

Public Sector Barometer

A forum for eliciting debates and commentaries

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CHALLENGES FACING THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

The South African economic system can be characterised as a free market economy where the private sector works hand in hand with the state whose character is developmental in nature. This means that the state seeks to play an active role in the economy of the country in order to, *inter alia*, compensate for the historical imbalances in the economy and also to cushion the most vulnerable members of the society against the negative effects of the free market economy. The Public Service, being an administrative arm of the government of the day, ought to be playing a crucial role in the execution of the mandate of the state.

In regard to the democratisation of the state and society, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994:125) envisaged, *inter alia*, the Public Service that is composed in such a way that it is capable of and committed to the implementation of the policies of the government and the delivery of basic goods and services to the people of the country. The Public Service is further called upon to observe the professional ethos and to internalise the concept of serving the people.

Given the above, the National Planning Commission's (NPC) diagnostic overview report of June 2011, together with the NPC's draft National Development Plan of November 2011, have identified the performance of the Public Service as uneven due to a variety of factors.

The overall challenge therefore is how do we sustainably build the capability of the Public Service as a building block in ensuring the creation of the developmental state that has the capacity to deliver on its mandate?

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