



Custodian of Good Governance

# Special PSC Newsletter

DECEMBER 2007

## Celebration of International Anti-Corruption Day

### WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY?

International Anti-Corruption Day is celebrated annually on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December in honour of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) which was signed in 2003, in Mexico. On this day recognition is given to the essential global leadership provided at the signing of the Convention where 95 countries took the anti-corruption pledge. They have since been joined by 42 more signatories, bringing the total to 137 nations.

Around the world on 9 December, people will stand up and say no to corrupt politicians, corrupt public servants and crooked companies. International Anti-Corruption Day recognizes the devastating impact of corruption on the lives of millions of people around the world and honours the quiet acts of courage of individuals who are building the foundation of change. In countries rich and poor, in all regions and walks of life, diverse organizations and individuals are united in a common cause forcing the world action against the scourge of corruption.

In South Africa much of the earliest initiatives to fight corruption have come through the corridors of the Public Service Commission (PSC). It is therefore appropriate that through this special news edition the PSC reflects on some of the initiatives it has undertaken as well as the other mechanisms put in place in the South African Public Service.

### BEING AN ETHICAL PUBLIC SERVANT

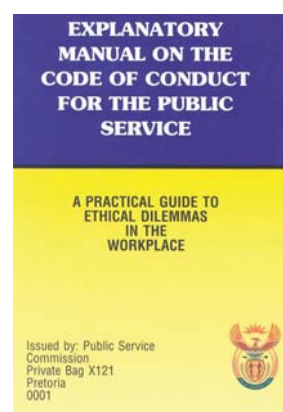
How does one become an ethical public servant? Developing integrity and an ethical attitude towards one's work does not happen in a vacuum. In order to bring this about the PSC developed a Code of Conduct for the Public Service. It is the primary inspiration for public servants to act ethically, professionally and in the public interest.

The Code of Conduct addresses the relationship of the public servant to the Legislature, to the public, to other employees and to his/her professional conduct in the workplace. It is a blend of values and compliance based rules, designed to allow public servants the space to apply ethical reasoning to ethical challenges in the workplace. It exemplifies the

spirit in which public officials should perform their duties in the public interest and requires of officials that their primary loyalty should be to the Constitution.

The Code of Conduct calls on officials to exercise their primary loyalty to the Constitution, secondly in the public interest and thirdly to the government of the day. Such a hierarchy of loyalties (where the Constitution and the public interest enjoys priority) promotes professionalism necessary in a young democracy to limit and indeed eradicate partisanship. This will ensure a level of maturity in a very competitive world. It creates a loyalty to the government of the day, tempered by the Constitution and the public interest. In this respect the Code truly represents the interests of the citizens it seeks to serve.

The Code of Conduct was popularized through the development of an Explanatory Manual which uses examples and illustrations of ethical reasoning in the workplace to make it easier to understand. The Explanatory Manual was also translated into all official languages.



*The PSC has produced and distributed over a million copies of the Explanatory Manual on the Code of Conduct for Public Servants.*

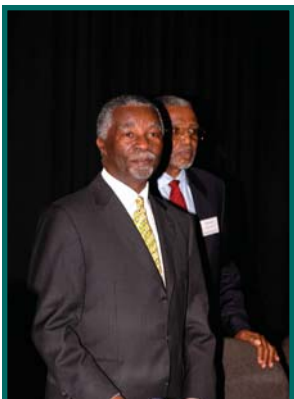
### KEEPING THE HONEST PUBLIC SERVANT HONEST

Most public servants in South Africa are honest. However, in anti-corruption strategies little focus is given to the protection of honest public servants. The PSC has recognized this and has developed a Financial Disclosure Framework. As custodians, entrusted with public funds senior managers need to maintain the highest standards of professional ethics.

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Chairperson of the PSC Prof. Stan Sangweni and President Thabo Mbeki at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Anti-Corruption Summit hosted by the NACF in March 2005.

Some of the earliest initiatives to fight corruption in the corridors of the Public Service are therefore appropriate that through the PSC reflects on some of the mechanisms as well as the other mechanisms in African Public Service.

