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HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT: A CASE-STUDY OF SOUTH AFRICA\*

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The present paper focuses on the development of human resources in the public service, its goals, challenges, process and features of reform. It focuses on the South African experience but seeks to identify basic approaches and concepts which might be informative to other countries.

2. The transformation of South Africa into a democratic country has brought into sharp focus the need to develop the public service as a key instrument of reform. In line with expectations of democratic governance, new assumptions have emerged with regard to the nature and role of government, the involvement of the public in governmental practice, including the financing of governmental functions and activities. The nature and purpose of the public service had to be redefined to meet new demands.

### I. THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

#### A. Vision and goals

3. As the Minister of Public Service and Administration indicated in his presentation at the Human Resource Development Conference, transforming the public service was at the heart of the government strategy of nation-building and reconciliation. In outlining the new vision, he emphasized the need to establish a new public service that would have a coherent policy, indicating a shift from past fragmented provisioning towards one that is representative and competent. The qualities envisaged are the following:

- (a) Service-oriented and responsive to needs of the public;
- (b) Geared for socio-economic development and reduction of poverty;
- (c) Goal- and performance-oriented;
- (d) Democratic, faithful to the Constitution, and non-partisan;
- (e) Accessible and informative;
- (f) Transparent;
- (g) Accountable to the Minister and the public;
- (h) Decentralized and consultative;
- (i) Committed to training and career development.

4. Government and public administration policy also indicates commitment of the State to playing a central role in ensuring the required transformation and development. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in South Africa details an integrated macropolicy framework for addressing the country's development needs. The Programme, however, is dependent upon the capacity of

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the public sector to facilitate and manage implementation strategies. The expectation of change by civil society is an additional pressure on the public service to hasten the change process. It is not only the requirements for transformation that are at issue but also how the changes come about, the involvement of civil society in the process and the constraint of limited resources. General Assembly resolution 49/136, on public administration and development, recognizes the important role that Governments and public administrations can play in addressing new responsibilities arising from the pursuit of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries. The reform process in South Africa should be viewed within that context and be related to developments in other countries.

5. Lessons learned with regard to the performance of Governments in dealing with the challenges of new domestic and international conditions indicate that Governments that perform well in dealing with these pressures appear to share certain characteristics.

6. "They are governments that are authoritative in the sense that they concentrate sufficient decision making power to respond effectively to public issues. They are also intelligent, in the sense that they are open to and encourage the use of technical information and analysis in decision making and problem solving. ... governments able to pursue development in this new context respond flexibly to rapid changing domestic and international conditions and demands so that national goals are protected and achieved. Many are participatory in the sense that they encourage debate, discussion, and participation in decision making. They are also accountable in the sense that those who are responsible for making implementing decisions and those who manage public sector organizations are held responsible for their actions and citizens have avenues to redress abuses of power." 1/

7. Simply stated, Governments that succeed go beyond finding answers to specific problems and develop systems, processes and cultures that ensure effective public choices and responsible use of resources. What are the challenges? What are the emerging policies, strategies and programmes to address the situation?

#### B. Size and composition

8. On 27 April 1994 the population of South Africa was estimated at 40,284,634, comprising 30,645,157 blacks (76.1 per cent); 5,171,419 whites (12.8 per cent); 3,435,114 coloureds (8.5 per cent); and 1,032,943 Asians (2.6 per cent). In December 1993 the number of persons employed in the public sector nationally was about 1,634,000 persons. It included the institutions and structures of the previous dispensation, including the central government, provincial administrations, self-governing territories, local authorities, parastatals, marketing boards and public corporations.

9. As at 31 December 1993 the figures for the new unified civil service which includes the civil services of the previous homelands and provinces were:

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(a) Central government administration: 552,000 (588,708 is the figure used by Public Service Commission for further projections);

(b) Provincial government administration: 695,000 (provisional estimate).

### C. Challenges

10. With the establishment of a new Government, and its commitment to developing a democratic, non-racist and non-sexist society, past structures and mindsets are a serious challenge.

#### 1. Lack of representativeness

11. Discriminatory practices and lack of representativeness in management positions will not be erased overnight. Whites still occupy key decision-making positions. In 1994, even after the population register had been abolished, it was indicated that 36 per cent of the public-sector employees were white but that some 90 per cent of middle and senior management positions were held by whites.

12. Democratization of the civil service requires urgent attention to the need of representativeness, particularly in a society where government had deliberately developed imbalances. Redressing racial and gender imbalances is high on the agenda of the new Government.

#### 2. Lack of development culture

13. The lack of a developmental culture and an inherent tendency to treat communities as passive recipients of service is in direct conflict with the new spirit of community involvement and self-reliance. This is linked to a lack of transparency and accountability to communities. Centralized control and top-down management comes as part of the legacy of the past, encouraging rule-bound approaches and limiting efficiency and productivity. A paradigm shift has occurred, demanding a move away from administration and control towards the management of development.

