is questionable whether national averages have much value, such as the statement that 45,9 percent of the nation's households lack at least a basic sanitation service level (White Paper on the Transformation

of the Public Service, 1995). The reasons for these differences can be attributed to the past urban bias of services, mainly towards White communities in South Africa (Second Economic and Social Rights Report 1998/1999, 2000). This system had been designed to promote the exclusion of Blacks from the mainstream of South African society after all the majority of the citizens who live in rural areas are Black.

The impact of the lack of service delivery by the previous South African public service is evident in the rural areas of the provinces: for example, in 1995, 13,6 percent of Western Cape rural households had a below basic water service level, whilst the same figure in the Eastern Cape was as high as 76.4 percent (White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service, 1995). Two percent of the Western Cape’s urban households have a below basic water service level, whilst the same figure in Eastern Cape is three percent. Approximately thirty-eight percent of Gauteng’s rural population had a below basic sanitation service level, while the figure for KwaZulu-Natal was 88.2 percent. Fifteen percent of Gauteng’s urban population had a below basic sanitation services level, whereas the same figure in KwaZulu-Natal is fifty-four percent (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995; Second Economic and Social Rights Report 1998/1999, 2000). These figures are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Service delivery backlogs in urban and rural areas of the provinces in 1995

Service	Province	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
Water	Western Cape	2%	13,6%
	Eastern Cape	3%	76,4%
Sanitation	Gauteng	15%	38%
	KwaZulu-Natal	44%	88,2%

(Source Naidoo: 2004)

Clearly, there were vast differences with respect to the service levels, both between rural and urban areas and among different rural areas. The South African government of 1994 thus inherited households in urban areas that had inadequate municipal services, and which were able to contribute very little to the cost of public services (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995:7). Most municipal authorities (local government level) experienced difficulties in financing, delivering and sustaining existing public services.

At a National Conference held by the South African government on Public Service Delivery in 1997, it was stated that the South African public service had to address two important issues (Du Toit and Waldt, 1999:22). Firstly, there was a need to provide services to all people in South Africa. Secondly, the need to improve service delivery imbalances and inequities among previously disadvantaged communities was highlighted as an urgent priority.

The improvement of service delivery means improving and redressing the imbalances of the past, while maintaining the continuity of services to all levels of society. The main focus, however, should be on meeting the needs of the fifty percent of South Africans who are currently living below the poverty line (World-Factbook, 2003:1). The objectives of service delivery should, therefore, include welfare, equity and efficiency. Unless the South African public service transforms its service delivery backlogs, it cannot claim to have achieved the democratic goals outlined in section 195(1) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (Van Niekerk, et al. 2001: 96).

The post-1994 public service inherited a system that was ineffective and inefficient in addressing the service delivery needs and demands of the South African society (Ncholo, 2000:22). The instruments necessary to effectively deliver services to all South African communities did not exist (Ramaite, 2002:1). An ethos and culture of service delivery first had to be created by the public service (Ncholo, 2000:22). There was a need for change and reform in the South African public service (Bardill, 2000: 104). As part of the process of change, the government led by the African National Congress (ANC) identified the transformation and reform of the South African public service as one of its primary goals. To this end, the South African government embarked on initiatives to improve the ability of the public service to deliver services.

After the proclamation of the interim *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1993 (Act 200 of 1993), the structure and composition of the South African public service changed significantly. In 1994, when the new democratic government came into power, most of the South African provinces had one or more former homelands in their jurisdiction. They had to confront difficult issues of integrating and accommodating these separate entities into one public service (A Report of the State of the Public Service, 2001:11). One step that was taken in this direction was the introduction of the *Public Service Act*, 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994). This Act created the basis for integrating the fragmented system of eleven public services into a single unified public service, which would operate at both national and provincial spheres of government (Public Service Act of 1994, Proclamation 103 of 1994). A restructuring of the various public services thus followed.

