

ADDRESS BY THE PRINCIPAL, PROFESSOR RICHARD LEVIN TO THE 18TH PUBLIC SECTOR TRAINERS' FORUM (PSTF) CONFERENCE

DATE:	05 October 2015
TIME:	11h30 – 12h00
VENUE:	Mittah Seperepere, Kimberley, Northern Cape
TITLE:	Theme, objectives and contribution of the PSTF to HRD

AUDIENCE PROFILE:

- Minister for Public Service and Administration, Honorable Adv Ngoako Ramatlhodi
- Honorable Premier of the Northern Cape Province, Ms Sylvia Lucas
- Honorable MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform, Mr Norman Shushu
- Elder Councillor Ms Agnes Ntlangula on behalf of the Executive Mayor, Sol Plaatjie Municipality, Mr D Molusi
- Northern Cape Public Service Commissioner Moira Marais-Martin
- Heads of the MPSA Portfolio (DGs & CEOs)
- Senior Managers in various government departments and entities
- Members from the structures of the HRD Council-SA
- Invited guests
- Trainers from all nine provinces, national departments; local government, sectoral colleges (e.g. SAPS, Defence, Health and Education),
- HRD Managers in all government departments and private organisations,
- Academics, researchers and students in HRD and Public Administration,
- Business Leaders from different sectors
- Leaders of all Organised Labour Federations
- PSTF Advisory Committee Members
- Ladies and gentlemen
- All protocol observed

Conference Theme and Objectives

Programme Director, my short address is on the **Contribution of the PSTF to HRD objectives**. In line with the PSTF tradition of responding to recent developments in the HRD domain, the 18th PSTF will explore the theme “**Developing Human Capability for Productivity in the Public Sector.**” At this conference, the notion of capability as a catalyst for improved productivity in the public service will be interrogated and debated from different viewpoints as we seek to stimulate reflections on:

- Perspectives of developing human capability for productivity for the public sector.
- Skills development strategies for the public sector,
- Partnerships among the private sector, institutions, social partners and departments for skills development in the public sector,
- Implementation and coordination challenges and opportunities of HRD in developing capability for the public sector.

To leverage learning opportunities and enrich discussions on this important topic, we have conceptualized the conference objectives and aligned papers, presentations and panel discussions to deliver on the following sub-themes:

- Enabling productivity through skills development in the public sector.
- Impact-directed Human Resource Development.
- Global trends in Leadership and Human Resource Development.

The Contribution of PSTF to HRD Objectives

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, to locate the contribution of the Public Sector Trainers' Forum (PSTF) to Human Resource Development (HRD) in this country, one needs to trace its historical humble beginnings from its inception in 1997. The PSTF was established as a non-statutory body to advocate Human Resource Development (HRD) within the Public Service. Its main thrust has always

been the provision of a platform for collaborative interactions towards improved organisational performance and involvement of government departments, social partners and key strategic stakeholders at national, provincial and local spheres.

The period 1995 to 1997 was the time when key policy and legislation was introduced including the *White Paper on Public Service Education and Training, WPPSTE (1995)*, the *Skills Development Act (1997)*, as well as *White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1995)*.

At the time of the PSTF formation, provinces and national departments were experiencing disparities in the way the Training and Development function was approached and practiced in the Public Service – given the country's legacy of fragmented and poorly resourced administrative authorities at that time. The Forum then became the key platform where the implications of the new legislation would be debated, policy prescripts that pertain to Education, Training & Development scrutinised and case studies on their implementation shared. Its annual conference provided an opportunity for International guest speakers from the Continent and the Rest of the World to share best practices with South Africa's HRD practitioners.

In keeping with the ever changing institutional governance arrangements in the country, this Forum was reconfigured in 2008 to make it relevant to current HRD practices and inclusive of all key stakeholders whose contribution to HRD is vital to taking the country on an economic growth trajectory.

Currently, the PSTF is managed by the National School of Government (NSG) in the context of its constitutional and legislative mandate to train and develop public service officials. The Principal of the NSG is the primary sponsor of the PSTF. An Advisory Committee comprising representatives from each Province; National Departments (DPSA, DHET, NSG, COGTA); SETAs operating in the HRD public

sector space (Public Sector Training Authority – **PSETA**, Local Government Sector Education Training Authority - **LGSETA**, Education Training and Development Practices Training Authority – **ETDPSETA**, South African Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority – **SASSETA**); strategic structures (Human Resource Development Council – SA (**HRDC – SA**) and **Universities SA** – formerly known as HESA - oversee the work of the PSTF. In a sense, the PSTF has been one step ahead of the times in terms of creating collaborative platforms for HRD that would be useful within the context of Public Service Human Resource Development Strategy.

Programme Director, over the years, the PSTF, as part of its functions, has organized annual conferences which served as reflective platforms for DPSA to connect with practitioners, report on implementation plans relating to its HRD Strategic Framework and generally consult departments. Similarly, the Human Resource Development Council SA (HRDCSA) has also utilized the PSTF conference platform to report on progress relating to its HRDC Implementation plans.

One of its enduring legacies has been the promotion of dialogue on HRD issues through the participation of regional and international speakers as well as public and private sector entities. This adds to the academic standing of the PSTF and provides good background information and enhances a comparative approach, which enriches HRD practitioners' knowledge base.

In 2012, the PSTF Conference introduced a tradition of PSTF Achievers Awards – a system of recognising excellence that is inclusive of the broader trainer community in the country. These awards will be conferred tomorrow at the Gala Dinner.