14. There is a need to reorient civil service towards the community. Unresponsiveness to citizen consumers has been identified as a problem. The standard services rendered by the administration machinery did not cater for the differentiated needs of consumers. Increasing demands by civil society to be actively involved in governance impinge on the traditional monopoly of the civil service.

15. The implications of transformation and the renewal of the public service and democratization of the country require that a new framework of governance be established. The relationship between state and society is being redefined, allowing those who are governed to have more say in governance. It is important to establish the implications of a shift from government to governance with regard to the purpose and function of the public service.

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3. Management information systems

16. The absence of reliable, relevant, open and effective management information and financial control systems is also a limitation. The lack of appropriate information systems leads to inappropriate mobilization and utilization of human resources.

4. Career paths

17. Human resource development has to address the lack of adequately defined career paths and under-provisioning of related training. This becomes more crucial in view of the policy of affirmative action, which presents a greater need to hasten the development of disadvantaged groups to ensure that they can occupy higher positions and succeed in their work.

5. Lack of a professional ethos

18. A sad legacy of apartheid is the lack of professional ethos and poor work ethics, which developed out of a sense of helplessness created by lack of opportunities. It is also said that a lack of commitment can be viewed as a subtle sabotage of the apartheid Government. With the establishment of a democratic Government, the aspirations and energies that were suppressed, need to be revitalized.

6. Rule-driven approaches

19. Inappropriate principles and management approaches present a challenge. International experiences indicate an increasing need to shift from administration and bureaucracy to management and professionalism. Traditionally the South African civil service has operated as a rule-driven bureaucracy. This undermines innovation by emphasizing adherence to rules and red tape over achievement of results. Management techniques have lagged behind international thinking by being authoritarian and fear-driven.

20. Increasing recognition of the need to focus on programme results instead of structures and administration deserves notice. Productivity in the civil service can benefit from the emphasis on results rather than rules and procedures. Appropriate systems of evaluation are required to promote productivity and a sense of achievement. A performance-oriented public service, as espoused by the present Minister of Public Service, requires mechanisms to make it a reality.

7. Lack of transparency and accountability

21. Transparency and accountability are critical as civil society positions itself to be a watchdog of the public service. With the demand to be involved comes the need of communities to be informed about reconstruction and development. Thus, lack of transparency is being challenged. Information has

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traditionally been left in the hands of senior officials, denying both the public and the front-line workers access to information on which key decisions are based. Access to information is critical to enable meaningful participation of citizens in governance.

22. The international shift towards operational accountability promotes the accountability of State employees. In the past accountability was practised largely as bureaucratic accountability, making employees accountable to a hierarchy and rules. Greater accountability of the civil service to the public is essential in order to enhance credibility.

#### 8. Corruption and mismanagement

23. Corruption and the mismanagement of resources have been noted as problems. The misappropriation of funds often occurred, due to an ethical vacuum created by the illegitimacy of the State. A legitimate Government has to ensure the eradication of such practices.

#### 9. Poor labour relations

24. Poor labour relations require urgent attention by the Government. There is an inadequate legislative and institutional framework for effective collective bargaining. The existing labour relations system does not comply with ILO standards, and the Ministries of Labour and of Public Service and Administration need to address the gap in industrial relations. The issue of remuneration poses a specific challenge to labour relations. Salary parity between the previously segregated administrations and high-income differentials between lower and higher levels of employees need to be addressed.

#### D. Planning and managing human resources

25. The issues identified indicate a need to initiate comprehensive strategies in addressing the inherent problems in the system to ensure effective delivery of reconstruction and development. A number of issues that require attention are discussed below.

##### 1. Restructuring

26. With the installation of the new Government, administrative restructuring had to be initiated, to bring the existing composition, management styles and structure of the civil service in line with new national goals.

27. The process of restructuring involves changing the civil service structures - building, rebuilding and, in some cases, replacing existing structures with new ones. The Public Service Commission, provincial service commissions, national departments and provincial departments have already begun to make changes.

28. Thirty-three new national departments have been established, together with nine provincial administrations with their own provincial service commissions. In accordance with schedule 6 of the South African Constitution, powers to administer existing laws have been assigned to the provinces. Progress towards integrating the administrations of the former "states" and "self-governing territories" are making progress, albeit with some difficulties.

29. The Ministry of Public Service and Administration and the Public Service Commission have identified the need to provide guidelines within which individual departments will restructure. The guidelines will include objectives and time-frames. The objectives will need to include the meeting of new programme priorities by departments, in line with the Restructuring and Development Programme and relating, in particular, to the promotion of representativeness, integrated development, and improved quality and equity in service provision.