During the first two-and-a-half years of its first five-year term, the new South African government focused primarily on developing its policies and on streamlining and improving frameworks, structures and systems (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2003) (Access<<http://www.gov.za/structure/pubserv.htm>: Retrieved: 17 October 2003). This was necessary to give effect to the values and principles of the interim Constitution of South Africa, 1993 (National Conference on Public Service Delivery Conference Report, 1997). Accordingly, various new acts and regulations were formulated and introduced in the South African public service to improve service delivery (Ramaite, 2002: 1). The transformation of the South African public service initially focused on legislative reform, but is presently undergoing massive administrative reform (Service Delivery Review, 2004).

The agenda for the legislative reforms had its roots in the principles drawn from both the 1993 and 1996 Constitutions of South Africa (National Conference on Public Service Delivery, Conference Report, 1997). Both Constitutions and the policies of the current South African government prioritize service delivery to all South Africans. To redress

imbalances and inequities in service delivery in South Africa, the three spheres of government (national, provincial and municipal) are expected by the government to broaden access to services at costs that are affordable to the public (National Conference on Public Service Delivery: Conference Report, 1997). They are also required to design appropriate levels of services to meet their customers' needs and demands (Batho Pele – 'People First' White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery, 1997). In this regard, they are required to adopt innovative and efficient approaches to redress imbalances and inequities in service delivery (Intergovernmental Fiscal Review, 2001: 11).

The early policy formulation phase, between 1994 and 1999, was characterized by the production and dissemination of policy papers, which formed the basis for legislations and regulations in the South African public service (Bardill, 2000: 104). These were prepared in nearly every sector of the South African public service. The aims and objectives of the South African government are manifested in these policies (Ramaite, 2002: 1). At this stage however, it is important to determine whether these initiatives and policies have in fact been translated into meaningful action, especially in previously disadvantaged communities.

Selective overview of service delivery by the South African public service from 1994 to 2003

Since 1994, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to improve public service delivery in South Africa. In 2003, the so-called cluster review, which was conducted by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) on the basic minimum service provision, found that the South African public service programmes to address deprivation in health, education, housing, land, basic services, such as water and sanitation, electricity and access to credit are well conceived and potentially well targeted (Department of Public Service and Administration 2003) (Access<[http://www.gov.za/issues/imbizo/2002: Retrieved: 20 October 2003](http://www.gov.za/issues/imbizo/2002:Retrieved:20October2003)). In another review conducted by the South African government, it was found that service delivery programmes have broadened access to services, thereby improving the lives of millions of people in South Africa (Towards a Ten Year Review, 2003). Analysts argue however that service delivery still requires much improved performance by the public service (Molopo, 2003: Discussion). A number of programmes currently being undertaken by the South African public service are therefore outlined and analysed to determine the actual state of service delivery in South Africa.

At the level of provincial government, an *Integrated Provincial Support Programme* (IPSP) was designed in 2003, to provide support to five provincial administrations in South Africa (Service Delivery Review, 2003). The aim is to improve the effective rendering of public services by public service departments at a provincial level. The programme focuses on capacity building and the sharing of experiences to promote effective public administration. For example, the IPSP has taken services provided by the South African Police Service (SAPS) by means of an effective mobile unit to remote rural areas in the former Venda area (South Africa Yearbook 2003/2004). Similar achievements are noted in other provinces, such as in the Eastern Cape, where a mobile mechanism for registering

Child Support Grant beneficiaries in remote rural areas is managed through IPSP support. In this manner, services are brought closer to the communities, which also ensures that services are provided for a smaller group and a more homogenous community. This contributes to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. It also provides for the depoliticisation of the provision of services at a community level, while promoting the participation and involvement of communities regarding service provision.

The South African public service is responding to service delivery challenges by exploring and implementing alternative methods of service delivery (Towards a Ten Year Review, 2003). There is a trend in both the provinces and the municipalities to use public-private partnerships (PPPs) as a way of meeting its service delivery objectives. This approach mainly uses the expertise, investment and management capacity of the private sector to develop infrastructure, as well as to improve and extend efficient services to communities (Van Niekerk, *et al.* 2001:256). PPPs are used in South Africa to provide services on a cost-effective and efficient basis. However, Naidoo (2004: 207) indicates that South Africa is still at an early stage of learning which types of PPPs are appropriate for which programmes. It is thus critical for the South African public service to apply principles of effective governance to the future development of PPPs in South Africa, and to ensure that these principles are genuinely appropriate to the context in which PPPs are operational.

