

THE COMMISSION'S MANDATE AND OBJECTIVES

Part 1 of the Annual Report discusses the Commission's performance during the year under review. As highlighted in the Director-General's overview, the Commission carried out its functions in terms of the Interim Constitution, 1993, as well as the new Constitution, 1996. Before proceeding with the discussion of the Commission's performance, it is necessary to clarify the role and functions of the Commission, as well as to outline the objectives the Commission had set for itself in 1998.

Role and Functions

The Public Service Commission is, in essence, a Constitutional oversight body. Its primary role is to monitor the extent to which the Public Service complies with the Constitutional values and principles of public administration.

The Commission's role is aptly expressed in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service as the "independent monitor and arbiter of the activities, ethos and comportment of the public service".

The oversight role of the Commission is not an end in itself, but aims to enhance the performance of the Public Service. The Commission therefore also has the role of advising organs of state on the maintenance of these Constitutional values and principles.

The Commission's powers and functions are set out in section 196 of the Constitution, 1996 (see Appendix 1). In brief, the Commission is required to:

- Promote the values and principles of public administration set out in section 195 of the Constitution, 1996, throughout the Public Service.

- Monitor, evaluate and investigate human resource practices, service delivery and related organisational matters to assess the extent to which they comply with the Constitutional values and principles and with relevant policies.
- Support the efforts in the Public Service to develop and maintain a high standard of professional ethics.
- Investigate grievances of officers and recommend appropriate remedies or actions.
- Report to Parliament (and Provincial legislatures from 1999 onwards) on the Commission's activities, including an evaluation of the extent to which the Public Service complies with the Constitutional values and principles of public administration.

In terms of the Interim Constitution, 1993, the Commission is required to investigate appeals in cases of misconduct. Until the new Public Service Regulations come into operation, the Commission is required to make formal recommendations on variations to prescripts and other matters that have not yet been delegated to Executing Authorities and departments.

Objectives for 1998

In setting its objectives for 1998, the Commission was mindful of the possibility of the new Commission coming into operation during the course of the year. The objectives set had to be broad enough to incorporate new perspectives that a new Commission would bring. The Commission's core objectives were:

- To promote a high standard of professional ethics in the Public Service.

- To monitor, evaluate and investigate service delivery and related organisation systems and practices.
- To monitor adherence to personnel procedures and transformation policies.
- To evaluate the management of information technology in the Public Service.
- To investigate appeals and grievances and recommend appropriate actions or remedies.
- To carry out transitional executive functions.

The Commission was of the view that delivering effectively on these objectives required internal transformation and change. The Commission therefore also set itself objectives to enhance its internal operations and its interaction with role players. The objectives set were:

- To accelerate the process of transformation of the Office, including the establishment of a new structure, systems and procedures for the Office to support the new Commission.
- To develop constructive working relationships with role players, nationally and internationally.
- To promote the Public Service Commission, its services and its products.



Code of Conduct Workshops were held with national departments and provincial administrations