30. Interdepartmental and intergovernmental collaboration is required to achieve the integrated approach suggested by the Programme. Interministerial committees have already been established, and the approach is being extended to all levels of the public service. A Human Resource Interdepartmental Task Team has, for instance, been established by the Programme office to facilitate coordination and development of coherent policies and strategies.

## 2. Reorganization

31. The reorganisation involves the process of changing the systems, culture and practices within structures and is therefore more fundamental than restructuring. It involves changes in organizational culture, the way in which human resources are mobilized, utilized and developed. It is also important to make the human resource development framework as practical as possible.

32. Redeployment and flexible approaches to the movement of employees between departments (intra-governmental) and between levels of government (intergovernmental) should become important elements of a human resource development framework. Public-sector human resources are mobilized and utilized as follows: 37.18 per cent of civil servants are in education, 11.8 per cent are in health and 0.02 per cent are in housing. There are 33.79 per cent in administration, 0.45 per cent in human resources management and 0.63 per cent in financial resources management. These figures demonstrate that current employment is not in accordance with reconstruction and development priorities and that redeployment and flexible approaches need to be considered in promoting quality of human resources.

33. Human resource management relates directly to the process of reorganization. Changing from a rule-driven approach to performance-oriented management and emphasizing the development of a service-oriented civil service are some of the urgent challenges confronting the civil service.

### 3. Rationalization

34. Rationalizing involves streamlining the size and productivity of staff so that human resource costs are commensurate with the value of the output of the organization. The challenge of bloated, unresponsive bureaucracies is an international problem, shared by South Africa, which already spends a relatively high percentage of GDP on the public service. The Government has committed itself to bringing the percentage down over time. Doing so while integrating the different administrative bureaucracies and increasing representativeness will be difficult.

35. A critical part of rationalization involves optimal utilization of staff through training, retraining, transfer, retrenchment, redeployment and modifying the levels of remuneration and the conditions of service. Building capacity to confront existing and emerging challenges is therefore an important part of the transformation process.

36. A number of strategies have been identified to ensure that the rationalization process leads to increasing efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The key strategies are:

(a) Redirection of human and other resources away from less desirable programmes towards service provision for areas with the least resources, and groups at the national, provincial and local levels;

(b) Introduction of new strategic models for financial management to support the process, by refocusing departmental budgets on the delivery of services to clients and to meeting outputs required by the country;

(c) Realization of efficient savings from increased productivity and the elimination of duplication and waste;

(d) Carefully negotiated partnerships to attract additional funds from international donors;

(e) The establishment of innovative partnerships between the departments, the Programme office, local communities and the private sector.

37. As part of this process, individual national departments will be required to produce strategic plans motivating efficient use of human and other resources. The plans will also provide a basis for comparing services by departments and provincial administrations.

38. Early retirement and retrenchment packages are thought to create greater opportunities for representativeness at the management levels. Classification and grading systems will also be reviewed in order to provide a basic personnel structure to match the present and anticipated demands. Personnel practices also need to be reviewed and adjusted to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the appointment, promotion, training and development of public servants.



39. A reflection of democratic governance is indicated through the provision of a platform (Office of the Public Protector) for recourse for civil servants who feel unjustly treated by the rationalization process.

#### 4. Legal reforms

40. Policy changes require legislative and regulatory reform to ensure real transformation. At present stakeholders are actively involved in ensuring that the new Constitution is informed by developments and current thinking with regard to the function, form and objectives of the public service. The process is building on the ongoing review of legislation relating to public-sector reform. The following key enabling legislative reforms are in accordance with the Constitution [Section 212 (1)]:

(a) Repeal of apartheid legislation

41. In the light of new developments and to support public-sector reform, the remaining apartheid statutes, proclamations, regulations and by-laws need to be repealed or substantially revised.

(b) Revision of initial legislation

42. Recent legislation pertaining to the public service, including the Constitution (Act 200/1993), the Public Service Act (Procl 103/1994) and the Public Service Labour Relations Act (Procl 105/1994) represent important steps towards the creation of a new public service. This legislation, however, is of a transitional nature and will need to be revised to give full effect to the policies in the Reconstruction and Development Programme and Public Service White Paper. This will include revision of many procedural rules in order to facilitate greater public participation in the public sector and in order to clarify procedures for appeal. The Constitutional assembly is also addressing this issue for inclusion in a new Constitution.

(c) Legislation on freedom of information

43. There is need for new legislation to stress accountability of the public officials to the legislative assembly and the public at large. It should also specify the procedures and structures to be followed in cases of administrative misconduct. Account will also have to be taken of the need to restrict access to some kinds of information where, for example, national security could be threatened or where individual rights to privacy and confidentiality are likely to be constrained.

