



**MINISTRY
PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AND
ADMINISTRATION, HONORABLE MR. SENZO MCHUNU**

**ON THE OCCASSION OF THE 20TH PUBLIC SERVICE TRAINERS'
FORUM CONFERENCE GALLAGHER CONFERENCE CENTRE,
MIDRAND**

07 OCTOBER 2019

Programme Director

Deputy Minister for the Public Service and Administration, Ms Sindisiwe
Chikunga

The Acting Principal of the National School of Government, Ms Phindile
Mkhwanazi,

DGs, HoDs and CEOs present

The Public Sector Trainers' Forum Advisory Committee

Senior officials of the national and provincial government

Heads of other public service training institutions

Vice Chancellors present

Members of the Academic Fraternity

Our International guests

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocol observed

It is a great privilege for me today to address this 20th Public Sector Trainers Forum (PSTF) conference whose theme is “Enabling Vision 2030 through HRD: Training and Development for Socio Economic Impact”.

It also provides me with a sense of honour to share a few thoughts with Human Resource Development managers and practitioners throughout the breadth of SA about the wide-ranging issues that span the HRD function, with the focused attention on capacity development to support the state developmental agenda, the role of public sector trainers including the role envisioned for the National School of Government in collaboration with its provincial counter parts.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year we ushered in the sixth democratically elected administration to take forward the aspirations and expectations of the people of South Africa. We are always guided by the Constitution and, Chapter 10 in particular, which articulates basic values and principles

governing public administration. The values and principles are a mix of compliance, learning and developmental aspirations. There is an expectation that the Public Service should meet people's needs without fail.

Last month we launched an Integrated Government Programme under the auspices of the 2019 Public Service Month under the theme: *'Khawuleza, Taking Public Service to the People. Batho Pele: We Belong, We Care, We Serve.'* The theme of the launch was based on aspirations of the 6th Administration as pronounced by His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa during his State of the Nation Address.

During the launch, **we emphasised the importance of public servants acquainting themselves with the governance systems and practices that guide their conscience for optimal performances of their responsibilities. We also pointed out to the public servants that there are huge expectations from our citizens and communities for public servants to deliver the much-needed public services.**

Training public servants to champion service delivery

Viewed against this backdrop, this conference theme compels all of us to reflect on the extent to which our training and development initiatives in the Public Service space impact on service delivery. We are called upon to focus our attention to what is expected of the Public Service by the South Africans we serve on a daily basis. We are reminded that our training interventions

should have a meaningful socio-economic impact. Each and every one of the citizens we serve has a legitimate expectation to receive quality services. However, these expectations would not be met if the Public Service is not positioned and attuned to the notion of service.

Priorities of the Sixth Administration

As you know, **the 6th Administration has set seven priorities, which are Economic Transformation; Education, Skills and Health; Consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality basic services; Spatial integration, human settlements and local government; Social cohesion and safe communities; A capable, ethical and developmental state; and A better Africa and the World.**

Building a capable, ethical and developmental state is premised on the willingness of public servants to selflessly commit to the public good and adopt a people-centric disposition. In this context, as public sector trainers we need to pause and reflect on how we make a meaningful impact to the Public Service, whose primary responsibility is to serve our communities. The Constitution is clear on the expectation that the Public Service should be professional, accountable and development-oriented.

National Development Plan

In the same vein, the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030, in mapping the country's developmental trajectory, has identified specific steps that need to be taken to promote the values and principles of public

administration contained in the Constitution and build an efficient, effective and development-oriented Public Service as part of a capable and developmental state. The NDP also highlights the need for well-run and effectively coordinated state institutions with skilled public servants who are committed to the public good and capable of delivering consistently high-quality services, while prioritising the nation's developmental objectives.

In this regard, we look upon the National School of Government, to play a significant role in ensuring that public servants are trained to serve the citizens of South Africa better. This school should, in our view, become a preparatory place or the “intellectual laboratory” for government where public servants are formed and moulded into caring, committed and citizen-oriented professionals, whose primary aspiration is to belong, to care and to serve.

NSG key to professionalising the Public Service

Indeed we look upon the National School of Government to capacitate and professionalise the public sector. President Ramaphosa, in the 2019 State of the Nation Address, succinctly captures the crucial role expected of the NSG in relation to the delivery of a suite of compulsory programmes approved by Cabinet (on 5 September 2018) in order to strengthen the capacity of the State.

'In improving the capabilities of public servants, the National School of Government is introducing a suite of compulsory courses, covering areas like ethics and anti-corruption, senior management and supply chain management, and deployment of managers to the coalface to strengthen service delivery.'