It is clear that a new view is emerging on the role of the South African public service. Van Niekerk, *et al.* (2001:256) argue that the role of the public service is not to provide all the services to society but to make sure that everything that falls within its scope is done. This represents an important shift away from the classical public administration approach as it implies that it is not only the public service's obligation to provide services but to oversee that they are actually delivered. The traditional inefficiencies of public service provision, fiscal constraints and scarce resources are the motivation for the South African public service embarking on this route. Consequently, the South African public service is embarking on partnerships with both business and civil society, including community organisations, voluntary organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). At a practical level, however, trade unions in South Africa have resisted PPPs because they are apprehensive that PPPs will reduce jobs (Naidoo 2004: 209). Service users, too, have sometimes expressed concern about having service providers who are driven by profit motives.

The focus of the South African public service is now on collaborative partnerships and alliances to improve service delivery (Naidoo 2004: 210). The public service is also improving civic governance, which is the regular citizen interaction and participation of communities in service delivery (Van Wyk, *et al.* 2002: 3). It has become evident that these partnerships are empowering communities and promoting service delivery. The public service is focusing on practical implementation to ensure that communities become involved in matters that affect them. An example of this trend towards regular interaction with stakeholders outside government is the institutionalisation of both large- and medium- sized emerging contractor programmes in a number of municipalities in South Africa. In the project on the electrification of the Jouberton project in Klerksdorp, Gauteng for example, local township residents were trained to install power connections to twenty

thousand households (Van Wyk, *et al.* 2002:3). The municipality of eTekweni in KwaZulu-Natal, as another example, has transferred responsibility for refuse removal to a group of thirty-five small entrepreneurs, using local labour in newly incorporated Black suburbs. In 1999, the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Transport launched the Zibambele Road Maintenance System. This programme employs citizens from severely disadvantaged households in rural KwaZulu-Natal to maintain the gravel roads that give villages' access to the city. By means of innovative service delivery strategies, communities are empowered to take responsibility for the manner in which their quality of life is improved.

In the Northern Cape, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAf), in partnership with provincial government, local government and communities, subsidize the installation of toilets and the provision of health education for many rural villages (Van Wyk, *et al.* 2002: 4). Through such partnerships with the communities, service delivery is becoming more successful. In 2002, the South African public service has provided improved sanitation to approximately 2,3 million people. From June 1994 to July 2003 the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry has delivered water to a total of nine million people in rural areas in South Africa. (Service Delivery Review, 2003). Nationwide, the South African government has supplied water to approximately a total of sixteen million people through housing and urban programmes (South African Yearbook 2003/2004). These initiatives suggest that definite efforts are being made by the public service to ensure service delivery.

There has been tremendous growth in public projects that target the previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa, and public funds are being spent in order to promote infrastructural work (Van Wyk, *et al.* 2002: 3). In 2002, the President of South Africa, Mr. Thabo Mbeki, announced a new campaign in his State of Nation Address, called 'Vuk'uzenzele', which means 'to arise and act' (South African Yearbook 2003/2004). This campaign is aimed at getting as many people as possible involved in public service delivery programmes (State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, Houses of Parliament, Cape Town, February 2002) (Access<[http://www.sabcnews.state of the nation/address2](http://www.sabcnews.stateofthenation/address2): Retrieved: 20 October 2003). These efforts by the South African government are ultimately allowing communities to influence and take control of programmes and projects and in so doing encouraging them to become self-reliant.