(d) Affirmative action and labour relations legislation

44. There is need for a uniform labour relations act to avoid inequity and discrimination between the labour sectors. The act would go a long way in promoting effective labour relations at all levels. The Ministry of Public Service and Administration and the Department of Labour have indicated commitment to a process of continuous consultation with public service unions, employee organizations, and the public-sector offices (central, provincial and

local levels) in facilitating the drafting of the new legislation. The policy of affirmative action requires careful legislation, coordinated with the labour relations legislation that is currently being drafted.

E. Public-service reform for strategic development

45. The Reconstruction and Development Programme is a vision for the fundamental transformation of South African society. A key priority in implementing transformation is to transform the way government operates. The Programme is developmental in nature, through its emphasis on social and economic development. Viewing the public service as a critical agent of change, the Programme aims to rebuild a public service that is the servant of the people: accessible, accountable, efficient, free of corruption, and providing excellent quality. It is important to examine human resource development as it relates to overall development and, in particular, capacity-building for the public sector.

46. The provisions of the interim constitution of South Africa still do not reflect the development ethos and values which should guide the rebuilding of the socio-economic fabric of society. How can governance in a developing society be achieved without highlighting interactive public administration as the nexus between government and civil society?

47. Reorganizing and transforming the public service should not be limited to structural issues. The status of human resources and the quality of services require attention. A lack of a clear human resource policy is a handicap in this regard.

48. In many African States the human element has taken a back seat to other factors such as technology, economic and logistics in strategy formulations processes.

49. Human resource development in the public sector should not only be viewed as an administrative matter. An integrated approach to human resource development and management is vital to the success of any development programme.

50. Nyembe's (1994) articulation of the problem is insightful. She raises for instance a concern that personnel matters, labour relations and building a representative public service are treated as if they were distinct and unrelated issues and suggests the need of a policy framework for human resource development and management practice.

51. She raises the question of the respective roles of the Public Service Commission and the Ministry of Public Service and Administration. The question brings to light debates on the role of the State, either as facilitator or implementer of services. She suggests that the appropriate role of the Commission is to investigate and propose measures which would contribute to the formulation of a new administrative framework, including a human resource development policy framework. The Commission as an agent of change would need to disengage from managing existing administration, so as to enable it to provide strategic input. This suggests the separation of the roles of the

Commission and the Ministry of Public Service and Administration. In addition, it highlights the need of involving other actors.

52. The Programme White Paper emphasizes the partnership between government and civil society in governance. The interim constitution is, however, silent on the issue. This omission gives the idea that the public sector, its content, organization and financing, is still a technical matter which can best be left in the hands of public administrators. Empowerment in this regard might be perceived as adopting a correct (technical/organizational) approach, based on alternative sets of prescriptive rules developed by experts. This would be a far cry from the relationship envisaged in the White Paper.

53. The vision of empowerment articulated in the White Paper suggests that genuine empowerment should include increasing power and control of groups of intended beneficiaries over the circumstances of their own lives, so that they can be in control of their development. Effective delivery of public service and public goods requires interaction between markets, non-governmental organizations, public institutions and political processes. The nature of the relationship between State and civil society stated by the Programme integrates people into government activities. It emphasizes the involvement of government and people in defining needs, making choices appropriate to those needs, and enforcing accountability. The recent UNDP report, Human Development, 1994, acknowledges the importance of people's participation in governance. It notes that greater people's participation is no longer a vague ideology based on the wishful thinking of a few idealists. People's participation is a condition for survival and a critical tool of development.

54. Mokgoro (1995) advocates developmental governance and suggests that, to achieve it, the public service should:

(a) State its core values explicitly and involve communities, employees and politicians in holding the civil service accountable for living up to those values;

(b) Manage values (rather than rules and procedures) that symbolize a network of beliefs, policies and work guidelines which influence all aspects of public service activity;

(c) Be less technocratic and be more infused with social sciences, in order to be relevant and responsive to the needs of the rapidly changing society;

(d) Shift its emphasis from the maintenance of law and order and managerial routine to the promotion and guidance of substantial societal changes.

55. Given that development can only be achieved through deliberate and purposeful interventions, civil servants must be innovative, competent and committed to meeting the challenges of change. Their commitment to improving the quality of life and eliminating poverty should be reflected in influencing expenditure policies to:

- (a) Promote equity across social groups and provinces;
- (b) Raise the quality of human capital within the ranks of the disadvantaged;
- (c) Ensure that services and subsidies benefit the poor;
- (d) Be transparent and promote social justice;
- (e) Develop participative decision-making;
- (f) Be efficient and effective.

56. These principles are captured in certain management principles of developmental governance, adapted to suit the developmental spirit in South Africa. They suggest a public management model which builds on entrepreneurial and public management solutions - namely, strategic focus; goal-orientation; facilitation; governance; quality control; delivery orientation; democratization; sustainability; leveraging; mission-driven objectives; result-orientation; affirmation; facilitation and leveraging.

