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**ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION,  
DR CHANA PILANE-MAJAKE (MP), AT THE LAUNCH OF AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE  
DAY.**

**19 JUNE 2023**

Programme Director,  
Ministers and Deputy Ministers,  
AU Leaders & Diplomatic Corp  
Academics,  
Directors General and Senior Managers in Government,  
Public Servants present here today,

I wish to welcome you all to the launch of this 10<sup>th</sup> Africa Public Service Day celebration under the theme “The Year of AfCFTA: Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area Implementation.” APSD is annually celebrated across the African continent to “recognise the value and virtue of public service to the people of Africa.

The AfCFTA Guided Trade as outlined in the theme shall also in 2023 focus on Trade in Public Service related five priority areas, namely: Tourism, Transport, Trade & Industry, Communications and Financial Services;

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a flagship project of Agenda 2063 aimed at creating a single African market for goods and services facilitated by free movement of persons, capital and investment to deepen economic integration, promote and attain sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, industrialization, agricultural development, food security, and structural transformation.

Officially launched in January 2021, AfCFTA is the world's largest free trade area bringing together the 55 countries of the AU and eight (8) Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

By removing barriers to trade, AfCFTA stands as a landmark agreement that aims to create a single market for value-added goods and services to promote intra-African trade, and attract much-needed investment.

**Minister Patel**, my inclination is that if the AfCFTA fails, Africa fails and South Africa will also fail. The accelerated implementation of the AfCFTA highlighted in the Africa Public Service Day theme must therefore, at all cost succeed.

Africa Public Service Day originates from the conference of African Ministers for Public or Civil Service that was held in Morocco in 1994. This conference agreed that 23 June should be celebrated annually as Africa Public Service Day to recognize the value and virtue of public service. Thus the importance of this week as the Africa Public Service Week.

**Programme Director**, as we celebrate Africa Public Service Day as an annual AU event entrenched in the AU calendar as a day that recognises the value and virtue of public service we must continue to :

- Promote awareness of Agenda 2063, which is Africa's blueprint for acceleration of Africa's economic advancement into an active player in global business;
- Reflecting on how AfCFTA will enhance sustainable human development;
- Highlighting the role of youth and women in driving the AfCFTA;
- Reflecting on the capacity of African states to deliver on government priorities such as the AfCFTA.

**Distinguished guests**, at present, all indications are that if successfully implemented, and exploited to its full potential, AfCFTA can assist the people of the African continent to overcome a host of economic developmental challenges experienced by the continent.

The accelerated implementation of the AfCFTA at the national, regional and continental levels is crucial for South Africa as it presents us with the unique opportunity to address the governance and development challenges whenever they occur.

Through the benefits of AfCFTA shared and inclusive economic growth, the 1.3 billion people living in Africa can overcome poverty and inequalities.

The World Bank already projects that the successful implementation of AfCFTA can lift over 30 million Africans out of extreme poverty and boost the incomes of 68 million others living in poverty. It further estimates that by eliminating barriers to trade in Africa, AfCFTA will lead to the creation of more decent jobs, sustainable development, and a better quality of life for all citizens of Africa. A realistic dream for the Africa we want.

In line with Section 195 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which provides that public administration must be driven by good governance

and a high standard of professional ethics; I urge all of the country's 1,2 million Public Servants to put all hands on deck to make rapid implementation of AfCFTA real.

Vision 2030 as defined in the National Development Plan (NDP) talks to building a capable, ethical, and developmental State that will improve the quality of life for all. Following these principles is but one of the factors considered for making public service a career of choice. Other factors to consider are building professional public service in which unprofessional conduct is never an option to be tolerated.

**Programme director**, to see through this dream, corruption in the public service must be decisively dealt with. Corruption is unlawful, erodes trust, undermines development, and creates an uneven playing field that not only drives investors away but makes free trade – as envisioned by the AfCFTA – impossible. We are a government that is viciously fighting corruption at all levels. Corruption is delaying realisation of South Africa's dream

**Programme Director**, the month of June is celebrated in South Africa as Children & Youth Month. It would be amiss of me to not highlight the important role the youth of 1976 played towards total liberation of our country. Today's Youth is calling for economic freedom we must not ignore. The success of AfCFTA will benefit the 400 million young people below the age of 35 years in Africa. Almost a quart of whom are in South Africa due to migration. Thus the challenge of population explosion to be considered and probably exploited by SA approach to AfCFTA without condoning illegal migration,.

For youth to drive AfCFTA, it is important to expand their financial literacy, employment opportunities, and access to capital.

**Programme Director** as I conclude, all of us present here today as leaders, should exercise our respective positions of authority to support the AfCFTA and Agenda 2063 which collectively seeks to bring about a more prosperous South Africa and Africa for us all and future generations.

Africa's governments must build corruption free capable, ethical and developmental states ready to embrace Africa's dream of being united in economic development toward a prosperous, independent and sustainable continent. I wish you well in all 2023 Africa Public Service Day deliberations.

I thank you.