

Ref. Nr: IE 6/2/3
Enquiries: A Hurter
Tel: (051) 405 4685

REPORT: AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE DAY, 23 JUNE 2006 – FREE STATE PROVINCE

PURPOSE

1. To provide feedback on the outcome of the Africa Public Service Day held on 23 June 2006 in Bloemfontein.

DISCUSSION

2. As you are aware Africa Public service day (APSD) serves as a platform for the Public and Civil Service to showcase and reward good initiatives and achievements in the public sector, and equally it provides an invaluable opportunity for public servants to promote values such as professionalism, accountability, responsiveness, ethic and performance in the delivery of public services.
3. Each year APSD focuses on a specific theme. The theme for 2006 was “Building an ethical Public Service for improved service delivery in Africa” and has the following sub-themes:
 - Promote governance (with emphasis on anti-corruption and ethics);
 - Empower the citizenry, especially rural communities to enhance accessibility to services;
 - Access to information;
 - Capacitate public service to meet the expectations of the people (enabling legislation, skills competencies, procedures, etc.); and
 - Restructuring the public sector in line with Africa’s unique challenges.
4. As part of the proceedings on 23 June 2006 in Bloemfontein at the Louis Botha Hall, an international satellite broadcast has taken place with the intend to share international experiences. The satellite broadcast was followed by a local panel discussion on the sub-themes as indicated in paragraph 4. Key issues raised and discussed were as follows:
 - 4.1 Opening of Africa Public Service Day: The Premier of the Free State, Mrs. B Marshoff, referred to the private sector and how well they applied business principles on a daily

basis to serve clients. It is therefore important for the Public Service to measure their own successes in changing the lives of ordinary people on a daily basis. She also highlighted the following:

- The public servants should be more customer focused.
- Public servants must use their project management skills to speed up the implementation of service delivery projects.
- Public servants must quantify and qualify their achievements on a regularly basis.
- Government must ensure that skillful people do not leave South Africa.
- All public servants should live the Freedom Charter to ensure a better life for all South Africans.
- Enhancing the image of the Public Sector.
- Deliver a quality service in the shortest possible time to clients.
- Public servants must live the Batho Pele principles.
- Greet people with a smile because public servants are the face of the Government.

4.2 Promote governance (with emphasis on anti-corruption): Commissioner Helepi, Public Service Commission, emphasized that corruption is the major reason for low morality, sickness of society and instability amongst South Africans. It seems that public servants are under pressure to be corrupted by relatives in developmental countries. However, Government has established a number of Acts to combat corruption and to address ethics, especially in the Public Service. The challenge at this stage is to ensure that the said Acts are operationalise at local government level.

4.3 Empower the citizenry, especially rural communities to enhance accessibility to services: Mr. Ramagoase, Chairperson of SALGA, indicated that water and sanitation should be improved at municipal level. Two issues, namely a lack of funding and a lack of capacity are the main reasons for poor municipal service delivery.

4.4 Access to information: Mr. Tshoenyane, Regional Manager: SABC, said that the SABC and all public servants must be agents of delivery so that people out there can be heard and informed of what is happening in Government. The SABC debates service delivery on all television channels and share best practices with all viewers.

4.5 Capacitate public service to meet the expectations of the people (enabling legislation, skills competencies, procedures, etc.): Dr. Nwaila, Director General: FSPG, emphasized the following:

- We have a world class technology for service delivery for example the live satellite coverage.
- We have a world class Constitution.
- We must identify the ideal state and work towards it.
- Public servants must build capacity and connect with the rest of Africa.
- We must build a Public Service which is based on integrity, patriotism and diligence.
- We must learn from experiences in Africa and share our best practices with our colleagues in Africa. Learning is like water, it takes different shapes.

4.6 Restructuring the public sector in line with Africa's unique challenges: Ms Tsopo, MEC: Education, said that challenges have changed after 1994. New Government structures were established, ethics in the Public Service was improved to combat corruption, and productivity of public servants has been addressed. An example of the how the FSPG has addressed these challenges is the well-thought Free State Growth and Development Strategy that will guide us to 2014.

4.7 Way forward: Mr. Makgoe. MEC: Provincial Treasury, summarized the event as follows:

- Improved service delivery is the most important tool to satisfy clients.
- We must fight corruption and corrupted public servants with all power available.
- We cannot address new problems with old solutions, especially at local government level.
- We must be customer focused.
- Public servants must use project management skills in the workplace.
- Public servants must set clear service standards so that clients know what to expect from Government.
- Public Servants must live the Freedom Charter by hart and must show their passion to render world class services to citizens of the Free State and Africa.
- The Batho Pele Belief Set must be engraved on the forehead of each public servant: We care, We serve, We belong.

Other activities on Africa Public Service Day

5. As you are aware on 1 December 2005 all South African Directors-General signed a Public Service Pledge as a sign of commitment to a high standard of professional ethics and integrity in the public service in Magaliesburg. By signing the Pledge, the Directors-General also committed them to be “firmly committed to the Code of Conduct for the Public Service and to serve our people with loyalty, respect, dignity and integrity”. The signing of the Public Service Pledge is set to promote a culture of good ethical behaviour among public servants and reignite the passion to serve with pride and dignity.
6. The Public Service Pledge came as a response to the Public Sector Anti-Corruption Strategy (PSACS)’s call to promote professional ethics in the public service. It was drafted by the Public Service Commission and approved by the Anti-Corruption Coordinating Committee of the Public Service. As part of the Africa Public Service Day Celebrations on 23 June 2006 it was expected of all public servants employed by Free State Provincial Government to sign the pledge as an illustration of their commitment to serve our people with loyalty, respect, dignity and integrity. The Pledge was translated into Afrikaans, English, Sotho, Tswana and Xhosa and is attached as **Annexure A**.
7. The Public Service Pledge was signed by all Heads of Department and Municipal Managers to show their commitment to promote professional ethics in the Public Service and the signed Pledge was handed over by the Premier of the Free State to the Commissioner: Public Service Commission (Free State Branch). Please see attached pictures of the event. (**Annexure B**)
8. Almost all Provincial Departments held events where officials have the opportunity to sign the Public Service Pledge. (**Annexure C**)
9. I have also given instruction that all Human Resource Managers in the FSPG must:
 - Ensure that all new appointees to the Provincial Departments sign the Public Service Pledge;
 - Each new employee receive a copy of the Code of Conduct on the first day of appointment;
 - A copy of the signed Pledge to be filed on the personal file of the employee;
 - Ensure that all officials in the Provincial Departments who did not sign the Public Service Pledge on Africa Public Service Day, to sign the Pledge before end of September 2006; and
 - Make copies of the attached signed Pledges and hand over the original signed Pledges to the relevant officials in the Departments.

LESSONS LEARNT

10. We have learnt the following lessons from Africa Public Service Day 2006:

- We need to build capacity to improve service delivery to the people.
- Stop negative reporting and inform people what is happening in Government and of all projects that are implemented.
- Finalise the Provincial Language Policy to ensure that people will be addressed in the language of their choice when served by public servants.
- Introduce more life orientation programmes at schools to address ethics in society.
- Learn and share experiences/best practices with fellow colleagues in Africa.