57. The present administrative structures are inappropriate mechanisms for implementing developmental policy.

#### 1. Constitutional process

58. In the past, no provision was made for a comprehensive human resources policy in the Public Service Act, 1984 (Act No. 111 of 1984). It merely made provision for a merit system, the delegation of authority to the executive functionaries and institutions, and the protection of the rights and interests of officials.

59. The Public Service Act, 1994 again provides in broad terms for the transition and rationalization of public administration, the regulation of conditions of employment as such. It does not identify public service reform priorities, or milestones to be achieved. Nor does it entail government conclusions on further improving public service performance.

60. Key questions with regard to public service reform priorities are dealt with in the new draft White Paper on the Public Service. Major issues concerning the composition and role of the Public Service Commission and the Public Service Administration Ministry are being reviewed and developed through the constitutional process. An important issue to note about the process is the consultative framework within which it is developed, as it allows greater involvement of stakeholders and interested parties. This creates an opportunity for complementary roles by the public and private sector.

61. As indicated above, the roles and functions of the Public Service Commission and the Ministry of Public Service and Administration are currently under review by the Constitutional Assembly. The roles and functions are important with regard to human resource development policy and planning. An

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examination of key questions that are being raised in the process can shed light on the future direction of human resource development in the public sector. The main issues identified for further discussion are the following:

(a) The need for a constitutional provision on the public service/public administration;

(b) The nature of that provision in terms of brevity and flexibility;

(c) Key themes, including the role of the public service, politics and administration, the structures of the Public Service Commission at the national and provincial levels, and the public service as an agent of development.

## 2. Characterization

62. The characterization of the public service is important to note as it relates to the envisaged goals articulated by the Ministry of Public Service and Administration and the draft Public Service White Paper. The public service is defined as an institution that should be professional; career-oriented; non-partisan; efficient, effective and responsive in terms of service delivery; loyal in its service to the public and the elected Government of the day; accountable to the public and Parliament.

63. The role of the Public Service in development is highlighted. It is indicated that the role should be seen within the context of transformation and with an emphasis on reconstruction and development. High quality human resources and a framework for interactive policy-making are indicated as crucial for the achievement of the desired role.

## 3. Politics and administration

64. Questions in this area go to the core of the policy functions of government and how far public servants ought to be involved in this role, and also whether public servants have any role to play in this regard or not.

65. Two viewpoints have emerged with regard to politics and administration. One is that the politicians make policy and law, while the public service is the implementer of public policy. The argument here is that involvement of public servants in policy-making will affect negatively their ability to act fairly and impartially in the rendition of public services. The other view is that public employees cannot be isolated from the policy-making process, that their role is critical in formulating policies that are responsive to needs of communities.

66. Examples can be drawn from other countries. In the United States of America, the President can appoint up to 3,000 civil servants in the top echelons of the public service for policy purposes. In France, each Minister is permitted to appoint 10 persons to a ministerial Cabinet, which is the policy arm of the Minister in relation to policy matters. The members of the Cabinet are appointed for their technical and policy expertise and ideological outlook, and their term of office is normally linked to that of the Minister. In

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Holland, before a person is appointed as a "mandarin" (equivalent of a Director General in South Africa), his/her political views are investigated. Dutch Ministers are allowed to have two or more political advisers of their own choice, though they have no connection with the ordinary public service.

67. The system of limited political appointments into the public service has found favour with some South African public administration academics and managers, who see it as a way of promoting innovative ideas in government.

#### 4. Public Service Commission

68. Questions have been raised with regard to the powers of the Public Service Commission, and they are at present under review by the Constitutional Assembly. The Public Service Commission has, under the current interim constitution, been given wide competence to make recommendations and to issue directives on public service departmental organization, conditions of service, personnel practices, including appointment and promotion, responsibility for efficiency and effectiveness, and the monitoring of a code of conduct.

69. Concerns have been raised about whether the Commission will usurp the functions of government and undermine the roles of the Ministry of Public Service and Administration. Suggested roles of the Commission are to ensure merit equity and representivity in the appointment and promotion process, and to act as an agent of change, development and administrative reform.

70. Key questions raised with regard to those roles are the following:

(a) What should be the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry and the Commission? What, if any, should be the relationship between the Ministry and the Commission?

(b) Should there be provincial public service commissions? If so, what should their roles be? What should be the relationship between the national and provincial commissions? Should the Constitution contain any provision on the above?

(c) How should norms and standards of public administration and management be developed and what, if any, should be the instruments of delegation from national to provincial governments?

#### 5. The public service as an agent of change

71. Management processes directed at transforming the culture of institutions and the whole of society have focused on developmental public service. The focus highlights the need to develop human resources that will meet the needs and challenges of development. The following roles have been suggested for the State in facilitating developmental public service:

(a) Creating mechanisms for open and interactive policy-making between citizens, communities and government, and promoting social partnerships for service delivery;

(b) Creating formats for effective communication between the administration and the public, user and consumer groups and public employees themselves.

