

**ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR
PERFORMANCE MONITORING, EVALUATION AS WELL AS
ADMINISTRATION, MR OBED BAPELA, ON THE BUDGET
VOTE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMANCE
MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

28 May 2013

Honourable Chairperson

Honourable Minister, Mr. Collins Chabane

Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Appropriations

Other Ministers and Deputy Ministers present

Members of the Standing Committee on Appropriations

Chairpersons and members of other committees

Esteemed guests

Comrades and friends

Ladies and gentlemen

Honourable Members

In 2009, in response to the call for a more responsive and interactive government, President Jacob Zuma established the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation. Since then the Department has been implementing a number of monitoring initiatives. The Minister has already referred to some of the initiatives.

Amongst these initiatives was the Presidential Hotline. The Presidential Hotline provides a platform for citizens to voice their complaints about the quality of services they receive from government.

The Presidential Hotline is now three and a half years old. In its short period of existence, it has proven to a valuable monitoring tool for citizens and government.

From its inception in October 2009 to 31 March 2013, the Presidential Hotline received a total of 160 914 cases. The case resolution rate is now at 90%. This is encouraging given that the Presidential Hotline started with a case resolution rate of 39% in November 2009. Over the last year we have been working intensively with targeted departments and provinces to improve their responsiveness of government to hotline cases. As a result, the case resolution rate of the provinces has improved from 50% to 71%. Our work with provinces and national departments to improve their responsiveness to complaints will continue this year. The cooperation from both national departments and provinces has been encouraging, and it indicates that departments are beginning to understand the importance of being responsive to the citizens.

The visibility and profile of the Presidential Hotline is being improved. We are sending regular reports on case resolution to the Forum of South Africa Directors General, the Presidential

Co-ordinating Council and Cabinet to ensure that departments take responsibility for putting our people first - Batho Pele.

In the context of the Presidential Hotline, “case resolution” means that a citizen has been contacted and has been given a response to their query or complaint. This does not always mean that the response we provide to a complaint will satisfy the caller. Some cases involve difficult and complex issues and are difficult to resolve quickly. However, in such cases the least that we can do is to assure the citizens that they have been heard and that we working with the relevant departments to ensure that their issues are addressed.

The quality of complaints resolution is as important as the number of complaints resolved. We have started working with departments to ensure that, in addition to complaints being addressed quickly, citizens are also satisfied with the way in which their cases are resolved. In this regard, since October 2012, we have been conducting interviews with citizens who logged cases on the Hotline to gauge their level of satisfaction with the Hotline service. Between October and December 2012, we called 3 211 citizens and 64% of respondents rated the service as satisfactory whereas 34% rated the service they had received as poor. These surveys will now be on-going and we will use the information to help us focus on those departments

and municipalities which need assistance in improving the quality of their case resolution.

There are good stories to be told about the help that citizens receive through the intervention of the Hotline. To mention a few:

Mr Vuyani Kholiwe from the Eastern Cape called to seek for assistance from the Hotline after trying unsuccessfully to apply for a foster care grant for his nephew. The matter was referred by the Hotline to the Office of the Premier in the Eastern Cape for investigation. Social workers made an assessment and assisted Mr Kholiwe and, in January 2013 the grant was approved and the child is now attending a local pre-school.

Another example is that of Mr George Mogale from the North West. Mr Mogale reported that he could not register his new marriage since his divorce application was not processed by the Rustenburg Magistrate Court. Through the intervention of the Presidential Hotline, his case was resolved on 21 January 2013.

Mr Anele Dyongman called to indicate that in 2010 and 2011 he had received National Students Financial Aid Scheme financial aid but in 2012 his fees were not paid despite funding confirmation from NSFAS. With help from the Department of Higher Education and Training the student was able to be

funded through the Discretionary Fund of the Department to cover his registration fees, textbooks and accommodation for 2013.

Ms Priscilla Mvuembe called the Presidential Hotline on 25 January 2013, reporting that she had applied for her child's unabridged birth certificate on 18 April 2012 but had still not received it. The Births Unit finalized the unabridged birth certificate on 28 January 2013.

These and other examples illustrate our determination to do things differently, to be responsive to the needs of our citizens and to be a caring government that puts people first.

We will continue to use the Hotline as a monitoring tool that assists with identifying service delivery trends and challenges in order to unblock blockages in our service delivery value chain.

Honourable Members

As mentioned in our budget speech last year, we are continuing with our programme of on-site monitoring of frontline service delivery, which we are implementing jointly with all nine Offices of the Premier. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the Offices of the Premiers for the leadership that they have shown in their support of this important monitoring initiative.

I am pleased to announce that last year we monitored 215 frontline facilities, including 23 SASSA facilities, 30 police stations, 37 schools, 51 health facilities, 19 courts, 14 drivers' license testing centres, 22 municipal customer care centres and 19 Home Affairs offices.

This brings the total of facilities we have monitored since the inception of the programme in June 2011 to 350. This type of hands-on monitoring at the coalface of service delivery is very important for government to gain insight into how citizens are experiencing service delivery in these facilities.

During each of these visits, a score card is produced and an improvement plan is agreed to. I want to take this opportunity to thank the departments responsible for these functions for the enthusiastic manner in which they have embraced the programme and for taking the findings seriously.

