

SECURITY

Public servants won't lose jobs during department changes

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PUBLIC servants will be protected from possible job losses during the reconfiguration of government departments announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa earlier this year.

The government has assured trade unions representing public servants that their members are guaranteed job security during the process.

"Employee security is a priority, in terms of which parties agree that no employee shall lose his/her employment or be negatively affected as a result of the transfer," states the agreement sealed at the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) by the government and five public sector unions on Friday.

The agreement will also apply to premiers who have also reconfigured their administrations.

Cosatu affiliates Nehawu, Popcru, Denosa and Sadtu, along with Naptosa, are signatories to the agreement.

Teachers' union Naptosa executive director Basil Manuel told Independ-

ent Media yesterday that the reconfiguration was a fait accompli like the transfers as some of the affected departments no longer exist as Ramaphosa had reduced them.

According to Manuel, all the unions were doing now was to ensure that the mechanics of the process work seamlessly.

The PSCBC will hold a workshop with all the affected departments and unions next week.

In terms of the agreement, the state has undertaken not to force employees to take voluntary severance packages as the reconfiguration announced by Ramaphosa after the May elections is based on a non-retrenchment guarantee.

It also undertakes that consultation during the process should be in the spirit of goodwill between the relinquishing and recipient departments as well as staff and their representatives.

"Fairness and transparency in terms of the decision-making process as well as implementation should underpin the process," the parties to the PSCBC agreed.



Basil Manuel

The agreement also shows that no fewer than 10 national government departments will be taking over certain functions of others and will not necessarily merge.

The Department of Basic Education will take over the early childhood development function from the Department of Social Development as Ramaphosa announced during his State of the Nation Address in February.

Ramaphosa's office will take over the socio-economic assessment functions from Department of Planning,

Monitoring and Evaluation and create policy and research services capacity in the Presidency.

The Government Communication and Information System will move from Communications Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams to Minister in the Presidency Jackson Mthembu while their Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities counterpart Maite Nkoana-Mashabane will now be responsible for the people with disabilities functions and the National Youth Development Agency.

Other changes include the transfer of the infrastructure development management system from the National Treasury to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, which will also be responsible for the Presidential Infrastructure Co-ordinating Committee from the Department of Economic Development.

The transfer process will only apply to funded posts, which will be ring-fenced, and public servants have been warned that there will not be automatic upgrades to higher level positions.