

IN SERVICE OF THE PUBLIC: REFORMING SOUTH AFRICA'S PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



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The public service

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The GNU pledged:

1

“A professional, merit-based, non-partisan, developmental public service that puts people first.”

2

“Building state capacity and creating a professional, merit-based, corruption free and developmental public service. Restructuring and improving state owned entities to meet national development goals.”

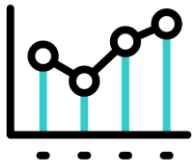
The public service

2.1 million employed in
government sector; wage bill
at 12% of GDP

“A cohesive society works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility.”

- *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development*

The challenge of social cohesion



Polling evidence shows declining trust in institutions and confidence in the future of the country.



Societal stresses driven and aggravated by economic stagnation.



The failure of governance is the key issue to be addressed.

How did we get here?



- Transition
- Institution building
- Transformation and ANC hegemony

PHASE

01



- Politicisation and capture
- Corruption
- NDP and 2014 Review

PHASE

02



- The “Capable State”
- Review of Public Service
- Stasis

PHASE

03

A diagnosis

- The public service has an extensive developmental mandate.
- There has been a failure of professionalism.
- It has become badly politicised owing to both structural and intentional factors.
- It does not have the skills base it needs for its mandate.
- Corruption and outright criminalisation are a serious problem.

**So, how can we
get back on track?**

Depoliticisation and reform

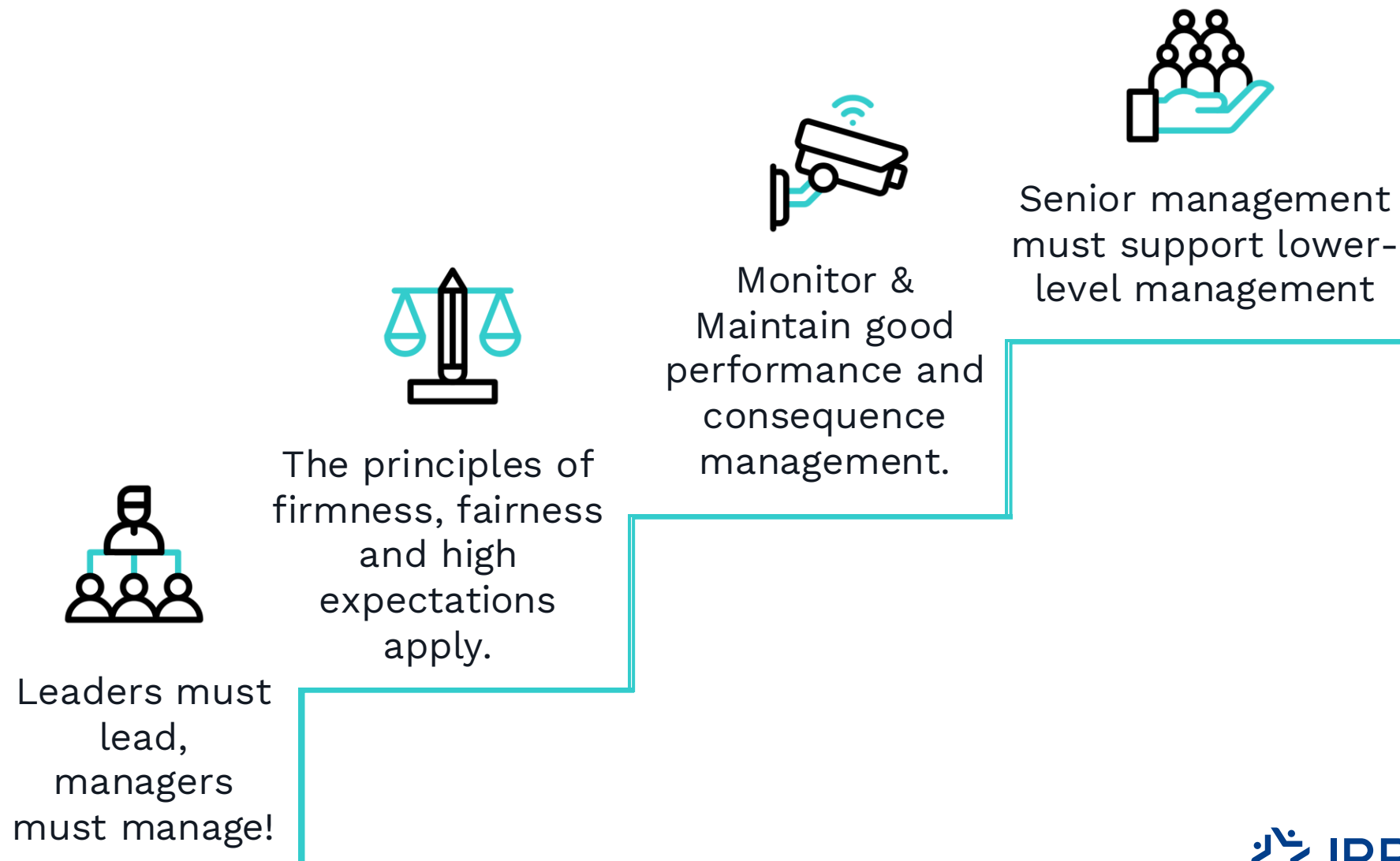
- Remove political manipulation over the public service
- Abolish cadre deployment
- Reform civil service – return PSC to controller
- This would demand a change of ideological approach from the ANC.

