



Governance and Corruption in South Africa's Public Sector: The Road Ahead

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Abstract

The development of any country hinges significantly on the availability of good governance and a well-functioning public sector. In the post-apartheid era, South Africa had to ensure that the public sector responded to the needs of the people through effective and efficient service delivery. However, several governance and corruption-related issues engulfed the public sector right after apartheid, severely damaging its reputation in the eyes of the general public. This paper examines the governance and corruption dilemma in South Africa's public sector. It employs a narrative literature review and conceptualizes the origin and concept of good governance to answer the underlying question of this paper. The paper found that South Africa suffers from years of corruption, which has wasted billions of taxpayers' money through irregular expenditure. The lack of transparency and accountability within the governance process in the public sector has consolidated corruption and impunity. Consequently, the implication is that the government will struggle to address the triple bottom issues of poverty, inequality, and unemployment. In the future, this will affect South Africa's quest for inclusive socioeconomic development unless urgent policy interventions are implemented to address these challenges.

Keywords: Development, Support, South Africa, Growth, Governance

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Introduction

Essential government functions such as providing welfare, security, economic development, and, most importantly, protecting the state's territorial sovereignty depend on a functioning public sector that effectively responds to the needs of society. Thus, an effective public sector is vital to the socioeconomic development of a country (Alińska et al., 2018). It consolidates authority and regulates a nation's developmental prospects through the effective allocation of resources. To ensure this becomes realizable, the public sector must be characterized by the rule of law, good governance, and adherence to democratic principles (Juiz et al., 2014). When South Africa gained multiparty politics in 1994, there was jubilation and excitement as the previously disadvantaged black majority saw this as an opportunity for them to play a central role in the country's development. This was based on the idea that a democratic South Africa run by black South Africans would comprehend the plight of the black man. While South Africa post-1994 has implemented various policies to ensure inclusive growth, the country's public sector faces multiple multifaceted challenges, making it hard to find an all-encompassing solution to address them (Nengwekhulu, 2009).

Challenges such as institutional capacity, lack of accountability, declining social values, corruption, lack of economic growth, inequality, and unemployment have all characterized South Africa's public sector (Nengwekhulu, 2009). South Africa needs to increase the effort to curtail these challenges to ensure a well-meaning public sector. Central to this is good governance and adhering to the rule of law, as the decay in the public sector hampers long-term economic growth and hinders the fight against poverty, limiting the people's welfare development (Mohammed & Farooq, 2002). This is likely to give rise to riots and protests driven by the decline in service delivery. Current arguments and debates around the public sector in South Africa dwell on the need to ensure the public sector works for the people and plays a central role in addressing past apartheid injustices. The government's ability to deliver services that respond to the needs of the people depends on the prevalence of a public sector characterized by ethics, professionalism, and integrity (Mhlauli, 2022). However, considering its challenges, South Africa's public sector struggles to support consistent economic growth and

eliminate corruption and maladministration, compounding the government's economic development initiatives. This paper examines the challenge of consolidating good governance in the South African public sector. The following query serves as its guide: What are the challenges of implementing good management in the South African public sector, and to what extent has this hindered inclusive development? A qualitative research approach was employed to answer this question, and a narrative literature review was undertaken to engage this highly politicized issue. Data was collected at an international, regional and local level. This approach was sufficient as it permitted the paper to go deeper into the current debates, arguments and discussions around understanding the South African public sector and its struggle to consolidate good governance.

This paper begins by introducing the main arguments of this paper. Then, the literature review is presented, which speaks to the conceptual framework of good governance, contextualizing governance in South Africa concerning corruption in the country's public sector and associated implications. Finally, it reflects on the findings, recommendations and conclusion.