72. A key question raised in this regard is should the public service act as an agent for development? If so, how can the Constitution create an enabling framework for such action, or should this matter be dealt with elsewhere?

#### 6. Development of public-sector capacity

73. The development of public-sector capacity should be seen within the context of developmental governance. In view of this, the building of public-sector capacity does not lie exclusively with the State. It is the Government's view that other institutions and actors outside of government should become active partners in building the capacity for good governance. The Government, however, also sees itself playing a direct role in the development of the capacity.

74. The Government has taken comprehensive steps to initiate change, but positive returns to this investment may take some time. Kluever (1994) notes that change often leads to a decrease in effectiveness and efficiency and an increase in cost, in the short run. Noting the enormous challenges of reform facing South Africa, he suggested that it could take at least three years before a real overall increase in effectiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness is achieved.

75. A framework for human resource development should therefore be viewed within the context of rapid transformation, while focusing initially on key areas that would ensure a stable and productive work force. The Government has made a clear statement of intent in the form of its draft White Paper on public service which outlines the Government's basic philosophy regarding the role and nature of a future South African public service and confirms its commitment to establishing a new human resource management approach in line with new national goals.

#### 7. Human resource management strategies

76. The development of public-sector capacity, specifically that of human resources, is a central part of the process of transforming government. A strategic framework would promote comprehensive mobilization, utilization, integration, training and development of human resources in the public service, at the national, provincial and local levels. The following steps have been identified for development of such a framework:

(a) Changing the role of human resource policy and elevating its status;

(b) Redefining the position, and role of trainers as specialists in human resources development;

(c) Establishing an effective and lifelong career development system;

(d) Developing appropriate methods to relate training to the goals and performance of public-sector organizations;

(e) Relating training to policies on remuneration, promotion and recruitment.

#### 8. Public service training and education

77. Education and training are in accordance with the White Paper on public service, considered important tools of democratization and development for two main reasons. First, the envisaged development-oriented professionalism requires comprehensive education and training programmes to make it happen. New work ethics, knowledge and skills are required to reorientate many of the values and practices acquired under the previous dispensation. Secondly, a well considered and properly structured education and training programme can be a powerful tool in facilitating and anticipating institutional changes within the public service.

78. It is further envisaged that training will enhance client responsiveness by assisting the public servants in concentrating on the needs of communities. The espoused vision of organizational management requires managers who, in addition to organizational and technical skills, have the ability to innovate policies and provide effective leadership.

79. The education and training programmes should therefore be intricately linked to wider processes of social and institutional reconstruction in civil society and within the State itself. Training should be:

(a) Needs-based and strategic, as opposed to formalistic and static;

(b) Directly and dynamically linked to the institution-building and institution-transforming programmes of public-sector organizations;

(c) Linked to policy-making processes, since that defines both its context and strategic purpose;

(d) Be viewed as an interactive process, involving trainers and learners, as well as practitioners from inside and outside the public service.

80. In line with the development orientation espoused by the Government's policies, a policy of continuous learning has been adopted by the Ministry of Public Service and Administration. All public servants, from the most senior to the most junior, will be targeted for ongoing training. The training of workers will, for instance, be linked to a new emphasis on client responsiveness and service delivery, development of career paths and the new policies of the public service. Training for senior and middle management will focus more on the



process and policy-making challenges indicated by the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

81. It is intended that the in-service training, particularly adult basic education, will be linked to the National Qualifications System. This will ensure recognition of knowledge accumulated through certification and accreditation. The immediate training targets identified include the following:

- (a) Induction and orientation of new lateral entrants to the public service;
- (b) Retraining and orientation of long-serving officials, particularly at senior management levels;
- (c) Development of programmes in such crucial areas as policy management, strategic planning, leadership, organizational development, and the management of change and diversity;
- (d) Provision of accelerated and intensive skills-training programmes for affirmative action beneficiaries;
- (e) Provision of training in gender and race awareness, public service ethics, constitutional law, and human rights;
- (f) Training and retraining of trainers.

(a) General training provisions

82. In accordance with the draft public service staff code, training of public servants and prospective public servants must be geared to achieving an efficient, effective, non-partisan, career-oriented public service broadly representative of the South African community. It is emphasized that the training must be approached as an integral part of the national human resources initiatives as envisaged by the White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

83. The programmes are required to be demand-driven and should be designed to address short-term, medium-term and long-term projected needs of the diverse client groups of the public service. Each head of department is, as provided by section 7 (3) (b) of the Public Service Act, 1994, responsible for the training and development of the staff of his or her organization as part of his or her responsibility for the efficient management and administration of the organization.

84. The Public Service Commission and - with regard to provinces - the provincial service commissions have a responsibility to promote the effectiveness and efficiency of the public service by means of their powers to recommend, direct and investigate, as provided by the Constitution and the Public Service Act, 1994, and this responsibility also relates to training.