54th ANC National Conference resolutions

As we look ahead to the future of the School, it is important to reflect on the **political mandates** given to this Ministry by the ruling African National Congress. We are guided by the resolutions taken at the 54th national conference, which, in reference to this portfolio, resolved that the transformation and modernisation of public administration should deal comprehensively with human resource development, capacity building and professionalisation of the public administration and establishment of necessary systems and processes.

Additionally, conference resolved that the National School of Government must play a central coordinating role in capacitating employees in all spheres of government, provide support for talent management and provide guidance for appointments, succession planning and career development. This will require specific interventions such as the establishment of a national competency assessment functions, implementation of a public service-wide skills database, and policy proposals for the setting of compulsory competence requirements for

certain occupational categories for entry or mobility within the public service.

The establishment of the National School of Government is a realisation of a historical milestone towards changing the trajectory of the Public Service training and development landscape to address the skills capacity gap, in order to align towards the imperatives of the National Development Plan. Also key to what has to be realised, is the improvement of performance results across government with special reference to **audit outcomes** and other performance areas that impede optimal performance of departments in pursuit of their respective service delivery mandates.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is quite urgent that government departments are supported by the NSG to build **public trust**. A confluence of myriad factors and forces have conspired to increase the trust deficit. The scourge of corruption, in particular, that has engulfed both the private and public sectors, has dominated the public discourse for many years since the dawn of democracy. The public needs to be assured that we aim to adopt a zero tolerance to corruption in all its manifestations.

The January 8th statement (13 January 2018), among others, placed emphasis on efforts to *'restore the credibility of public institutions.'* We have a huge task to institutionalise integrity, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. The erosion of good governance, accountability and consequence management in public institutions has to be addressed head

on. In this regard, the NSG suite of programmes which include ethics and a whole range of good governance courses will greatly assist.

Refining the Public Service

It is also imperative that we put in place the appropriate mechanisms to, *inter alia*, recruit, and skill and retain public servants towards ensuring continuity and efficiency. Our government has acknowledged the weaknesses in our Public Service, one of the most critical being the skills capacity of public servants to fully support the developmental agenda of the State, and is unequivocal about addressing this gap. Furthermore, our constitutional ideals of a values-laden public administration makes us all that more committed towards building a better South Africa. We cannot fail our people.

The NSG is poised to be a catalyst for change and assume its rightful place as training/learning solution provider for government that responds timeously to critical training needs and identified skills gaps.

Ladies and gentlemen, the National School of Government should indeed plays a significant role as a hub for government policy development – assisting government departments and officials in areas of policy research, implementation, and refinement. **As part of this training of policy developers, the NSG should also assist in the training of DGs and Ministers.**

As we indicated in the Budget Vote Speech, policy development is a *'distinct science that we have not gone into in the past.'* We will be *'up skilling public servants on these aspects, strengthening existing programmes and improving efficiencies across the Public Service'* and the NSG will be expected to be in the forefront of those interventions.

The NSG, as a national training arm of government, should assume a vanguard role in producing revolutionary leaders to serve the Public Service. It should forge partnerships that should guarantee delivery of training content and desired outcomes, which are aligned to the seven government priorities.

However, for the NSG to play this role meaningfully, it must transform itself to win hegemony and occupy the public space within the constellation of Public Service trainers.

Taking stalk of skills base in the Public Service

The current arrangements in terms of training in the Public Service across the spheres of government point to the existence of a wealth of trainers located in HRD units in departments, employed in Provincial academies and in training units of larger national departments like Defence, Correctional Services, Home Affairs and the Police, and so on. Almost all of these entities offer both transversal and department specific training programmes, which makes their trainers available as an important resource for the national school programmes.

We need to emphasise the pivotal role and centrality of trainers and other HRD practitioners in the realisation of a service-oriented and efficient Public Service. The sporadic service delivery protests engulfing the country are indicative of communities' dissatisfaction with social services. In this regard, trainers and HRD practitioners in general can make a meaningful impact through purposeful training and development interventions to capacitate the Public Service. They, however, have to first empower themselves and be grounded in Batho Pele principles and values and have a firm conceptual grasp of the South African Constitution as a founding document that articulates the principles that guide public administration.

The '*Khawuleza*' clarion call, spearheaded by our President of the Republic, will indeed need public servants at all levels to be energised and purposeful in instilling a sense of revival and optimism across the nation through their caring and diligence in serving our people. As trainers and HRD practitioners, you are better positioned to influence and support the delivery of services with speed in the spirit of '*Khawuleza*.'

As I conclude, I wish to congratulate the Advisory Committee Members who will today take forward the important work of the PSTF structure. We also extend our gratitude to the members who served in the previous term.

I thank you!