

Mees sal Volksblad 28-06

HSRC RESEARCH OUTPUTS in '08 glo in 4690 stede-woon

Blyk uit VN-verslag

■ FANIP VAN ROOYEN

LESOTHO - Meer as die helfte van die werksidse bevolking van sowat 5,5 miljoen mensure sal tuis wees in stedelike gebiede woor.

Die blyk uit die Verenigde Nasies-verslag oor die stand van die werksidse bevolking vir 2007, wat glo in wêreldwye bekendheid is.

Die "Zand-Dring" opgetreke hof van die departement van wêreldwye ontwikkeling het in Pretoria gesê dit is vir Suid-Afrika van die grootste belang om hulle te versorg, want te land op die potensiaal van die pols van verskuldiging te oortreem. "Suid-Afrika is een van die lande in Afrika wat die meeste verskuldiging het. Sowat 80% van die land se binnelandse bruto produk is in stedelike gebiede.

"Die verskuldiging is voortdurend op sy eie die wêreld se ekonomiese op die vasthoud.

"Dit is baie belangrik dat verskuldiging in Suid-Afrika nie oorkomende groei sal aanneem, eerder as om dit te verhoed", het Bronger gesê.

Die verskuldiging in verskeie lande wat aangehoort in Suid-Afrikaanse stede verskriklik is, is volgens hulle een van die land se grootste uitdagings.

"Suid-Afrikaanse stede is te lank hier van die ontwikkeling van verskuldiging. Dit is hoekom in sommige gemeenskappe en townships nader aan buite-wêreldse stede die ontwikkeling omdraai en verskriklik is, hulle is seer.

Om die uitdagings aan te pak sal hulle voegens daarvan belangrik moet word op die ontwikkeling van die wêreld van stede, maar ook op die ontwikkeling van landelike gebiede.

Die ontwikkelings van die wêreldwye stede onder die land se armes is volgens hulle nie gebaseer op die ontwikkeling van stede nie.

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GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE/Vinodhan Naidoo

BUSINESS DAY 16-07

Through provinces of perplexity



THE future of SA's provincial governments is attracting increasing attention and is likely to come under more scrutiny in the months to come. In recent addresses to the National Council of Provinces, senior ministers suggested that the number of government structures created under the country's current intergovernmental system may be hampering effective public service delivery.

The governing African National Congress (ANC) has even placed the future of the provincial level of government on the agenda of its upcoming national conference in December, tabling a number of options for provincial government reform in a position paper entitled Legislature and Governance.

In some respects, the issue risks being viewed as "relatively simple" — as a member of the opposition Democratic Alliance party was recently quoted as saying — but not necessarily for exclusively political reasons, linked to an attempt by the ANC to increase and consolidate national executive authority over sub-national levels of government.

The issue is more complex, than that, and must take into consideration what the provinces have been seen to be effectively delivering on the core social functions that the constitution handed to them in 1996, in areas such as education, health, and social welfare. With this perspective in mind, what might some of the options for reforming the provincial level of government entail?

The first option could be described as enforcing the relatively loose constitutional principle of "co-operative government" between national, provincial and local spheres of government, where the national government assumes more direct responsibility and accountability for the execution of functions, particularly those that are currently defined as concurrent (those shared between national and provincial government). This could result in a streamlining of the policy and public financing processes that could, theoretically, facilitate service provision. The next step would see a reduction in the discretion and authority of provincial gov-

system. Implicit in their comments was a concern about whether the national sphere of government could exercise effective monitoring and oversight over the provincial sphere — functions the constitution obliges it to perform.

There is a certain pragmatism behind this fourth option, where evidence in the provinces of senior management capacity shortages; poor audit results, especially around personnel expenditure; expenditure volatility; financial governance, and the time and resources required to maintain a complex system of inter-governmental co-ordination, reporting, and monitoring have reasonably led some to rethink the shape of the current system where reducing the number of provincial governing structures, and so provinces, could potentially minimise such problems and/or reduce complexity.

It could also be argued that a strategic reduction in the number of provinces might yield efficiencies (such as economies of scale) in service provision. In the second instance, though, a reduction in the number of provinces would most certainly have political implications for regional party representation, and in this regard, might also yield "pragmatic" political gains for parties with broad national representation, such as the ANC.

Finally, although a federal system has been raised as another option for the provinces — which would increase their legislative and executive authority — it is likely that this option will be resisted in the short to medium term by the governing party on the grounds that it offers less of an assurance that the extent of poverty and associated regional disparities in the country can be responded to in a consistent manner. It would, however, also be in the governing party's interest to oppose such a move on political grounds, where doing so would act to preserve national executive authority over the provinces in view of strong opposition support in some regional areas.

■ Naidoo is a chief researcher in the Democracy and Governance research programme at the Human Sciences Research Council.

government can, in addition to their current roles, cope with the significant responsibility of administering and overseeing the large social services sectors (education, health, and social welfare), which presently account for three-quarters of provincial budgets? This then puts options one and two back on the table.

A fourth option, also introduced by the ANC, is what it has termed a "hybrid" model, where the three spheres would be retained but with fewer provinces. This seems to correspond with the tone of recent comments made by the finance and defence ministers. Both ministers appeared to express a general concern about whether the country's administrative corps could effectively manage the number of governing structures created under the current

such as district and metropolitan governments in service provision, and facilitating the deployment of skilled administrators to subnational levels experiencing difficulties.

A third option mooted by the ANC is to remove the provincial level of government altogether. It's not clear, however, whether such a move would eliminate all administration in the remaining national and local spheres, where provinces might be confined to co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of services that might then get shifted to the local sphere. An important question that arises from this, however, is: given their respective and more clearly delineated roles in policy formulation and regulation, administrative corps could effectively manage the number of governing structures created under the current

feasible that national and/or local

omnibus, which would eventually revert to administrative tiers, taking directives from national government.

A second option, suggested by the ANC, would be to retain the current system and continue to ensure that public service delivery is progressively and consistently improved across the provinces. The argument is that the structures, mechanisms and remedies stipulated in the constitution for this purpose have perhaps not been fully explored or utilised.

Suggestions for improving the oversight role of provincial legislatures over their executive bodies, strengthening the national government's own ability to monitor and support provincial governments, increasing the role of sub-provincial structures