(b) Departmental training policy and structures

85. To ensure appropriate attention to training needs in each department, each head of department is required to issue a training policy for his organization within the framework of norms and standards contained in the staff code. The policy must also be regularly updated to reflect emerging needs to ensure suitable application of training.

86. It is suggested that a training committee should be established in each department to advise on training needs, arrangements and policy. The training committee must be representative of functional composition of the relevant organization and must properly take into account the need for representation of racial groups and genders. The committee must meet at least once every two months and the proceedings of each meeting be properly recorded.

87. In accordance with the needs of the particular organization, it is proposed that the training committee establish training advisory subcommittees to advise on training with regard to specific occupational groups. Functionaries from the relevant occupational groups must be represented in the subcommittees. Advice from them should be channelled to the head of department through the training committee.

88. To ensure quality and coherence in training, prescribed courses have to conform to the "framework" curricula set in the training course standards. Those standards have to be amended by the Public Service Commission, as and when necessary, to ensure their currency and relevance. All training institutions conducting prescribed training courses must adhere to the curricular prescripts with regard to standards and content.

(c) Involvement of institutions

89. The Public Service Training Institute (now called the South African Management and Development Institute (SAMDI)) will coordinate and ensure training standards. Training may be provided by any department or training institution outside the public service, subject to the provision of the Public Service Act, 1994, the public service regulations, and the draft public service staff code. Institutions outside of the public service interested in conducting prescribed courses for the public service, must register with the Public Service Commission. The condition for registration of the training institutions shall be that of the Public Service Commission, and the Commission shall have the right to investigate such institutions to evaluate whether standards and registration requirements are complied with.

90. One of the key objectives of the Public Service Commission is to establish a nationwide and international network of training partners comprising relevant tertiary public and private institutions. Historically black universities have already been identified by the Commission as targets of this involvement. This, it is hoped will enhance the quality of training of black public administrators and contribute to building the research capacity of these institutions. The Public Service Commission will coordinate the network to ensure coherence and effective delivery. The provincial service commissions and departments are also

encouraged to cooperate, particularly in meeting training needs of a generic nature.

## II. SOUTH AFRICAN MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

91. The Public Service Commission and the provincial service commissions are responsible for ensuring effective implementation of training policy. SAMDI, which falls under the aegis of the Public Service Commission, is currently the single most important statutory body with respect to the provision of in-service training. The role and composition of SAMDI is at present under review by the Commission and restructuring is anticipated, including increased flexibility for provincial training institutions.

92. A further mechanism of support can be developed from the provisions of the Constitution. In terms of section 210 of the Constitution, a statutory "Human Resource Development Council" is proposed, to assist the Public Service Commission and the provincial service commissions in managing the transformations. The purpose of the council would be to advise and assist the Public Service Commission and the provincial service commissions and, on request, individual departments with regard to the principles of and the strategic direction in human resource development; the identification of problems and emerging issues; the promotion of exemplary practices and models for human resource management; mobilization and utilization of local and international expertise in the field of human resource development; and evaluation of human resource management.

93. In order to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities it is proposed that the council could initially embark on the following assignments, for each of which a task group should be established:

- (a) Service to community;
- (b) Staffing;
- (c) Training and development;
- (d) Remuneration;
- (e) Administration policy;
- (f) Management of diversity;
- (g) Developing the capacity of the public service to turn its diversity into a source of creative strength, mutual dependence and synergy;
- (h) Resource management and budget controls (accountability);
- (i) Staff relations.

III. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY IN  
GOVERNMENTAL DEPARTMENTS

94. The Interdepartmental Task Team on Human Resource Development was charged with the task of facilitating interdepartmental and intergovernmental cooperation on human resource development. As a starting-point the task team mandated a questionnaire survey of governmental departments to identify:

(a) Human resource development capacity which could be used to address RDP priorities;

(b) Areas where interdepartmental and other forms of cooperation could result in greater efficiency and hence cost and capacity savings (for example, coordinating generic learning such as adult basic education and training (ABET));

(c) Potential for training qualifications awarded by each department to be recognized by other departments and by other educational institutions to ensure consistent standards and career development;

(d) Areas of excellence or special capacity which need to be more actively supported or replicated;

(e) Examples of effective governmental and civil society partnership arrangements and provision of learning opportunities to communities which could be replicated;

(f) Financial expenditure on human resource development with a view to maximizing its utilization;

(g) Areas in which line function departments experienced problems or plan to expand in respect of human resource development;

(h) Compatibility of human resources development activities of departments and offices with RDP thrusts.

95. A significant indication highlighted by the survey was that there was no coherent understanding of human resources development across governmental departments. The inconsistencies in the understanding of human resources development created problems both in the collection of data about departmental resources dedicated to human resources development and in the interpretation of results.