## PUBLIC SERVANT

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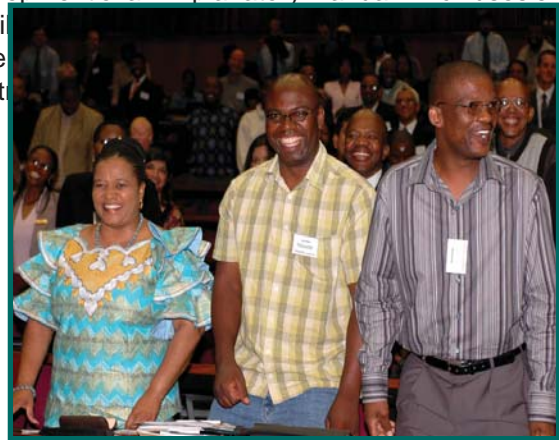
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Delegates at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Anti-Corruption Summit hosted by the NACF - 2005

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Their integrity and that of their departments must be beyond question. The Framework is aimed at preventing conflicts of interest by requiring of senior managers to disclose their financial interests annually. The disclosure of financial interest is designed as an early warning system to identify potential conflicts of interest from becoming actual conflicts of interest and, through this identification, keep senior managers from conflicting with their official duty and to always perform their functions in the public interest.

In order to enhance the Framework the PSC has recommended a policy to manage conflicts of interest in the Public Service. The important reason behind developing mechanisms for



*National Anti-Corruption Hotline Toolkit has been widely distributed to all stakeholders.*

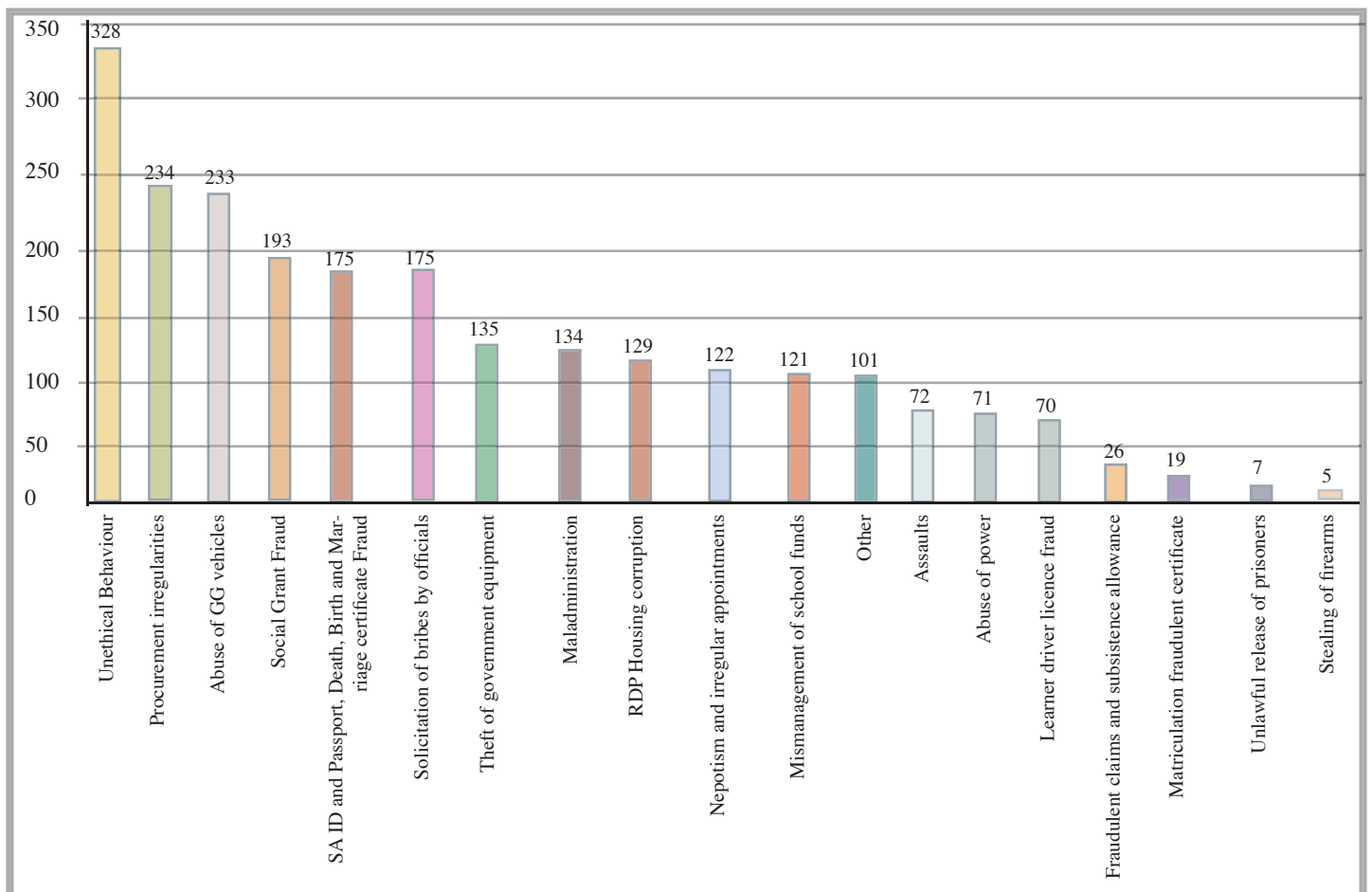
Whistle blowers can call the NACH to report corruption without fear of victimization as the NACH offers anonymity. Such a mechanism empowers the silent majority to speak out in respect of unethical practices, and contribute in the fight against corruption.

