



government  
communications

Department  
Government Communication & Information System  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Government disputes claims about Public Servants layoff plans**

The Minister for Public Service and Administration, Ms Ayanda Dlodlo has noted with concern reports from the Mail and Guardian newspaper and other media houses who latched on to this story, that government was planning to lay off 30 000 Public Servants in the next three years.

“I take a dim view of this type of reporting where none of the affected departments in this story were consulted to verify what the Mail and Guardian reports as coming from ‘sources. Neither the DPSA, Presidency nor the National Treasury were consulted to verify a story that has the potential to cause panic and instability in the Public Service. The numbers being bandied about by the Mail and Guardian and other news sources who latched on the false claims in the story, have no substance whatsoever because from the point of view of government, the macro-organization of the State will be undertaken meticulously and not in a dramatic wholesale retrenchment of state employees,” said Minister Dlodlo.

She condemned this in the strongest terms and called on media houses to be more responsible in their reporting.

The Minister went on to say, “If employees would be affected, to the extent that has been reported by the Mail and Guardian, Citizen newspaper and ENCA, that decision would have been taken to the affected Public Service Collective Bargaining Chamber for discussion.”

The Minister says the report is a complete misrepresentation of the government program in relation to the macro-organization of the State and the initiatives proposed to manage the public sector wage bill. “The figures quoted in this report are creating a state of panic in the Public service and are utterly misleading to members of the public in general,” she said.

“It is true that as part of a bigger plan to reorganise government, an employer initiated severance package and early retirement without penalties, among other measures are being considered but government is yet to engage labor unions on the matter,” she added.

She said the President’s call to restructure government in order to enhance service delivery and making the public administration more effective and efficient by removing

superfluous functions and structures does not include such figures as quoted in the paper. “Of course the plans to reconfigure government could result in a reduced public administration and executive and a clearly defined role of the National Administration within national government but this process will be undertaken meticulously and not in a dramatic wholesale retrenchment of state employees” said the Minister.

Minister Dlodlo explained that the whole exercise includes the important work of the Presidential Review Commission whose task is to review and restructure state-owned entities to make them more efficient and impactful in the economy. She also emphasised that the Public Service was bound to undertake this important exercise with regard to its own specialized entities as well, in order to address the challenge of the current structure and size to introduce efficiencies, which will help government to deliver services more effectively.

With regard to the initiatives aimed at tighter management of the public sector wage bill, the Minister restated her commitment to lead a government wide process of initiatives to mitigate its impact on the economy and society in general.

These measures include the following:

- The development of a comprehensive remuneration strategy that covers the three spheres of government including public entities in the medium term;
- The extensive work to look at the organisational design regime and organizational structures of departments which will result in a directive that will seek to limit the appointment of personnel additional to the establishment without affecting the operations of the department;
- Ensure strict adherence to the guidelines of the Ministerial handbook in respect of the appointments of support staff in Ministries;
- Strict management of overtime, performance bonuses, leave management, implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation and separation management;
- The introduction of an Organisational Functionality Assessment Framework that will effectively measure performance, functionality and outcomes rather than compliance only;
- To work extensively to finalize the Government Employees Home Owners Scheme to ensure affordable housing for all Public Servants;
- Introduce a Uniform Job Grading System to ensure compensable and comparable worth of all jobs in the public sector; and
- Introduce a larger suite of compulsory training programmes to ensure government employees are trained in Evidence-Based Planning, Project Management, Modelling and other disciplines so as to strengthen outcomes and results.

The Minister said these initiatives will ensure that personnel expenditure remains within the budget ceiling of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and employees are given the necessary tools and training to effect the desired changes to the system. She concluded by assuring public servants that government does not have a plan to retrench Public Servants *en masse* as alleged by the Mail and Guardian newspaper.

“While it is important for us to embark on the reconfiguration exercise as government, we cannot do this in a clumsy way that will negatively affect the livelihoods of people, in this regard Public Servants must rest assured that no such plans exist in government.” She also emphasised the importance of attracting the youth and unemployed graduates in particular into the public service. “We have just launched a Graduate Recruitment Scheme which aims to address the employability of young people and graduates in particular, this is all part of the bigger plan to contribute towards addressing youth unemployment, enhance the image and competitiveness of public employment and to improve professionalism in the public service” she concluded.

**This message was brought to you by Government Communications and Information System**