Literature Review

Theoretical and Conceptual Background: The Concept and Elements of Good Governance

In 1992, the World Bank introduced the concept of good governance in a Governance and Development report. While the bank argued that good governance is favorable for inclusive development, it also stated that poor governance is readily recognizable, and some of its main symptoms are:

1. Failure to make a clear separation between what is public and private, hence, a tendency to divert public resources for private gain.
2. Failure to establish a predictable framework of law and government behavior conducive to development or arbitrariness in applying rules and laws.
3. Excessive rules, regulations, and licensing requirements impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent-seeking.

4. Priorities inconsistent with development, resulting in a misallocation of resources.
5. Excessively narrowly based or non-transparent decision-making. (The World Bank, 1992, p9)

The World Bank argued that for the public sector to ensure growth and consistency in public service delivery, it must consolidate essential components such as capacity, efficiency, transparency, and a legal development framework and accountability. The prevalence of these elements ensures that governments can promote the inhabitants' social and economic welfare. For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), good governance relates explicitly to the prevalence of influential political and institutional processes and outcomes, which are fundamental in achieving the goals of inclusive socio-economic development (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2007). Good governance can be seen as a process that harbours and delivers a compelling promise of human rights, socio-economic and political rights, economic and civil rights and cultural rights (Corruption Watch, 2022). However, it becomes crucial to reflect that implementing and adhering to good governance is complex. Many challenges may hinder its eventual implementation, such as violating human rights, corruption at various levels, inactive civil society, weak democratic institutions, poor participation of the disadvantaged in the decision-making process, the criminalization of politics and centralization of power and authority (Asefa & Wei-Chiao, 2015).

These challenges have primarily manifested themselves significantly in the global South, where many countries are currently going through some form of political instability. From a social perspective, good governance can enhance the participation of society in the democratic process (Mavee, 2022), ensure that their voices are heard and allow them to play a greater developmental process. Post-1994, South Africa gave many hope that it would consolidate good governance. However, the decay in the public sector has worked against the government's developmental initiatives. Issues such as a lack of public service skills and accountability mean the government cannot consolidate development and ensure collective socio-economic prosperity

(Tshishonga, 2019). For good governance to prevail, five essential elements are needed. These include effectiveness, transparency and accountability, equity and fairness, decentralization and participation in decision-making and policy, and legal and institutional framework.

A post-1994 South Africa has understood that corruption has eroded public trust in state institutions (Pillay, 2018). As a response, the country has embarked on various reforms, such as strengthening the judiciary, implementing various strategies and legislation to combat corruption (National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2020-2030, The Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004, The Criminal Procedure Act, The Promotion of Access to Information Act and The Protected Disclosures Act) increasing background checks and implementing lifestyle audits. Nonetheless, the struggle to separate politics from administrative decisions has weighed heavily on the effective functioning of the public sector (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020), undermining good governance and socioeconomic stability. There have been arguments that corruption in postapartheid South Africa has become consolidated. Friedman (2020) notes that the final years of apartheid were when corruption flourished. This was the most corrupt period in the nation's history when attempts to thwart the successful international sanctions campaign led to adopting corruption as a central government strategy shielded by secrecy. Private companies frequently worked together to accomplish this.

When majority rule was established in 1994, corruption had permeated every aspect of government operations and business relations with the government. This immediately impacted South Africa's post-1994 governance despite the efforts of Nelson Mandela and his deputy, Thabo Mbeki (Friedman, 2020). Blending the public and private domains was a distinctive aspect of the final years of apartheid, and it persisted in the newly established system in at least two ways. The first was corrupt; during the final years of apartheid, criminal networks recruited members of the new government, quickly turning adversaries into business associates. The second one involved more intricacy. Although it was widely believed that the ANC would take power soon, its top officials lacked the resources to lead the lives expected by people of standing (Friedman, 2020).

