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New unit will boost the private sector's role

Robyn Chalmers

PRIVATE sector participation in service provision is expected to increase rapidly with the establishment of a new public-private partnerships unit and a big real increase in budgeted privatisation receipts.

Finance Minister Trevor Manuel also announced that a total of R6,9bn had flowed into the exchequer from the sale of state assets. A large portion of these funds came from the SA Special Risks Insurance Association which was converted to a public company with reduced reserves.

Manuel said privatisation proceeds were expected to contribute R5bn to debt reduction in the current year, which could increase to R10bn in 2002/03.

Government officials said a large portion of the proceeds was expected to come from the upcoming listing of shares in Telkom and SA Airways, probably on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

The budget review said that a 20% initial public offer of Telkom shares would be made by 2001.

Officials said the new public-private partnerships unit had been under discussion for some time. It would help to co-ordinate the roll out of infrastructure by departments such as public works and defence as well as the National Roads Agency.

The budget review said current public-private partnership transactions include two new prison contracts, the reconstruction of the N4 road linking Gauteng and Maputo, and the further development of the N3 between Heidelberg and Cedara.

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