



**ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND
ADMINISTRATION, DR CHANA PILANE-MAJAKE, ON AFRICA PUBLIC
SERVICE DAY, 23 JUNE 2022.**

NATIONAL THEME:

“Rebuilding the State and restoring trust and pride by tackling human capital development challenges for social and economic development”.

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Programme Director,
Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
Directors General and Heads of Departments,
Distinguished Public Servants,

Programme Director, it is a pleasure for me to be part of this very important event today being presented under the stewardship of the African Union that has rightly identified 2022 as the year dedicated to promotion of food security through public service in Africa under the continental theme: **“Building resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent: Accelerated human capital, social and economic development”**. This theme is most appropriate given the challenges experienced in Africa and globally impacting negatively on food security. These challenges are but not limited to:

- COVID-19 pandemic;
- climate change in the form droughts, heatwaves, floods; and
- sky-rocketing grain, oil, and natural gas prices resulting from the *“Ukraine-Russia Crisis”*.

Focus on Human Capital Development

The African Union’s emphasis on accelerating human capital development on the continent is certainly not misplaced. Human capital development is a determined effort to grow the knowledge, skills and capabilities of all the citizens in society. These efforts have a potential to bring about wider societal benefits through social and economic development leading to increased productivity both in the private and public sector. This is in line with the Africa Agenda 2063, a blueprint for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse. Africa Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework with (7) aspirations each with its own set of goals which, if achieved, will move Africa closer to attaining its vision of

prosperous Africa by the year 2063. The Africa we want. These 7 Aspirations reflect our desire for shared prosperity and well-being, for unity and integration, for a continent of free citizens and expanded horizons, where the full potential of women and youth are realised, and with freedom from fear, disease and want. Is our public service in SA capable enough to be good player in rolling out this ambitious plan? This is the question we must begin to answer. These aspirations have guided the Africa Public Service Day Week-long dialogues that culminates today.

It is a well-established fact that poorly nourished societies struggle to build human capital, whereas human capital development thrives in well-nourished societies. Food security is therefore essential to Africa's human capital development and securing the resultant benefits of social and economic growth and development. Food security in Africa must be prioritized.

I therefore urge all South Africans – including our country's 1,2 million public servants – to stand in solidarity with rest of the continent as we strengthen agriculture and agro-food systems which Minister Didiza will be further deliberating on.

Focus of Africa Public Service Day in South Africa

We must stand in solidarity with the rest of the continent of Africa in building social protection mechanisms, accelerating human social and economic development being mindful of our own operational challenges in South Africa as follows.

- Population explosion that frustrates public service delivery
- Over pricing of services rendered to govern

- Supplier data base that is not talking to real needs on the ground excluding unsophisticated players in agriculture and agro-food processing who can manage to bring about real change in the lives of South Africans
- uneven public service delivery to citizens across the Public Service specially for almost forgotten remote rural areas in Limpopo; KZN & Easter Cape.

As a caring and responsive government, we acknowledge that these national challenges must be addressed as a matter of priority, which is why we are balancing the continental Africa Public Service Day theme for 2022 with our national priorities for the South African Public Service under the theme:

“Rebuilding the State and restoring trust and pride by tackling human capital development challenges for social and economic development”.

This national focus that calls for paradigm shift in terms of government approach to service delivery will help respond to our unique challenges towards human capital development in line with vision 2030 as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP).

Professionalising the Public Service

From the onset, the NDP has been clear that a capable and developmental state starts with the quality of people who work for the government of SA. These public servants must have appropriate skills, knowledge and competencies in addition to the right attitude to implement government policies efficiently and effectively. This we call professionalization of public service towards realization of a capable state, a framework the DPSA is still developing in collaboration with NSG towards this envisaged renewal of public service.

In his address to Public Servants during last year’s Public Service Month, President Ramaphosa emphasized that being in public service demands

high level of professionalization, selflessness, commitment, adherence to ethical norms and standards and observance of Batho Pele principles – putting the people first .

Commemoration of Africa Public Service Day has been a week-long programme with key sub-themes. These were implemented in the form of interactive dialogues between public servants, academics and civil society as follows:

- Using modernisation and digitisation in the public service to improve on food security;
- Innovation and incubation hubs for new entrants in agriculture and agro-food processing;
- nutrition-smart public service interventions at all levels in public service;
- Participation of women and youth in agriculture and agro-food processing;
- Access to land and public service assistance for players in food security chain and
- Strategies to build enforceable accountability mechanisms for officials in fast tracking food security assistance in South Africa.

It is hoped that the outcomes of these engagements should not lead to creation of more and more structures in government that delivers reports only. Our next Africa Public Service Day must be in form of a report on progress made on commitments we will have made as public service over this Africa Public Service Day. Commitments by the State and Labour towards the well-being of public service employees should not be overlooked.

Programme director, rebuilding Africa that is strong, united, resilient and peaceful is non-negotiable. Let us also stand united in the promoting food security for Africa as public servants. The war against corruption by charlatans in the public service has been intensified. Service delivery provisions made across government must be freely and unconditionally available to all South Africans through a criteria that makes it possible to access help. This is a true path to a developmental state that a large number of public servants are committed to regardless the challenges.

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

As we take off the COVID-19 masks as announced last night, I wish to say to public servants and more especially frontline workers: We thank you for the commitment you had over COVID. This includes public servants who became part of the evacuation team for South Africans who were trapped in when international flight routes were closed due to the onset high risk of COVID-19 that riddled havoc in the lives of so many. We value you as public servants. With the same breath we remember all public servants we lost from Covid-19. May their souls rest in peace as we pray to God to continue comforting their families towards healing.

The “new normal” means vaccination first.

Government cannot do it alone. To give substantive meaning to the NDPs conception of a capable and developmental State, all of us – Public Servants, businesses, academia and civil society – must put shoulder to the wheel. We must hasten to respond to the development and service

delivery needs and expectations of our citizenry. We must hasten to develop the human capital of our people without regard to race, gender or geographic location. We must hasten to implement legislation and policies that promotes the well-being and growth of our citizens and of the continent. We must hasten to build effective service delivery oriented public-private partnerships that are responsive to the South African dream. We must hasten to drop anything that puts spanners in the works to frustrate this dream to feed into a sad narrative of DECLINE IN TRUST IN GOVERNMENT that demoralizes committed public servants. It is for this reason that we must remember that public servants are not a homogeneous group.

Building and sustaining Public Trust

This perception should be of concern to us as public servants especially as leaders in public service to avert undermining freedoms and liberties enshrined in the Constitution of SA as promised to South Africans.

We must also encourage citizen participation in development and implementation of government policies through meaningful and representative consultative processes. Adhering to Batho Pele Principles, government on the other hand must be caring, transparent, accountable, with easy to access affordable

Ke ya leboga, Dankie, Enkosi.