01

The role of the unions

- The quality of unionism is in decline.
- Perception of being overpaid and entitled.
- Unions have a vested interest in promoting professionalism.
- Appropriate communication between unions and managers is imperative, but roles must be understood.
- The privileged political relationship between COSATU affiliates and the ANC is a problem and needs to change

Good leadership and management



Organisational discipline

- Discipline must be a priority.
- Managers must be fully aware of company policies and contractual obligations.
- Human resource departments must keep accurate records and assist line management to carry out their responsibilities
- ... but they must not be expected to take on the role of management.

Recruitment

- Make the public service a career of choice through a new system of recruitment.
- Make sure recruitment systems are appropriate
- Visible meritocracy must be a requirement
- Exams for entry into and/or for progression in certain careers should be instituted
- Qualification verification and thorough background must be instituted where appropriate
- These processes can assist employees' aptitudes, career progression.

Capacitation

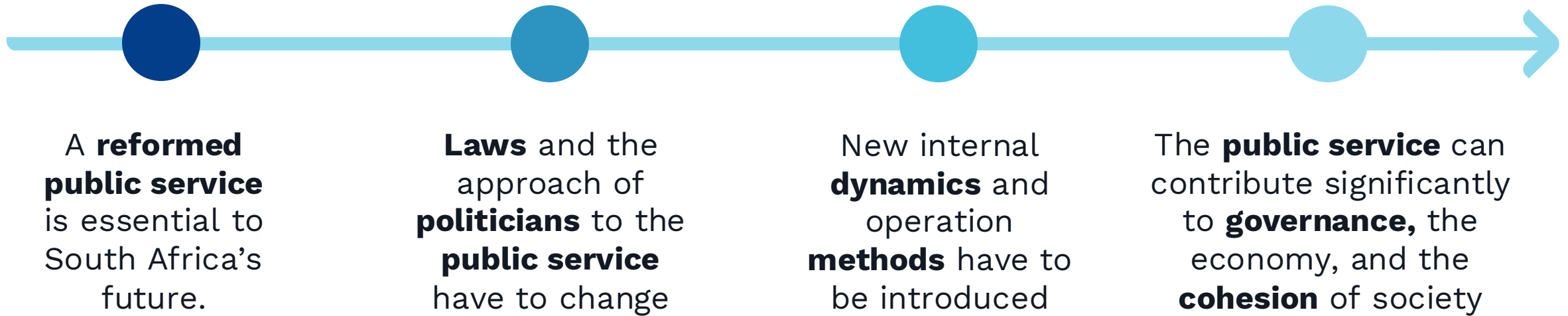
- Prioritise building a suitable skills base.
- Skills development and application result from exposure to effective practice as well as formal instruction
- Professional development programmes can be instituted and used as a metric
- Managers should be open to welcome approaches from staff with innovative ideas.

Technology

- Information technology, digitisation, and artificial intelligence can be hugely beneficial to an enterprise
- IT systems ensure that problematic employees do not re-emerge elsewhere in the state
- A well-functioning State Information Technology Agency is critical

Looking forward

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