In August 2003, the South African Cabinet approved the plan for the community development workers (CDWs) (State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, Houses of Parliament, Cape Town, February 2002) (Access<[://www.sabcnews.state of the nation/address2](http://www.sabcnews.stateofthenation/address2): Retrieved: 20 October 2003). This is called the 'Letsema' campaign, which means to volunteer. The CDWs are an additional type of public servants; they act as skilled facilitators, filling the gap between government services and the communities (Post-Cabinet Lekgotla Briefing on Governance and Administration, Presented by Minister of Public Service and Administration, Ms Fraser-Moleketi, 4 August 2003) (Access<[http://www/gov.za/search97cgi/s97](http://www.gov.za/search97cgi/s97): Retrieved: 20 October 2003). The plan to deploy community development workers is intended to contribute to improved service delivery among previously disadvantaged communities (Towards a Ten Year Review, 2003). It is also intended to assist the poor to develop the capacity to organise

themselves and participate in decision-making. With co-operative participation by the public service and community, development in local communities can be ensured.

In accordance with the community development worker (CDW) plan, members in the community are being trained as public servants to assist citizens with matters such as obtaining birth certificates, and identity documents, completing social-grant applications and starting up small businesses (South African Yearbook 2003/2004). The project involves that public servants go directly to the community (Interview of President Thabo Mbeki, SABC TV2, 16 February 2003) (Access<<http://www.gov.za/search97cgi/s97>: Retrieved: 23 October 2003). For example, the South African public may not know about a child support grant that is being offered by the government. The project is thus designed to inform the public of services provided by the government. If a pensioner has not been receiving his or her pension, steps are taken to ensure that this happens. These public servants are working regularly in communities to redress public service imbalances and inequities. The reason for such an initiative is that there are often many people with low levels of education or who are illiterate in remote rural communities. This is a positive development towards responding to community needs. These new initiatives are indicative of innovative service delivery initiatives. Naidoo (2004: 210) suggests that a clear understanding of the social, political, economic and cultural profile of such a community is necessary to understand its specific characteristics and needs. It is also essential to analyse the resources already available within that community, and how these can, best be used to promote service delivery.

Between April and June 2002, another thirty thousand new child beneficiaries were registered for social grants (State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, House of Parliament, Cape Town, February 2003) (Access<<http://www.gov.za/search97cgi/s97>: Retrieved: 23 October 2003). Communities in South Africa have heeded the call to participate in the 'Letsema' campaign (State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, House of Parliament, Cape Town, February 2003) (Access<<http://www.gov.za/search97cgi/s97>: Retrieved: 23 October 2003). This means that the citizens have been selflessly volunteering their services to improve the lives of people in their communities. Research suggests that social grants are exceptionally well targeted (Towards a Ten Year Review, 2003). Thus, the programme is successful in achieving its goals and objectives. According to Soobrayan (2004: Discussion), this is as a result of the direct engagement between the South African public service and the citizens of the country. These engagements clearly demonstrate that in many rural villages and urban townships, citizens have for various reasons not been able to access the services and benefits offered by the public service. These projects, which are being undertaken by the South African public service, are valuable in assisting people who are unaware that they are entitled to certain benefits and services. They are also helpful in assisting citizens who experience difficulty with the complex procedures required by public service departments. These unique practices by the South African public service increase accessibility to public services and promote service delivery outcomes.

Through programmes, such as the 'Izimbizo' (outreach programme), the South African government, including the President, Cabinet Ministers, Premiers, Members of Executive Councils (MECs), mayors and councillors have been interacting with communities throughout

South Africa to address service delivery needs in previously disadvantaged communities (State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, House of Parliament, Cape Town, February 2003). The South African public service is empowering people to take responsibility for the manner in which their quality of life is improved (Service Delivery Review, 2004). Community owned solutions are thus being encouraged, which is important in identifying the true needs of the community and addressing them. It also promotes trust between government and communities (Towards a Ten Year Review, 2003). The need for the public service to become more customer-focused and service oriented, is emphasised.

There are numerous possibilities for improving service delivery, especially in previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa. The South African public service is currently redefining its role in executing its activities in a responsive manner (Chandu, 2004: Discussion). The 'Izimbizo' and CDWs programmes have been introduced as a possible consideration in assisting the public service to cope with service delivery backlogs, especially in previously disadvantaged communities. The extent of success will however depend on the complex of political, economic and social realities that prevail in South Africa. To present a balanced perspective of the South African public service, the service delivery performance by selected South African public service departments is examined.

