



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY:**

**HONOURABLE THEMBELANI WALTERMADE NXESI,  
ACTING MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND  
ADMINISTRATION AND APRM NATIONAL FOCAL  
POINT IN SOUTH AFRICA,**

**AT THE RECEPTION OFFERED BY THE APRM  
CONTINENTAL SECRETARIAT**

**IN HONOUR OF THE NEW CEO OF THE AFRICAN  
UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY-NEPAD AND THE  
NEW PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT BUREAU**

**JAVETT ART CENTRE,**

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA,**

**AUGUST 4, 2022**

- Honorable Mashego Dlamini, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation,
- Honourable Amos Masondo, Chairperson of the South Africa National Council of Provinces,
- Your Excellency Andre Nzapayeke, Ambassador of the Central African Republic and Dean of the African diplomatic corps in South Africa,
- Your Excellency Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD,
- Honorable Chief Charumbira Fortune Zefania, President of the Pan- African Parliament,
- Director-General of the Department for Public Service and Administration
- Prof Eddy Maloka, CEO of the APRM Continental Secretariat,
- Prof Tawana Kupe, Vice Chancellor of the University of Pretoria,
- Prof Frans Viljoen, Director of the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening to you all. I am delighted to be here tonight in the presence of diplomats, academics, senior international as well as national public servants for this staid yet warm function in our nation's capital.

I take pride in the fact that some of the best of Africa's public service is represented tonight at one of the finest institutions of higher learning in the land.

We welcome the collaboration between the University of Pretoria and the APRM Continental Secretariat on the planning and hosting of this event -celebrating the arrival of new leadership at some of the AU's most important organs. This is commendable.

Collaboration such as this unleashes talent, nurtures creativity and accelerates progress on continental, but also global development goals. In other words, inter-organisation connections, continentally, will have a positive bearing on the future of a continent which has got all it takes to effect the self-transformation its inhabitants have long ardently desired.

Allow me to extend my appreciation to the APRM Continental Secretariat directed by Professor Maloka - for organizing this reception, alongside the University of Pretoria whose Vice Chancellor, Prof Tawana Kupe, is with us tonight. The other attendees are equally deserving of praise for making time to partake in this gathering.

**Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

The renewal of leadership in AU structures, this year, was made possible by the wise counsel of our Heads of State and Government who merit our deep gratitude. The leaders we are welcoming tonight were chosen from a large, diverse and competent pool.

Indeed, selecting whom to elect to lead the Pan-African Parliament and the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD was a difficult endeavour as is often the case.

Certainly, various evaluation criteria went into the selection process and I am pleased that our Heads of State and Government made the right choices.

I have no doubt that this renewal will inject new vigor, passion and thinking into decision-making at the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD and the Pan-African Parliament.

Moreover, South Africa is confident that the acumen, aptitudes and vision that the newly elected officials bring to the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD and the Pan-African Parliament will raise their stature and enable them to continue providing support to national experts and leaders, but also guidance on how to turn Africa's immense potential and vision into development successes.

As South Africa's Acting Minister for the Public Service and Administration, I am acutely aware of the importance of forming and retaining conscientious, industrious and dedicated public servants who put their country's interests before theirs and who spare no efforts to drive change in villages, city councils, and ministries.

Africa's leadership shortcomings have been the subject of numerous conversations, both informal and formal. The mismanagement of resources, the ideological chasm between the powers that be and the people, and the refusal to change course in the face of headwinds are some of the causes of discontent and unrest in many countries globally.

The impatience of the governed is both palpable and understandable. And it cannot be divorced from the current global context. Surely, the ravages COVID-19 has visited upon our countries are multi-dimensional.

Quantifying such ravages would only capture part of the state our world finds itself in because the quality of our professional and private lives has also been severely dented as a result of the pandemic.

Thus, we cannot remain silent or unperturbed vis-à-vis the people's expressions associated with failures to deliver on popular and legitimate expectations of governance and development.

There is so much at stake in the realm of public service. The work of public servants impacts the lives of all and sundry in more ways than one. Every day, we enjoy their tangible contributions to society. Indeed, the distribution of public goods such as water, transportation, and security is ensured around the clock by unsung people whose highest motivation and reward is public satisfaction.

Therefore, public offices should be filled by individuals animated by probity and altruism. Today, access to education and knowledge is being democratised with free online courses and presentations. So, I strongly encourage African youth to make use of these, in addition to other forms of instruction, to equip themselves with the skills they will need to be indispensable in an increasingly competitive job market.

Competition to attract the brightest minds is fierce. The private sector on our continent, but also developed countries offer working environments and benefits which Africa would be hard-pressed to match or reproduce.

But I believe that it is possible to make the public service appealing. Rooting out nepotism and corruption and applying more rigor and transparency in recruitment processes are a few of the corrective actions we should take to attract the brightest minds to serve our fellow citizens.

**Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

I want to assure Her Excellency Nardos Bekele-Thomas and Honorable Chief Fortune Charumbira Zefania and his bureau of my country's unflinching support for the institutions which they lead.

The Department of Public Service and Administration already works closely with the APRM Continental Secretariat. I believe that this model can be replicated in other ministries and agencies across South Africa.

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation which is being ably represented tonight will, I am certain, concur with my suggestion to develop stronger partnerships between national and continental organisations for mutual benefit.

Regular meetings to assess the level of engagement and progress on the implementation of our National Development Plan and the meeting of our global commitments should be held with the three AU organs we are fortunate to host.

As a country, we value the contributions made by the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, the African Peer Review Mechanism Continental Secretariat and the Pan-African Parliament - to advance the continent's interests and aspirations enshrined in Agenda 2063.

In closing, may I reiterate my thanks to Professor Eddy Maloka and Prof Tawana Kupe for co-organising this evening's event and for bringing us together to socialise. However, levity and intellectual stimulation are not mutually exclusive and I look forward to meeting my colleagues and learning about their plans for achieving results which will help the continent move ever closer to "the Africa we want".

**Thank you for your kind attention.**