The importance of the PSTF Today

The National Development Plan commits South Africa to building a capable developmental state. Developmental states have been defined as states whose ideological underpinnings are developmental with a commitment to construct and deploy administrative and political resources to the task of economic development. Developmental states establish capable institutions giving them the capacity for effective, selective and sustained interventions to positively alter their countries' development trajectories.

Visions of developmental states emanate from a combination of Amartya Sen's capability approach to development with modern reconstructions of traditional economic models of growth. Amartya Sen argues that "well-being" involves both increasing contentment through socio-economic development and growth, as well as the *capacity of human beings* to achieve what they want to¹. Thinking in terms of "capabilities" rather than just "well-being", as Peter Evans argues draws attention to the fact that human capabilities are both ends in themselves and the key means to socio-economic growth and the construction of democratic institutions that help us to "lead the kind of lives we value"². It is in this context that we need to build our understanding of the capable developmental state and the NSG and PSATF role in it.

Sen's notion of expanding human capabilities goes beyond education and learning, to encompass social development in all its dimensions. It invites us to ensure that quality education and learning at all levels including the public service is capability enhancing. It challenges the NSG, all state training institutions to ensure that state employees at all levels are exposed to the highest quality of education and learning *as well as professional development*. Building human

¹ Amartya Sen, (1999), *Development as Freedom*, New York, NY: Knopf

² Peter Evans (2011), "The Capability Enhancing Developmental State: Concepts and National Trajectories," Centre for Studies on Inequality, Discussion Paper 63, University of California, Berkley

capabilities requires all of us involved in education and training in the public sector to explore our “ideational role” in orientation, engendering new doctrines, cultures and practices at all levels of the state.

Our overarching challenge as public servants engaged in Human Resource Development, within a limited funding base is to deliver relevant and responsive, education and training programmes, which build the capacity of the state to deliver developmental programmes that meet people's needs.

Towards a new vision for the National School of Government

Programme Director, ladies & gentlemen, to the extent that the National School of Government plays a critical role in capacitating and empowering public sector officials at all performer levels, I wish to share with you some insights into how we plan to respond to the HRD challenges facing the public sector. The NSG has embarked on an exciting phase characterized by exploring the feasibility of the following:

A hybrid delivery model of provision and /or facilitation according to programme intervention need;

An integrated capacity development model, including planning, design, development, delivery and evaluation;

A hybrid funding model including voted funds, the skills development levy through PSETA, cost recovery and donors; and

A multi-layered pilot intervention, that includes Induction, Performance Management Development System in support of and arising out of the work of the Public Service Commission and the Management Performance Assessment Tool and Leadership development platforms.

These interventions are meant to pilot:

- The integrated delivery model
- Combined use of provision and facilitation using internal, public service and partnered Academy capacity
- Hybrid funding
- E-learning platform

- Mandatory programme testing

The five pilots are:

- Government Leadership Platform
- Performance Management Development System
- High volume delivery of the Compulsory Induction Programme utilizing internal capacity (initially on contract during the test phase) and on-board accredited Public Service trainers
- Compulsory Induction Programme - CIP 13-14
- Partnership between the Chinese Academy of Governance and the NSG for a SMS short learning programme focused on planning, evaluation, economic development and public service governance systems

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that HRD plays a huge role in building state capacity to realize its Constitutional “development-oriented” role of delivering services that meet people’s needs and promote the public good more broadly. For South Africa to successfully transform itself into a developmental state that can enable a better quality of life for all its citizens thereby meeting the objectives of the NDP, Government requires Public Service cadres who can demonstrate developmental values, zeal, knowledge, skills and commitment to serving the ordinary citizens of South Africa.

We need platforms like the PSTF to renew itself. We need to ensure that the PSTF is not only active during Conferences, but sets up learning platforms and learning networks that catalyse the development of human capabilities that build state capability to transform our country. We need to identify working groups such as HRD practitioners, HRM practitioners, Public Sector trainers and develop capacity development workshops and learning networks in between conferences and back-to-back with Annual Conferences. We need to identify research initiatives relevant to the Forum and set up teams of researchers to engage in evidence-based policy research. One such team could focus on the locus of coordination for training in provinces with a view to establishing good practice and establishing a uniform approach to provincial training coordination.

Sometimes we need to revisit our past in order to reimagine our future. The 1995 White paper on the Transformation of the Public Service envisioned training and education as critical to “develop the professional capacities of public servants and to promote institutional change” by:

- **First**, equipping all public servants ...with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to carry out their jobs effectively in pursuit of the new vision and mission for the public service;
- **Second**, forming an integral part of the process of increasing the representativeness of the public service;
- **Third**, enabling public servants to acquire a new development-oriented professionalism; this will entail the development of a new work ethic, knowledge and skills with which to implement the RDP;
- **Fourth**, being a powerful instrument for anticipating as well as facilitating the introduction of institutional changes within the public service; and
- **Fifth**, assisting public servants in developing a better understanding of the needs of the communities which they are serving, as well as a capacity to respond to these needs.”

On that note, I wish to congratulate the newly inaugurated PSTF members, who this morning have committed themselves to working diligently in pursuing the HRD objectives of the PSTF outlined in its Terms of Reference. I look forward to fruitful engagements with the PSTF Advisory Committee as we collectively explore all avenues to building the human capabilities of our developmental state in our quest to combat poverty, create jobs and reverse social and income inequality in our country.

Thank You