

DEMOCRATIZATION OF STATE INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES: A CRITICAL INGREDIENT FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

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Summary

This inaugural lecture is entitled “Democratization of state institutions and processes: A critical ingredient for Good Governance” and it is presented from a South African perspective. The democratic values which are enshrined in the country’s constitution play a tremendous role on the manner in which public administration operates as well as social cohesion. State institutions are also bound by this reality.

According to the World Bank the eight major characteristics of good governance are participation, rule of law, consensus, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, transparency and responsiveness (www.unescap.org/pdd). Good governance is key towards promotion of effectiveness and efficiency in both public and private sector institutions. It contributes significantly towards the promotion of professionalism and elimination of corruption.

If state institutions are to be democratized, their recruitment, selection and placement practices should be consistent with democratic norms.

Public participation is an essential ingredient for good governance in any democratic country. It is a broad and relative concept which includes various forms of participation. Examples of which include citizen and community participation. Public participation democratizes the making and implementation of policies and it facilitates the exchange and flow of information between the government and members of the public by, among others, promoting responsiveness to public needs, enhancing government’s accountability, facilitating the processes of policy implementation and community development.

In a democracy there is freedom of expression through which people can contribute towards government’s agenda in various ways which include constructive criticism.

Democracy is a process in which people should exercise their rights including demanding accountability and responsiveness of government to public needs and demands. A scenario which, in some instances, leads to public protests.

South Africa’s democracy is also intended to enhance the status of women and eradicate gender inequalities. Although there are notable milestones in this regard, much more needs to be done.