The NACH is a manifestation of government’s commitment

to root out corruption through a safe and anonymous mechanism to report allegations of corruption. The system allows for feedback to be provided to the whistle blower via a confidential system which includes a dedicated reference number.

The NACH also allows for a central database of allegations and finalized cases to be managed by the PSC and enables it to provide departments and provinces with a profile of areas of administration which may be susceptible to risk. Since its inception the NACH has referred a total of 3357 cases of alleged corruption to departments for investigation. The most common reasons for the reporting of alleged corruption to the NACH and the number of cases received in respect of such reasons from 1 September 2004 to 30 November 2006 are indicated in the figure below.

The high number of case referrals shows that the uptake of the NACH amongst the public has been successful. This implies that much of the corruption reported can be rooted out with the cooperation of participating departments.



**The graph above shows the nature of cases reported between September 2004 and November 2006**

The NACH has however already achieved tangible results. In the province of Limpopo a total of 20 officials have already been dismissed as a result of corrupt practices committed by them which were reported through the NACH. A further 17 officials throughout the Public Service have been placed on suspension pending disciplinary enquiries. Apart from these visible results, the NACH has also served to create awareness amongst public servants regarding corruption.

The awareness created serves two important purposes. First of all it provides public servants with information on how to report corruption and secondly it deters those intending to commit corruption from doing so out of fear of being exposed. A further reason to be proud of the NACH is that through its centralization it minimizes duplication of hotlines by respective departments and also prevents "forum shopping" by whistle blowers, thus providing a substantial saving to the taxpayer.

## CONTINUING WITH THE FIGHT

Based on the areas as highlighted, the Public Service has made significant strides in building integrity and fighting corruption although there is still much to be achieved. The enabling mechanisms are in place and have begun to bear fruit. In commemorating International Anti-Corruption Day, this brief reflection is proof that South Africa does not only pay lip-service to the occasion but has implemented successful mechanisms with concrete results. Through such efforts the South African Public Service has the potential of becoming a shining example to the rest of the world to emulate, especially in the light of what has been achieved in the short period since democratization.

# LET US FIGHT CORRUPTION TOGETHER

To report any act of corruption in the Public Service, please call the National Anti-Corruption Hotline for the Public Service at 0800 701 701

The Hotline number is:

- Toll-free; and
- accessible 24 hours a day in any South African official language

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