Companies intervened to help with cars, houses, and private schools for good and bad reasons. Businesses only knew political activists with whom to negotiate when they realized they would need black business partners. They, therefore, made the shares and board positions available to them, which were necessary for businesses to adjust to the new political climate. Thus, the seeds of corruption after 1994 were firmly ingrained in the nation's history. However, the crime that has occurred since then is also a sign of another way that the past was incorporated into the intended new society (Friedman, 2020). Before 1994, the state's ruling class utilized it to guarantee their hold on the economy. This was further supported by Kota (2021), who narrated that South Africa's systemic corruption needs to be understood in the context of its past. Indeed, the actions of postapartheid political elites are not the only instances of corruption. It was carried over from the apartheid era. By 1994, the nation had adopted an entitlement mentality, and the South African government was mired in its bureaucracy. Most homeland administrators worked at the provincial level, where there would be a robust entitlement culture. As a result, the system was ingrained with the entitlement mentality of the political elite and the bloated civil services, which persisted even after apartheid ended. Most of the aspiring black bourgeoisie lacked access to capital because of decades of socioeconomic oppression (Kota, 2021). The ANC made the creation of a black capitalist class its top priority to deracinate industrial capital. Those driven to act corruptly by greed and entered the public or private sectors after 1994 were likely to welcome collaborating with influential, frequently well-connected individuals who had avoided prosecution for comparable actions during the apartheid era. In South Africa, black people can become wealthy through political connections and allegiance to the ruling party (Kota, 2021). Gaining promotion within the party does not come from hard work, dedication, or aptitude; instead, it comes from covering up or participating in unethical behaviour and putting the party's interests ahead of your own. This is especially clear at the municipal level, where factionalism is pervasive and encourages the abuse of power by obstructing access to and the provision of resources and services. Appointing officials is not based on competence or merit (Kota, 2021).

Perspectives of Good Governance in Globalized Era

Ever since the demise of the First and Second World Wars, the decolonization, the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union, there have been increasing debates and arguments on bringing stability to the international system through consolidating good governance (Botchway, 2000). This was driven by the observation that these events changed the global security architecture, giving rise to instability and governance uncertainty (Weiss, 2000). The world remains challenged as some states still restrict people from playing a role in the developmental process. In Latin America, governance-related challenges stem from the inability of countries to elevate persistent problems such as poverty, inequality and unemployment (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2020). According to the Gallup World Poll, trust levels in governments in LAC reached 33.9% in 2018, 4.4% lower than in 2007 and below the OECD average of 45%. The COVID-19 pandemic further revealed the polarization of the governance structure in the region, where unity and social cohesion between the state and the people were mainly missing. BTI Transformation Index (2019) argues that long-standing resentment over severe social disparities culminated in massive waves of protest – some of which turned violent – against governments and political elites, particularly those in Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Panama. The leadership in these countries had held on to established models of economic and social order for (too) long and proved less and less able to deliver on the promise of prosperity. In Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, polarization is mixed with a populist-driven effort to dismantle democracy. One of the biggest problems in the region has been the institutional weakness in several dimensions of public governance, which explains the vulnerability of many countries in the region (BTI Transformation Index 2019). Despite many countries in the region adopting democracy as a form of government, the lack of adequate job creation, poor economic recovery, inequality and poverty and weak administrative capacity means consolidating good governance will continue to be elusive.

In Asia, Hass & Lindsey (2021) reflects that Asia's relationship with democratic governance is complicated. In recent years, however, democratic backsliding has shifted the political tides in the

opposite direction, leading to a resurgence of liberalism and, in some cases, rising authoritarianism. The IMF noted that although Asia and the Pacific remained the fastest-growing region globally, Asian countries had increased wealth, and inequality has become an increasingly profound problem (Asian Development Bank, 2019). According to the Asian Development Bank, regional inequality increased by 42% over the past two decades, growing at a rate that exceeds other developing regions such as Africa and Latin America. Corruption is one of the most prevalent factors affecting good governance in Asia (Hass & Lindsey, 2021). Corruption remains a serious concern in multiple countries, leading to government turnovers and the high-profile arrests of political leaders in Malaysia and South Korea. Corruption undermines good governance, and bad governance produces corruption. Corruption and governance issues have become a severe concern in Southeast Asia countries. Conditions of such massive corruption in some countries in ASEAN make the issue of corruption in the region always wrapped around the development process.

