

Transparency, accountability sought by PSC

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has called for greater transparency and accountability to build a South Africa where all citizens enjoy a higher standard of living.



PSC Chairman Ben Mthembu says that greater transparency and accountability is needed among public servants in South Africa.
Image: PSC

"All people in the public service are accountable and must be transparent. They must be held accountable so that we can improve public administration to build a South Africa where all people enjoy a higher quality of life," PSC Chairman Ben Mthembu said.

Mthembu was speaking at the Gauteng Stakeholder Engagement session held at Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg under the theme 'Living constitutional values and principles to achieve excellent public service and administration'.

The objective of the session was to evaluate the extent to which Gauteng government departments adhere to the values and principles of Section 195 of the country's constitution. The principles include high standards of professional ethics, responsiveness and good human resource management.

Mthembu described the PSC as a knowledge-intensive organisation that conducts research and makes findings and recommendations regarding the public service.

He urged government departments to make use of the recommendations made by the PSC and other institutions like the Auditor-General.

"We believe that if departments can make use of these recommendations and implement them, service will improve," he told delegates.

Commissioner at the PSC, Mike Seloane, said that for the Gauteng province, only 79% of senior managers generally made their disclosures by the 30 April deadline. By law, senior managers are expected to disclose all their registered interests, and that the PSC expected 100% compliance.

Misconduct, non-disclosure

The PSC found that the Economic Development Department in Gauteng had 33% of senior managers doing remunerative work outside the department last financial year.

Departments are compelled to report all financial misconduct cases to the PSC. In the 2013/14 financial year, 93 cases were reported while in the past five financial years, 561 cases were reported. Seloane said the 93 cases reported involved an amount of R8.8m, while the 561 cases involved R71.4m.

On the spending of budgets in Gauteng, the provincial Education Department had spent 99% of its budget last year and had achieved 90% of its targets.

The PSC also found that audits in Gauteng departments were improving. With regard to the payment of invoices within 30 days, only 36% of creditors had been paid on time.

Last month, Public Service and Administration Minister Collins Chabane told the National Assembly that new legislation will strengthened the powers of the PSC.

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