

POST-DEMARCATION CHALLENGES

The municipal elections on 5 December 2000 will allow us to begin to set in place a new, democratic, non-racial municipal order. These are some of the challenges:

Matching capacity and delivery needs - There are great differences between municipalities. Key strategic decisions must be taken on how to organise the existing capacity and build new capacity.

Defining and exercising functions and powers - As indicated in this publication (p 6-7), a process is underway to ensure continuity and legal certainty.

Integrated development plans - IDPs will become the defining developmental programmes for municipalities. Preliminary work plans must be finalised by early 2001. Substantial work has to be done to ensure decisions on -

- municipal priorities;
- direction and nature of municipal growth; and
- integration of developmental nodes.

Institutional transformation - The new municipalities have to -

- create an institutional structure;
- appoint senior management;
- integrate and transform the municipalities' human resources, financial operations and service delivery components; and
- ensure an effective training and development component.

Alignment of government boundaries - There must be an integrated approach to the alignment of government boundaries. National, provincial and local spheres must operate as a single unit in areas like water, electricity, sanitation and sewerage, transport and health.

Political restructuring - The question of how ward committees will work is important (empowerment through delegations). How will functions and powers be delegated? What is the strategic orientation each municipality will adopt? This includes debates on service delivery approaches.

Governance - The President's

response to traditional leaders locates their contributions specifically in the broader area of governance. The influence of traditional communities has been significantly broadened into the bases of economic and political power through the demarcation process

Communication - There are too many disparate initiatives like capacity building, donor support, provincialism, etc. A better allocation of responsibilities and more effective communication between stakeholders and role-players is required.

Conclusion

Much needs to be done to adequately address the human, financial and technical resources required in the transition (next two years) and in the transformation (next ten years). In addition, the allocations of intergovernmental grants might well need to be restructured, particularly to assist in developing capacity. At the same time, the question is: how do we match national, provincial and local governance with other resources, such as NGOs, donor support, consultants etc?

The principles, underpinning local government in the past, namely authority and control, treating African South Africans as transients, a racial-geographical order, financial segmentation and underdevelopment, advisory local government for black South Africans etc must be replaced with -

- developmental municipal governance;
- integrated service delivery within integrated development plans;
- ensuring equity and sustainability; and
- ensuring democratic representation and accountability through encouraging participation.

Let the real work begin.

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