In Europe, good governance is built on elections, human rights and assistance for civil society (Nuh & Sriboonnark, 2016). While Europe has been praised for its sound governance system, there has been great concern about the good governance structure in Eastern Europe. The Economist (2021) reflects that corruption, autocracy, and overbearing government were the perils many hoped Eastern Europe was escaping when its fledgling democracies joined the European Union in the early 2000s. Instead, the rest of Europe worries that the eastern members have simply smuggled these vices into the EU. To reinforce this reflection, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) paints a bleak picture of anti-corruption efforts in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Many democratic institutions and norms across the region are threatened – often by authoritarian rule. Governments throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia fail to preserve the checks and balances foundational to democracy and instrumental in controlling corruption (Transparency International, 2019.) Undoubtedly, corruption thrives where weak democratic practices exist. Combined with a lack of political will to combat corruption in the public sector, countries across the region are undermining their citizens' political rights and good governance.

However, whenever one looks at a region that is challenged in governance, Africa is always used as an example. While one cannot ignore the governance issues in Africa, one also cannot ignore the continent's colonial past and how it has given rise to Africa's current governance problems (Mlambo et al., 2023). This paper reflects that when colonialism ended in Africa, the post-colonial leader who inherited the state had no developmental agenda to unite the ethnic compositions that make up Africa (Dadja-Tiou, 2018). Instead, what we have seen is reminiscent of colonialism, where oppression and violence have characterized the modern African state (Jones & Manda, 2006). Corruption, nepotism, human rights violations, lack of accountability and transparency and never-ending conflicts have removed the need to consolidate good governance. About 30 million more Africans fell into extreme poverty (living on less than US\$1.90 a day) when COVID-19 broke out in 2020. Before the pandemic struck, over 445 million people – equivalent to 34% of Africa's population – lived below the poverty line (Akins & Mclachlan, 2022). The inability to address poverty, inequality and unemployment limits people's role in good governance and development. At the same time, the African Union Agenda 2063 development seeks to transform Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. Mugabi (2022), the 2020 Ibrahim Index on African Governance (IIAG), has named Mauritius, Cape Verde, Seychelles, Tunisia, and Botswana as the 2019 top-scoring countries, painting a bleak picture of governance in Africa. The CGF Research Institute (2015) argues that laws cannot be justly applied and security upheld without good governance. Africa faces high risks of internal insecurity, which can quickly develop into humanitarian crises in the absence of security and the rule of law, hence the need for Africa to improve its governance approach.

The Problem of Corruption in South Africa's Public Sector

Corruption has been a persistent problem for South Africa since the end of apartheid. Although the country has made significant strides in eradicating systemic racial discrimination, corruption remains a major obstacle to good governance and development. Thusi and Selepe (2023) reported that corruption in South Africa had been widely discussed due to its high prevalence concerning and divesting effects. It is particularly concerning as it can potentially

undermine the country's progress and development. Despite various measures taken to curb it, corruption continues to be prevalent across various sectors of the country (Corruption Watch, 2014). One of the primary reasons for corruption in South Africa is the lack of transparency and accountability in government institutions and public offices. One may argue that this creates an environment where corrupt practices can easily thrive, and politicians and public officials misuse their power for personal gain (Maropo, 2018). Corruption also exacerbates poverty and inequality, diverting public funds from much-needed social and economic development initiatives. Another factor contributing to widespread corruption in South Africa is the lack of political will to tackle the issue. Thusi et al. (2023) state that numerous reports of high-ranking government officials have been involved in corruption activities, but little action has been taken against them. This reinforces the perception that those in power are above the law and can act with impunity.