96. The analysis, however, revealed some perceived needs:

(a) To establish common understanding of human resource development and management;

(b) To generate a clear statement from government with regard to human resource development and management;

(c) To facilitate linkages between central and provincial offices;

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- (d) To relax control from the centre to facilitate efficiency;
- (e) To create a service-oriented public service;
- (f) To reform the budgetary process;
- (g) To devolve decision-making from the central level to line departments and line managers;
- (h) To establish a coordinating structure for human resources development to facilitate change management in departments.

A. Provisions for external training

97. The Government has indicated its commitment to involving training organization outside of the public service in developing public-sector capacity. In accordance with the arrangements of the past system, public service training was largely conducted by the Government's training institute. Currently the role has been taken over by SAMDI and the departments. Supplementary training in management was offered by mainly white universities, while some technikons provided additional technical training.

98. It is envisaged that the transformation of SAMDI will lead to a change in relationships with external training agencies. The Government has indicated interest in promoting greater involvement by historically disadvantaged tertiary institutions as part of the process of restructuring the public sector. The role of community-based and non-governmental organizations has been identified as a resource base for the development of public service.

B. Operational plans

99. The Public Service White Paper identifies the following three key steps as being critical for translating the policies identified into a meaningful coordinated strategy:

- (a) Identification, prioritization and implementation of specific programmes of public-sector reform;
- (b) Identification and training of key agencies responsible for driving the reform process;
- (c) Development of effective mechanisms for ensuring that the reform process is consultative and well coordinated.

100. It further identifies a number of action programmes to facilitate reform and restructuring of the public service. The following are included:

- (a) A comprehensive review of the structure and function of the public service and its statutory bodies, including the Public Service Commission. The review will focus on the division of roles and tasks between central and

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provincial authorities and will be followed by an introduction of reforms and, where necessary, redeployment of staff;

(b) An internal review and audit of each department, office and agency concerning its objectives, structure, function, staffing, and financing. The process will be followed by the drafting of internal reform plans;

(c) A review and revision of the system, routines and procedures of planning, budgeting and financial execution, with a view to increasing public-sector accountability. This would need to be undertaken in partnership with the Ministry of Finance;

(d) A comprehensive phased programme of affirmative action, aimed at making the service both representative and efficient;

(e) A study of the viability of setting up transformation units within each department to motivate change and evaluate the reform process;

(f) The introduction of a system of performance auditing throughout the public service. Appropriate performance indicators would need to be developed to facilitate the activity;

(g) A broad review of salaries, benefits and conditions of service in the public service, linked to the promotion of equity and effectiveness;

(h) The introduction of a widely accepted and understood code of conduct for civil servants, designed to promote honesty and accountability, respect for human rights, and the development of a professional ethos;

(i) The rapid development of a comprehensive national training policy for the public service. This would include the prioritization of training needs and the implementation of an integrated training programme to actualize the training quickly and effectively;

(j) A substantial investment in the development and, where necessary, the reform of public-sector training institutions, including those at the tertiary level.

101. The current situation in the transformation process can be described as a policy formulation process. The next phase will involve integration and the development of strategies for implementation. The process of implementation is therefore becoming more urgent.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

102. The UNDP Human Development Report, 1994 argues for sustainability in all sectors of the economy and suggests the need for balance between the needs of today and the needs of tomorrow, between private and public action, between individual avarice and social compassion. This is a key challenge facing the public service administration as it considers bridging gaps from the past and

developing an enabling policy framework and practice to meet current and future socio-economic challenges.

103. The Zimbabwean experience is in this regard significant, in that the transformation phase took place without destabilizing the country. Yet words of caution need to be taken seriously. South Africa is advised to avoid expanding the public service and should develop strategies that will ensure that appointments and promotions are made on a basis of objective criteria related to merit and ability.

104. As the public service administration is grappling with the issue of devolution of decision-making from the centre to the provinces and line departments and institutions, there is need to consider strategies for avoiding fragmentation. Insights can be drawn from countries like Australia, where the Public Service Commission has developed a "policy cycle" approach.

105. Having recognized the importance of resolving the labour relations issues, it is essential for the Government of South Africa to consider ways of utilizing workplace bargaining to enhance working conditions and boost productivity. Emerging policies and strategies should go beyond crisis management.

106. Governance has become an important prerequisite for facilitating collaboration between governments and civil society. In addition it has become an essential element for peace, stability and socio-economic development. Human resource development for democratic governance should underpin strategic approaches to public-sector development, to enable public service administrations to succeed in managing the challenges of the changing world and meeting the needs of communities.

#### Notes

1/ M. E. Hilderbrand and M. S. Grindle, "Building sustainable capacity" (IND/92/676), paper prepared for the UNDP Pilot Study of Capacity-building. Cambridge: Harvard Institute for International Development, pp. 9-10.

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