An analysis of service delivery in housing, electricity, water, sanitation, from 1995 to 2001, from 1994 to 2003 and at 2003 reflects progress with respect to redressing service delivery imbalances and inequities in South Africa (Statistics South Africa's 1995 October Household Survey and 2001 Labour Force Survey; Reports from public service departments – December 2003). These results are summarised in Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5 respectively.

Table 3: Selected service delivery programmes from 1995 to 2001

Increasing Access To Public Service	1995	2001
Households Living In Formal Housing	65,8%	72,6%
Household Using Electricity As Main Source Of Lighting	63,5%	71,7%
Households With Tap Water As Main Source	78,5%	84,3%
Households With Flush Or Chemical Toilet	56,9%	58,3%

(Statistics South Africa's 1995 October Household Survey and 2001 Labour Force Survey)

Table 3 reflects that the provision of formal housing, electricity, water and sanitation, by the South African public service between from 1995 and 2001. The provision of housing improved from approximately sixty five percent to approximately seventy two percent. The provision of electricity improved from approximately sixty three percent to approximately seventy percent. The provision of water improved from approximately seventy eight percent to approximately eighty four percent. Sanitation improved from approximately fifty six percent to fifty eight percent. These are significant achievements by the public service towards improving service delivery.

Table 4: Selected service delivery programmes from 1994 to 2003

Output of social programmes	1994-1998	1999-2002	1994-2003
People Gaining Access To Clean Water (Community Supply Programme)	3,0 million	5,4 million	8,4 million
Number Of Connections To The Electricity Grid	2,3 million	1,5 million	3,8 million
Subsidized Houses Completed Under Construction	0,7 million	0,7 million	1,4 million

(South Africa Yearbook 2003/2004)

Table 4 reflects the actual number of people who benefited from improved and increased access to water, electricity and housing. With respect to the provision of water, from 1994 to 1998, three million people received clean water, between 1999 to 2002 approximately five million received water and from 1994 to 2003 the total number of people that received water was approximately eight million. With regard to the provision of electricity, between 1994 to 1998, two million people received electricity, between 1999 to 2002 approximately one million received electricity and from 1994 to 2003 the total number of people that received electricity was approximately 3,8 million. From 1994 to 1998, three million people received clean water, from 1999 to 2002 approximately five million and from 1994 to 2003 the total number of people was approximately eight million. From 1994 to 2002, the number of subsidized houses that were completed under construction were 0,7 million. At 2003, the number of subsidized houses completed under construction increased to 1,4 million. Again, these statistics reflect significant achievements in redressing service delivery imbalances and inequities.

Table 5 reflects that approximately 1,9 million subsidies were approved by the Department of Housing for new houses. Forty nine percent of these subsidies were awarded to women, while six million citizens received housing. The South African government has a policy, which focuses on empowering women and youth, by giving preference to them, in for example housing subsidies.

Table 5: Selected service delivery housing programmes from 1994 to 2003

Housing programmes	Quantity
Subsidies Approved	1,985 Million Subsidies
Subsidies: Women	49% Subsidies
Housing Received	6 Million Citizens

(Towards a Ten Year Review 2003)

Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5 reflect that progress is being made with respect to redressing service delivery imbalances and inequities in the provision of housing, housing subsidies,

electricity, water and sanitation in South Africa. The public service is, therefore, currently implementing a number of public-sector driven programmes, aimed at improving basic needs and services, such as expanding the social security net, creating job opportunities and putting the necessary socio-economic infrastructure in place for sustained growth. The South African public service has broadened access to a number of basic services to society. Most evidence suggests that government has made progress in terms of service delivery.