Breakfast and Nomarwayi (2020) reported that South Africa faced immense challenges, and the new government was tasked with creating a democratic society that was inclusive, just, and prosperous for all. However, corruption has, to a great extent, impeded this objective. A lack of institutional accountability, weak governance structures, and a culture of impunity for those in power all contributed to the proliferation of corrupt practices (Breakfast et al., 2020). The public sector is the part of the economy comprising all governmental levels and businesses under government control. Households, nonprofits, and private businesses are not included. The exercise of public authority or the execution of public policy are examples of activities that fall under the broad definition of the public sector, which goes beyond simple government functions to include ownership or control (Wegrich, 2023). The inner circle of the public sector is defined by the core public service provided by central and subnational government agencies when represented as concentric circles. In this case, the public sector can be easily distinguished from the private sector based on employment relationships and the ability to exercise public power. The term "public sector" is also employed for analytical purposes, mainly to contrast it with the private and third, or voluntary, sectors (Wegrich, 2023). This makes it possible to map the extent of government

activity within the larger economy and to compare it over time and space. Moreover, it draws attention to unique trends and protocols used in the public sector.

Mlambo (2019) asserts that one of the most high-profile examples of corruption in post-apartheid South Africa is the case of former State President Jacob Zuma. During his tenure, allegations of corruption and patronage networks proliferated, and he faced numerous scandals and investigations. In 2018, he was finally forced to resign as president over allegations of corruption related to government contracts awarded to his friends and family (Mlambo, 2019). Corruption is an issue that has plagued societies throughout history, and South Africa's post-apartheid era is no exception. Despite significant strides towards democracy, equality, and justice in the country following the end of apartheid, corruption remains a formidable challenge (Mathiba, 2021). This paper will delve into the causes of corruption in the post-apartheid era and explore the factors contributing to this pervasive problem.

Corruption is one of the pressing issues in contemporary society. It refers to the abuse of power or position for personal gain or advantage, particularly the misuse of public office or resources. Corruption has negative consequences on society and the economy, and it can lead to a decrease in public trust, inefficiency in governance, and social inequalities (Myint, 2000). The World Bank defines corruption as abusing entrusted power for private gain. It is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that takes many forms, including bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and extortion (Mlambo, 2019). According to Mlambo et al. (2023), corruption may occur through dishonest practices such as fraudulent accounting or tax evasion. It undermines the rule of law, the legitimacy of democratic institutions and processes, and the public's trust in government. One may argue that corruption is people who abuse their authority can be either individuals or members of groups, such as corporations or government (Mistree & Dibley, 2018).

Mlambo (2019) state that corruption can be defined in various ways. Petty corruption happens when public officials interact with the public during the implementation phase of public services, such as offering bribes in exchange for a favour, a present, or money to receive a service or perhaps to avoid being fined or punished. State

capture is a new term of corruption in South Africa that emerged when former president Jacob Zuma was in office (Martin & Solomon, 2016). State capture became popular because President Jacob Zuma was close to the Guptas brothers, who allegedly captured state-owned enterprises such as Eskom, Transnet, and South African Airways. During this period, there was a lack of integrity and accountability as there was the perception that the brothers were seen as the president's close associates and, hence, could get whatever they wanted. As a result, the Guptas wielded significant influence over Jacob Zuma as they set about looting billions from state enterprises before fleeing South Africa. This was the tip of the iceberg for the country's public sector. Buthelezi (2021) communicated that South Africa lost R1.5 trillion through corruption between 2014 and 2019, further complicating the need for collective development. The delivery of public services like healthcare, education, and law enforcement is hampered by inefficient institutions. When public servants fail to fulfil their expected role as bureaucrats providing services, individuals may attempt to access these services through alternative means. While this is not always the case, citizens in some nations need to pay a bribe to use public services. It is also essential for the media to promote good governance and shape opinions about the standard of governance at the local, national, and international levels.