We have not experienced any defensiveness regarding the programme. Rather, we have found that departments appreciate the score cards and that they have committed to work with us to ensure that the findings are acted upon.

Government will use the information gathered through the frontline service delivery monitoring visits and follow-up visits to catalyse improvements in the quality of services our people receive in public facilities. This holds true particularly where

simply improving the management and leadership at a facility can bring immediate improvements in the quality of services being rendered.

From these visits, we are beginning to see the positive impact of the efforts of government to improve service delivery.

I personally conducted a monitoring visit with the DPME team to the City of Johannesburg customer care centres in Midrand and Randburg. In the Midrand centre I found a well-functioning facility with happy customers but in the Randburg centre I found many frustrated citizens and I found their frustrations to be valid. In meetings with the management of the municipality we were assured that facility managers would be more visible in these centres in future and that the improvement programme of the City will bring results.

In my visits to Mafikeng SASSA, I observed visible improvements in the speed of registration of grant applicants. In Montshiwa Clinic, I found that substantial improvements had already occurred, including the refurbishment of the clinic and improved stock management of medicines. While I found the building in which Mafikeng Drivers' License Testing Centre is housed to be in poor condition, I was assured that its upgrading had already been budgeted for.

My visit to the Gugulethu SASSA office coincided with the re-registration of social grant beneficiaries. Many citizens were dissatisfied with the speed at which services were delivered. This was validated by the facility manager, who indicated that a shortage of staff was exacerbating the issue. However, there was assurance from the management of SASSA that capacitation of the facility was underway.

I was particularly pleased with the initiative taken by the management of the Fezeka Municipal Customer Care Centre, who had already put plans in place to prioritise the elderly and persons living with disabilities in both their service provision and in term of access to the facility. To the management of the Umzimkhulu SASSA office – we were inspired by the enthusiasm of your team in acting on our findings – we hope that your hands-on management style, your accessibility to citizens, and your creative problem-solving approach will inspire other facility managers.

In this current financial year, we have set ourselves a target of monitoring at least 140 facilities in all provinces. Importantly, we will conduct follow-up visits to ensure that the agreed improvements in 81 poorly performing facilities out of the 350 facilities which have been monitored to date are implemented. Together with the responsible national department as well as

the Offices of the Premier, we will be able to bring about positive changes in the conditions of these 81 facilities.

In spite of some complaints about less than helpful attitudes of some staff at some facilities, we have often found exemplary management and leadership during these visits. We witnessed managers who are committed to public service and who have developed excellent relationships with the communities they serve. These are the public servants who deserve to be celebrated.

One of the objectives of our frontline service delivery monitoring programme is to encourage all service delivery departments and municipalities to carry out this kind of monitoring themselves, of their own service delivery facilities. We would like to see all Ministers and MECs and Mayors visiting their own service delivery sites regularly, to identify and address problems. The President set a very good example in this regard with his recent visit to Eldorado Park, shortly after receiving a letter from a citizen in the area, and by the way in which the government has responded swiftly to the drugs-related problems raised by citizens in that area.

Through our frontline service delivery monitoring work, we have found a gap in the manner in which we do monitoring - the absence of the voice of the citizens on whose behalf we are called upon to serve. In this regard, last year, we promised to

develop a citizen-based monitoring framework by 31 March this year. I am pleased to announce that we have delivered on that promise. The citizen based monitoring framework was approved by the Minister in February 2013.

This year, we will begin with the implementation of the citizen-based monitoring programme. We will be carrying out intensive piloting and prototyping of citizen-based monitoring approaches at police stations, clinics and social services sites. This two year piloting process is being undertaken in partnership with the South African Police Service and the Departments of Health and Social Development. Through this action-learning approach we hope to develop practical and scalable ways to improve service delivery.

The importance of this citizen-voice in monitoring performance cannot be overstated. We exist to serve the citizenry. To do this effectively, we need routine and systematised ways to measure government's performance from the citizens' perspective.

As described in the National Development Plan (NDP), we need to increasingly establish a constructive dialogue between government and communities about their experiences of service delivery. This will have two benefits, firstly it will assist us to improve our service delivery, and secondly, it will contribute towards increasing citizen participation in governance and developing a more active citizenry.

Honourable Members

We have made sure that our M&E programmes are informed by international good practice, while being customised to our unique conditions. We have undertaken a number of study tours and we have established strong working relationships with international organisations with expertise in this area, such as the World Bank. As a result, we are now starting to receive delegations from other African countries, which are very interested in the work that we are doing. This is itself a vindication of the President's decision to establish a dedicated unit for performance monitoring and evaluation in the Presidency.

As I conclude, I would like to leave you with the following anonymous quote:

“Take life as it is but don't leave it as it is. Change is inevitable and is necessary. Change should not be about benefiting the few but should be about improving the lives of the majority. The introduction of monitoring and evaluation systems in the country was that change. It's about how government functions and the quality of services that it delivers to its citizens.”

In conclusion, I wish to thank Minister Chabane, the DPME Director General Dr Sean Phillips and his management,

members of staff in my office, the Chairperson and members of the Standing Committee on Appropriations for their support.

I thank you