

Debate on Vote No 4 : Home Affairs

UCDP : Hon MN Matladi

Tuesday, 12 April 2011

I'd like to congratulate the Ministry and the Department for the remarkable achievements we see on the Department's annual report. The National Population Registration Campaign launched in March 2010 is a great stride by the Department and we hope that it shall gather momentum and give birth to other campaigns in order to ensure that our people comply and are aware of birth and other forms of registration requirements.

The launch of the Ministerial Hotline is another welcome step because more often than not, our people do not know where and how to channel their grievances when met with unsatisfactory service and service points. It has also come to our attention that the Departments' Customer Care Centre Line has very efficient and dedicated people who continue to follow up on a customer's complaint until it is resolved. This therefore is a compliment to the Department.

Further, in spite of the recorded minor hiccups before and during our nation's hosting of the FIFA World Cup, we think the Department did us proud and carried out their mandate effectively and efficiently. We hope that the Department shall carry out its oversight mandate over the IEC in a similar fashion as we approach the Local Government Elections in May.

There are areas that warrant serious concern and it seems the Department hasn't developed a workable solution to them. It is shocking to learn that the Department's staff take 6 929 sick leave days a month and this to be happening in a Department that is faced with large numbers of vacant posts makes this a crisis. I am inclined to think this is one of the things that resulted in the Department having to face a High Court class action for the frustrating ridiculous delays in processing temporary residence permits.

We are also enraged by the proposed tariff hikes by the Department for Identity Documents and passports. There can be no justifiable reason to hike a necessary service to citizen by 600%. The Department is shooting itself on the foot, on one hand they embark on a registration campaign ensuring that qualifying citizens have ID's and on the other they increase the cost of re-issue from R20 to R140. It does not take an economist to know that vast number of our people will not afford this fee, more that 30% of the population is unemployed and now expected to fork out R140 for an ID book. The Department needs to seriously re-think this move.

It is with horror to learn that the Department has recorded R261 426 Million on irregular expenditure relating to non compliance of procurement processes. I had expected that any turn-around strategies that the Department would employ would focus primarily on eradication of this scourge as this has been going on for a long time now.

It is absolutely unacceptable that R6.862 Billion will be allocated or used for pending legal claims. This amount is ridiculous so are the number of case against the Department. To me I'm inclined into thinking that probably this is another scam run by the Department's personnel where they continue to make arbitrary arrests that result in court cases against the Department.

It is disappointing that we are here for a Budget Vote for a Department that has yet again given us a qualified audit report after many years of receiving same and after many strategies derived and commitments made. I'd like to know what it is that the Department will do differently this time around.