Impact Of Corruption on Service Delivery in South Africa

To understand the roots of corruption in post-apartheid South Africa, one must consider the historical context in which it emerged. Decades of apartheid rule perpetuated socioeconomic disparities, systemic racism, and inequality (Ndlazi, 2022). Consequently, the end of apartheid in 1994 brought newfound hope and optimism and created a vacuum of power and opportunity for corruption to take hold (Friedman, 2020). Due to the detrimental economic impact on citizens, this has resulted in protests in the country at various times. BBC News (2020) reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, corruption became another pandemic, as evidenced by the misuse of relief money to buy Personal protective equipment (PPE). Reuters (2022) noted that South Africa flagged COVID-19 contracts worth around 2.1 billion rand (\$137.12 million) for possible corruption and fraud. Theft, over-pricing and potential fraud are just but a few

scandals relating to the COVID-19 funds. Some of the alleged corruption was grand and complex, involving front companies moving millions of dollars through a web of bank accounts. This showed that even during a crisis, corruption prevails at the expense of unity.

Mamokhere, Musitha and Netshidzivhani (2021) posit that protests against poor service delivery in South Africa constantly occur where most citizens are not happy with the services they receive. In 2018 and 2019, protests totaled 237 and 218, respectively. The South African Police Service (SAPS) was present at 2,455 protests from July to September last year, according to their quarterly crime statistics released in November (Masson, 2023). South Africa is seen as a country where politicians misuse funds needed to implement service delivery. For example, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, former health Minister Zweli Mkhize was implicated in a corruption allegation where a multimillion-dollar communications contract was irregularly awarded to associates of the former health minister (Khumalo, 2022). Another case was that of Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy Gwede Mantashe, who was fingered in corrupt allegations after he benefitted from Bosasa's corrupt modus operandi. The company had installed CCTV cameras at his homes in Boksburg, east of Johannesburg and Cala in the Eastern Cape (Polity, 2022). Politicians' apparent abuse of power for personal gain has discredited the public sector. In the local government sector, corruption has halted service. My Broadband (2021) contended that over the last decade, R186 billion disappeared from the accounts of South African municipalities because of irregular expenditure. Of the 257 municipalities in South Africa, only 27 received clean audits.

Additionally, the government has lost an estimated R12 billion due to suspected fraud and non-compliance with legislation (Fengu, 2022). The above reflects that South Africa is facing a problem where corruption has infiltrated every sphere of government, which has become a thorny issue for the ANC-led government. As measures to address corruption, voters increasingly shift their voting support to other political parties that they think can offer a better solution to the problem. Masuku and Jili (2019) contend that corruption continues

to be a significant challenge in many countries, affecting various sectors and hindering development.

Promoting Good Governance from A Good Governance Perspective: Challenges and Prospects

In 2020, an estimated 101,712 employees participated in 117 strikes and lockouts, with 783,945 working days lost. In contrast, 157 strike incidents were recorded in 2019, with approximately 14,092 employees involved in strikes and 20,792,189 working days lost (Department of Employment and Labour, 2020). Even though 1994 was a year of change for the country, The ANC-led government inherited a very divided country, with the black majority lingering in poverty and inequality. These issues have been the most pressing in terms of forging inclusive development and consolidating good governance. We know that the public sector in South Africa is primarily informed by the country's politics, often removing the blurred lines distinguishing administrative and political decisions. Another challenge to good governance in South Africa is the lack of professionalization in the public sector (Mlambo et al., 2022), which limits the extent to which ethics and adherence to the rule of law can be applied. South Africa recorded more than 900 service delivery protests in 6 months, from August to January 2021 (Martin, 2021). This reflects a decaying public sector plagued by governance-related issues. Many factors give rise to this. However, at the core has been public sector corruption, decay in the local government sector and the detachment of leaders from the needs of the people. The South African government, for its part, recognizes that to ensure an effective public sector that responds to the needs of the people, there is an urgent need for the consolidation of legislation that deters possible corruption and prosecutes those who partake in activities that undermine public sector efficiency and good governance. The government acknowledges that corruption is one of the most significant impediments to the country's growth and development (Isilow, 2021). While there was a need for the country to consolidate growth and governance, the political uncertainty and breakdown in governance in the public sector posed a considerable threat to this urgent need. South Africa's governance-related issues were laid bare at the Zondo Commission, which investigated corruption at state-owned enterprises and, more broadly, the public sector. The

