

**The Presidency : Budget Vote**

**UCDP : Hon MN Matladi**

**Tuesday, 14 June 2011**

It struck me as being odd in perusing the Presidency Annual report and noting that there are so many vacant key role posts in the organogram of the presidency. I certainly did not expect that from the highest office in government. I'd be happy if they are now filled but would however wish to understand if it has been due scarceness of the skills and if not, what could have been the reason? I cannot understand how we continue to have vacant positions in various government departments when the very same government is committed to creating jobs and we know of many skilled and qualified graduates that are without jobs.

Similarly there is a new trend set up by the president, the reshuffling of Ministers before the end of their term. The argument that this is based on performance of the Ministries does not seem to hold water when you consider that the new Minister will come in and take time learning the ropes, also that usually the administration in each Ministry that has been reshuffled also gets a face lift to say the list, thereby meaning valuable skills and experience are then forfeited, meaning people lose jobs and join the unemployed masses. I can't help but think we seem to be running around circles sometimes. Contrary to the intention, I think this has detrimental effects on service delivery.

It is interesting that the presidency's mission is to ensure accountability amongst all spheres of government and the president has re-iterated and emphasized over and over again how government must have zero tolerance on corruption. However, the citizen are inundated with media

reports of executive heads and other senior government official who are squandering state resources and this is such a concern. What is more concerning is that the presidency does not seem to be swift and true to its word and commitment when dealing with such individuals.

We see that the government had resources focused on the development of transport services but the disappointment in many areas and provinces is that such development seem to be focused on the privileged road users catering for those that are already in positions of convenience whilst masses of our people living in rural South Africa still have no proper roads and transport which means that the poorest of the poor continue to use unsafe roads and pay a lot more on transport costs. For instance if you look at the Bus Rapid Transport (BRT), it is basically in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban which are all urban areas and you wonder if this government thinks the poor in the rurals do not deserve similar services. I've read from the annual report that government is setting aside 25 billion rands over Medium Term Expenditure Framework to stabilise rail passenger transport services and I want to know what percentage of that shall be towards ensuring that rural villages have train access or any other safer transport service?

On another note we commend the presidency in its work coordination the energy supply deficiencies, of course many areas have not yet experienced the dreaded load shedding, Eskom and other agencies involved seem to be well on track. However I want to know what intervention strategies the government has come up with in order to cushion the poor against the price hikes implemented by Eskom? We applaud government for the intended digital migration and the intention to subsidise poor household on box sets. This is pro active thinking that

serves the poor which is something we had started to see deteriorating in service delivery. We hope that the jobs that will be created in this process will be sustainable and that such a process shall be sealed from corrupt tendencies that cloud attempts at bettering the lives of the poor South Africans.

We welcome the contemplated move by government to have a single election for all three spheres of government. We however would like to caution that such a move must be well planned and organised in order to avoid confusion amongst our people.