

Acting KZN Premier Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo says Govt corruption can be defeated if civil servants familiarise themselves with - and live by - the Public Service Pledge

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Public servants should be encouraged to recite the Government Code of Conduct regularly so as to root out fraud and corruption – and improve professional and ethical conduct among government employees. This will ultimately benefit the public and help improve the reputation of the province, country and African continent.

This is the view expressed by the acting Premier of KZN, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, who was today part of the launch in Durban of the Public Service Commission's Pledge, which promotes constitutional values and principles among state employees.

Dr Dhlomo says that, in addition to putting stringent fiscal control measures and consequence management in place, reciting the Pledge could reawaken people's consciences.

A Brigadier General in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) himself, Dr Dhlomo cited high levels of discipline among members of the Army as an example of the impact of reciting and internalising the Code of Conduct.

"In the army, when there's a parade, all soldiers, including generals, repeat the code of conduct. When you repeat something, it becomes part of you. It is no wonder therefore that you find armies in the world, including ours, behaving the way they do. They are reminded all the time of their civil and national duty. Soldiers know the code of conduct by heart. And when you know something by heart, you tend to live it. Maybe we should consider having regular occasions where public servants are made to recite the Code of Conduct, so that they embrace and be part of it," he said.



signs the Public Service Commission's Pledge

MEC Dhlomo

Delivering a speech on behalf of Premier Mr Willies Mchunu, MEC Dhlomo said Government is serious about rooting out corruption within all its spheres. Eradicating corruption, he said, will conserve resources as fraud and corruption have the potential to cause a massive drain of resources, which poses a risk to service delivery and may cause democracy to flounder.

"In fact, many studies have indicated that there is a negative correlation between investment on one hand and fraud and corruption on the other. While the lack of ethics can benefit a few individuals or groups in the short term, it may have devastating consequences for a province, a country and continent," he said.

MEC Dhlomo urged the people of KwaZulu-Natal to also understand the rights and the quality of services they are entitled to, adding that the National Development Plan 2030 calls for, among others, an active citizenry who can resist and expose corruption wherever it takes place.

He also called on the strengthening of systems to ensure that all individuals are held accountable for their actions.

"We consistently said that it cannot be correct that nobody is held accountable for failing to achieve clean audits. Consequence management will apply in the workplace in order to turn this situation around. The statutory responsibility of accounting officers and all senior managers is to maintain effective systems of internal controls, and they must therefore be held accountable."

The MEC said that, on behalf of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, the Province espouses the values of the Constitution and seeks to adhere to the Bill of Rights in Chapter 2. He recommitted the Provincial Government to championing the principles which are contained in Section 195 of the Constitution, which are also listed as follows in the Pledge of the Public Service Commission that was signed today:

- Promotion of professional ethics at work, in interactions with the public, and in the management of state resources;
- Ensuring that public resources are used for the purposes they are meant for;
- Promoting Social Cohesion, while being impartial, fair and equitable and unbiased;
- Complying with appropriate prescripts.

Dr Pearl Mpilo Sithole, head of the Public Service Commissioner in KZN described the the Pledge as a recommitment of all public servants to the values and principles of the Constitution, particularly those that are enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

"The Pledge asks of the public servants to recognise that we are all equal. That all citizens deserve to be treated with dignity, and they have freedom and the democracy of our country is well-recognised in the manner in which they service the people. It also affirms the values and principles as enshrined in 1965 of the Constitution, which speak to how they must work.

It deals with issues of high level of professional standards; development orientation; being accountable and efficient in the use of resources; and even looking after and nurturing the career development of the public servants in KZN. We really want this to, in line and in addition to Batho Pele, really emphasise that in our totality as the Public Administration, in the manner in which we co-ordinate and manage the work, we are as obliged to ensure that people are served equitably and without bias. We are really hoping that all senior management are going to go out there, mainstream the Pledge, and ensure that it is lived by all public servants.