commission revealed how billions of public funds (estimated R500 billion) were stolen by corrupt individuals and companies (in cohort with corrupt politicians) rendering services to state-owned enterprises (Kohn, 2023). South Africa's state-owned enterprises have been dependent on the government through bailouts because of corruption and maladministration, further compounding the consolidation of good governance in the public sector. The lack of adherence to public procurement policies speaks to the need to urgently professionalize the public sector to ensure that those who operate in the sector are professional, adhere to ethics and are characterized by integrity, enabling them to perform their duties diligently. A well-functioning public sector is vital in the state's quest to address one of the most significant issues affecting South Africa: poverty. It is reported that 18.2 million people in South Africa live in extreme poverty (Galal, 2022). At the same time, in the final quarter, 32.7% of South Africans were unemployed (Mukherjee, 2022). This reflects a decline in the ability of the public sector to attract investment, eradicate

corruption and implement policies that address the current socioeconomic dynamics. It reflects the failure to implement sound policy to safeguard the abuse of power, thus impeding good governance. South Africa's quest for inclusive development hinges on its ability to professionalize the public sector, ensure accountability and transparency and implement a policy that reflects current socioeconomic issues.

Were To from Now?

The fundamental question today, considering the status of governance decay and the consolidation of corruption in South Africa's public sector, is what the road ahead holds. There is no denying that South Africa has been challenged from various fronts in the post-apartheid era, which warrants a robust policy response and interventions. Nevertheless, rather than seeing effective policy being implemented to address these issues, which have become a barrier to economic development, they have become consolidated, and those who partake in them often do so with impunity. The lack of corrective action to address these challenges has discredited the public sector. The poverty, inequality, and unemployment levels in South Africa warrant a well-functioning public sector to help the

government address these socio-economic challenges. However, with politicians consistently implicated in corruption-related scandals, it becomes difficult for ordinary citizens to trust the public sector to improve their socio-economic conditions. For South Africa, consolidating the rule of law, everyone being equal before the law and ensuring that politicians are held accountable when power is abused are vital elements that need to be consolidated in the public sector and reflected through action where those who abuse power are held accountable. Since the 2008 global financial crisis, South Africa's economy has struggled to maintain consistent economic growth. This warrants the need for effective policy to grow the economy. This is vital to lift millions of people out of poverty and inequality. The South African public sector should, as the injustices caused by apartheid affirm a more inclusive economy where the previously disadvantaged play a more meaningful role in the country's economy. However, for this to happen, there is a need for a policy that speaks to the needs of the people, respects the rule of law and puts in place measures to address governance decay and corruption in the public sector. Employing skilled personnel who are knowledgeable is also vital to ensure growth and development in the public sector.

One cannot help but observe that the public sector in South Africa is confronted with numerous issues. Addressing these issues warrants multiple stakeholder collaboration, coordination, and cooperation. Moreover, legislation must speak to governance and corruption, where those on the wrong side of the law must be held accountable. This will send a message about the country's seriousness in dealing with governance decay and corruption in the public sector. Clearly defining goals for each newly appointed minister and executive council member would aid in combating corruption. In addition, it strengthens the oversight function of the nine provincial legislatures and Parliament, implements a good governance program that emphasizes improving integrity, transparency, and accountability, and locates the best talent in the public and private sectors to fill important senior management positions. This could be achieved by ensuring that the accountability requirements outlined in the various laws are followed, ensuring that information technology is used effectively to support good

governance, and fostering an atmosphere that encourages more positive community involvement in the provision of public services.

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