

## BUDGET VOTE ON THE PRESIDENCY

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The Presidency is the window through which the South African public and the world see the goings-on in the government. If the Presidency shows incapacity the obvious statement would be that the entire government is in a crisis but if it is alive and kicking our country will be like a candle light to moths of all types.

If anyone, on behalf of government, makes a controversial and or provocative statement such as that the e-tolls are not a dream and no-one is going to stop them as that made by the head of government communications on the occasion of introducing the e-tolls, the public ascribes that to government, actually to the president.

The result is that government is left with egg in the face and efforts are being made to win back the hearts of the people.

It is understandable why the president has introduced the Department of Performance and Evaluation as he is irked by the slow pace of service delivery in government. He has always kept to his word that he is frustrated insofar as how government departments perform their duties. He said that on national television on the occasion of one of the breakfast shows he addresses.

Sometimes some of us wonder why when ministers switch portfolios or new ones are appointed such changes also affect heads of departments and to some extent other managers. This in our view is unnecessary as the party in power remains the same. Our concern is that as reorganisation takes place programmes planned for delivery take a toll.

There have also been quibbles about some ministers or deputy ministers leaving one department for another without handing over vehicles to their successors. This makes unpleasant publicity for government and the by extension the president as cabinet is his responsibility.

We note that government has decided to part ways with business as usual hence some changes to the approach and outlook of issues.

The best thing to have happened is the establishment of the National Planning Commission. This commission, unlike in the case of many government programmes before, did their homework. They followed the standing principle of R, D and D, Research, Development and Diffusion.

The commission has taken time to bring all stakeholders on board. They have been to provinces, they have been to caucuses of political parties, they have addressed themselves to the general public and members of the commission continue to write articles in newspapers putting across their views on the different aspects of life in the country.

Government has heeded the saying that: “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail”, that is why the commission is focusing on where this country will be by 2030.

As against the slogan of the early 1990’s when the ruling party proclaimed that they were ready to govern, they have since realised that they are preparing to govern effectively as the commission has set its eyes on a capable state by 2030. This will also address the view held in other circles that this country has no long term plans.

We wish to thank and congratulate the chairman and of the commission who, as member of the National Executive Committee of his party, recused himself whenever the commission briefed political parties, stating that he did so to avoid being construed as pushing the agenda of his party.

We in the UCDP pray much the strength of Minister Manuel and all commissioners; they are worthy sons and daughters of the mother continent.

There is a bitter pill yet to be swallowed insofar as the National Youth Development Agency is concerned. All are agreed that youth and their matters should form part of the national agenda but the difference is on how these are meted out. The astronomic salaries paid to the members of the board while there is very little they can show with regard to reducing youth unemployment and social cohesion is the cause of the displeasure. Not much is being done to at least bring the youths of the country together from across the different social backgrounds, political outlooks and or the urban and rural divides. Whatever efforts that are made are the results of schools, churches and in

some cases political parties on their own initiatives to cause the youth to mingle.

To borrow Martin Luther King's words the ideal South Africa will be the one where her children will not be judged by the colour of their skin or their political affiliation but by the content of their character. The sooner we attain this the better it will be for the youth in this country. The issue of carrots being dangled to young people demeans them as they tend to do right through fear and not from a sense of justice.

We are aware of hosts of business magnates that accompany the President on some of his overseas trips and hope that as much as the president does his utmost to invite investors to our country, they too will do all they can to open opportunities for our youth, be it jobs, offering bursaries and whatever it takes to make our young people be prepared to look into the future without flinching, wincing or even winking.

Wednesday, 30 May 2012