

Efficiency key in spending govt money: Motlanthe

PRETORIA: Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe says institutions such as Parliament, provincial legislatures and councils must play their oversight role to ensure public resources are allocated and used in accordance with policy priorities, and that there is efficient spending and value for money.



Speaking at the 5th Annual School of Public Management and Administration Conference at the University of Pretoria on Friday, Motlanthe said public servants were responsible guardians for public resources.

"An effectual public service has to develop a deeper understanding of the constitutional imperatives and the character of the developmental state in which it serves. Secondly, we have to repeat the message that resource wastage cannot be tolerated."

He said it was important that institutions such as Parliament, Provincial Legislatures and Councils provide oversight and always interrogate whether public resources were allocated and used in accordance with policy priorities.

This also included checking whether there was efficient spending and value for money, and if resources were genuinely constraining service or the problems were a result of institutional and organisational constraints.

He said accountability in the public service was as important as the transformation of the Human Resource Management principles that underpin work in the public service.

"It requires a mind-set change and an understanding by citizens that they have a right to government services. At the same time, public servants must understand that they have the duty to provide these services without the expectation of a bribe."

The conference theme is "Pushing the model of governance in the public sector to higher levels of performance, effectiveness and accountability - global challenges and prospects".

Motlanthe said universities and leadership institutions must be at the forefront of backing governments' efforts to improve public service, especially amongst young graduates.

He said higher learning institutions were an important player in ensuring that the knowledge imparted would not be solely for individual gain, but would be used as a tool for advancing the betterment of society, which could be done while earning a living in the public service.

He said the loss of rare skills and pivotal institutional memory further constrained the ability of the public service to deliver and that, according to Motlanthe, resulted in government thinking up new ways of doing things.

"An effective educational system would thus give the learner a thorough understanding of society and the wider world in which he or she would live," Motlanthe said.

"I wish to suggest that universities not confine training to the post-graduate leadership programme but must start at the foundation of under-graduate study."

Motlanthe said the prosperity of societies depended on efficient, dedicated and well-trained civil service.

"While it is the primary duty of the state to turn the civil service into a responsive, purring machinery that serves the people, it takes more than government to achieve this objective," he said.

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