Current Trends

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has noted improvements in a number of national and provincial departments (Service Delivery Review, 2004). The DPSA is responsible for the formulation of national policy in South Africa. The DPSA has acknowledged nonetheless that there is still vast scope for further progress (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2003). In this regard, the DPSA has indicated that some public service departments are confronted with challenges that impact on their performance. These challenges mainly relate to policy implementation. This is reiterated in the *Synthesis Report on the Implementation of Government Programmes* (Towards a Ten Year Review, 2003). This Report indicates that, efforts towards service delivery need to be consolidated with greater attention to policy implementation.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) maintains that previously disadvantaged areas, especially remote rural communities in South Africa, still continue to be under-served. (Service Delivery Review, 2003). The PSC is a national government department that is constitutionally mandated to monitor public service delivery in South Africa. It claims that, in many instances, the scale of the imbalances has proved enormous, and that the inherited inequalities from the previous government cannot be fully addressed in the next five to ten years, at the pace that is needed in South Africa. Furthermore, the PSC states that there are challenges in the South African public service that impact on service delivery.

Analysts argue that the pace of improving public service delivery is not fast enough (Molopo, 2003: Discussion). According to the *Report on the State of the Public Service* (2001: 20), the implementation of the government's policies is a major challenge in this regard. Despite advances in policy design by the South African public service, the transition to implementation remains a challenge (Report on the State of the Public Service, 2001: 20). Ramaite (2002: 1) contends that many public service departments are unfocused, and that this impacts negatively on service delivery.

The South African public service's ultimate success should be judged on whether it could overcome the large disparities that still exist between the levels of service in different parts of South Africa. The provision of services to society should be an ongoing and dynamic process that ought to be sustained because, as standards are met, they must be progressively raised. Improving public service delivery is essential for the future economic prosperity and social development of South Africa. The South African public service is pursuing different approaches to promote a sustainable public service to improve service delivery (Minister for the South African public service, Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Dialogue around Africanizing Public Administration: Issues for leadership and good governance,

October 2003). The public service has considered models of excellence and good practice in other institutions, communities and/or public service systems in other countries. In this respect, the trend is the transformation of a public service to a model of public administration that is service driven. The focus is placed on performance and efficiency.

Naidoo (2004: 44) states that the policies adopted by developed countries would not be effective in South Africa. It would be important for the South African public service to also consider local narratives and cultures. Nonetheless, appropriate models ought to be examined by the South African public service to accelerate service delivery. In fact, there is a growing need for a hybrid leadership and governance framework. More specifically, a need is expressed for unique South African leadership and governance model with a view to improving current frameworks, or exploring new alternatives to promote service delivery. A distinctively South African leadership and governance framework, with its own unique characteristics and incorporating diversities perspectives, strategies and socio-economic and political differences is required, to be an effective instrument in improving service delivery in South Africa.

Future Trends

A practical approach that would be adaptable to different contexts in the South African scenario is essential to accelerate public service delivery. The unique circumstances faced by the post-apartheid public service, requires a conception of public service that draws on relevant approaches, strategies and models. A hybrid framework is proposed, that is multifaceted and multidimensional with its own unique characteristics, diverse perspectives, approaches and strategies. The framework should cater for sensitivities of culture, gender, religion, ethnic origin and socio-economic and political differences. These divergent perspectives, approaches and sensitivities are incorporated and developed in such a way that the full potential of public servants and public service institutions may be realised optimally. A combination of approaches are essential, in order to improve service delivery in South Africa. The framework should incorporate traditional African values, transformational leadership and team leadership. It also refers to effective governance approaches towards public service delivery, such as civic governance. For example, it refers to the active involvement of communities in service delivery. It also refers to the promotion of governance principles such as accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equality and public participation. The framework should be flexible, so that it can be applied to diverse settings and circumstances in South Africa. The aim, therefore, is to utilise the divergent perspectives within the South African public service and to reach a synthesis in order to reach the highest possible levels of performance.

CONCLUSION

A number of positive initiatives are currently being undertaken by all South African public service departments to redress service delivery imbalances and inequities. The short-term goals of almost all the departments in the South African public

service have been met. However, although progress has been made, certain areas of service delivery do require improved performance by the South African public service. Furthermore, there is a need to address factors impacting on the sustainability of the public service, which slows down service delivery.

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