



JEFF RADEBE

WHENEVER a new policy proposal is announced by the government, the media, analysts and think tanks are quick to remark about whether or not it is in line with the National Development Plan (NDP).

When a proposal is found wanting, the ministry sponsoring such a policy is called to account by the media and other formations in our country. And, lately, government has been criticised and said to have abandoned the NDP.

This is a myth based on ignorance of government processes and misinformation about what government is actually doing. It is important to debunk this myth.

For a start the NDP has become the centrepiece of government processes. Even parliament now benchmarks proposed legislation against it. The NDP is increasingly serving as the standard against which decision-making is evaluated.

Not only legislation, but all plans and programmes of government must conform to the NDP's aims. When the current administration came into office following the May 2014 elections, it based its five-year plan entirely on the NDP.

Plans of the provincial governments have also been revised to reflect NDP goals. The nine-point plan announced by President Jacob Zuma is a vehicle designed to accelerate delivery on commitments contained in the NDP.

Existing programmes are reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis to determine the extent to which they contribute towards the goals of the NDP.

The NDP has impacted positively on the functioning of our government and has enhanced accountability. As ministers we are grouped according to the responsibilities attached to our portfolios to ensure that we work closely together and avoid silos.

President Zuma has entered into performance agreements with each of us, which set out what is expected of us and in this way he holds us accountable. We submit progress reports to cabinet on a quarterly basis where our performance is scrutinised.

Are there tangible examples of how the NDP is being implemented? Yes there are.

The NDP has given impetus to a number of transformative programmes such as the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Programme that has become among the largest in the world and has unlocked R193-billion of private



UPGRADE: The National Development Plan has singled out SA's rail fleet renewal and significant investment has gone into modernising our passenger rail systems, despite the controversy currently playing out at Prasa, says the writer

PHOTO: SHEN SCOTT

Zuma set standards for cabinet ministers

DEVELOPMENT PLAN IS A YARDSTICK

sector investment in 92 energy generation projects. Put together, all the approved renewable energy projects are equivalent to the combined electricity output of two Eskom power stations. We are making progress in generating clean energy.

The NDP has helped focus attention on public transport infrastructure and it specifically singled out "the renewal of the commuter rail fleet, supported by enhanced links with road-based services". Significant investment has gone into modernising our passenger rail systems, despite the controversy currently playing out at the Pas-

senger Rail Agency of SA (Prasa). When this fleet renewal is complete, South Africans will travel in modern, clean and safer trains. SA will become a manufacturing hub for locomotives for the rest of the continent in line with the decision of the African Union earlier this year.

Road-based public transport in our cities is also changing for the better. A number of cities have rolled out bus rapid transit systems. These include the Rea Vaya in Johannesburg, MyCiti in Cape Town, A Re Yeng in Tshwane and Yarona in Rustenburg. Infrastruc-

ture construction in other cities has commenced.

The NDP has also been successful in highlighting the potential of partnerships between the government and the rest of society.

For instance, the NDP identified that the challenges in our education can only be addressed through broad partnerships. And so we established the National Education Collaboration Trust, a partnership between the government, business, unions and civil society organisations.

The adoption of Operation Phakisa methodology to bring stake-

holders together to work through difficult problems and find solutions was intended to help fast-track implementation of the NDP.

This methodology works because it aligns interests, shortens decision-making processes and improves accountability. Operation Phakisa is at implementation phase in the health sector and oceans economy and is at planning stage in the mining sector.

The building blocks for accelerated implementation of the NDP are in place and what we need is to remain focused over the long term and not allow short-term challenges the media, analysts and think-tanks tend to harp on to distract us from reaching our goals.

■ Radebe is minister in the Presidency