



**MINISTRY
PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND
ADMINISTRATION, HONOURABLE AYANDA DLODLO, MP, AT THE 7th
NATIONAL BATHO PELE EXCELLENCE AWARDS
BIRCHWOOD HOTEL, BOKSBURG, GAUTENG, 24 MARCH 2022**

Programme Director, **Ms Alicia Jali**

Minister of Health, **Dr Joe Phaahla**

Deputy Minister for the Public Service and Administration, **Dr Chana Pilane-Majake**

Deputy Minister of Transport, **Hon. Sindisiwe Chikunga**

Premiers present tonight

Executive Mayor of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Council, **Alderman Tania Campbell**

Chairperson of the Adjudication Panel, **Mr Oomang Parag**

Chief Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Health Group, **Dr Ali Hamdulay**, our main sponsors for tonight

Representatives from the CS Boshomane Accountants, with thanks to **Ms Charity**

Boshomane for the auditing of the adjudication process

Directors-General and Heads of Department present

DDGs, Senior Managers and all officials from the various national and provincial Departments, as well as Municipalities

Finalists present here and those joining us virtually

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen present here and all those joining us virtually

It is always a pleasure to be a part of such an occasion that recognizes the sterling and outstanding contribution of our public servants in the service of our people. Let me therefore take this opportunity to extend my greetings to all of you. I am particularly pleased that Minister Phaahla, the Minister of Health, could join us. The theme for this year's awards is biased towards health as we seek to highlight the role played by various categories of workers in our health sector in combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although we have placed a bias towards health, we have not left out other sectors in the public service that have distinguished themselves in the service of our people. The awards to be conferred tonight will show these categories of public servants. As we observed last year - this era of COVID-19 has called for us to quickly get rid of the old habits and adapt to the new order of working to ensure we provide quality services and speedily.

In the last two years we have noted the drastic increases in the number of casualties in the public service due to Covid-19. As at 18 March 2022, 276 297 public servants have been infected. 1 129 are active and 13 047 have succumbed to the disease.

Last September the President indicated that our economy and society had suffered great devastation by that stage. We had endured a fierce and destructive storm that had culminated in the *Beta*-variant of the pandemic. But by standing together, by remaining resolute, the country withstood storm. The current country recovery rate is at 96% (3,590,266 from 3,704,784). The President applauded the people of South Africa for this achievement and for the thousands of lives that have been saved through collective actions. This achievement has also been recognised by the World Health Organisation, which has been working closely with us to strengthen our response. From being in the top ten of the most infected countries in the world, South Africa has moved to 27.

The ability for the country to move is due to the work of these dedicated public servants, who not only go the extra mile, but do so at great cost savings for the fiscus, and in some instances at a great inconvenience to their personal and family lives. Many frontline staff who have lost their lives did so after exposing themselves to the

serious safety challenges. But they took the risks to ensure that hundreds, if not thousands, of citizens are saved. I wish to thank them for their dedication to caring for our people and for the enormous sacrifices they have made, especially in health institutions where their care resulted in zero deaths. As public servants our diligence is always a vehicle for speedy and successful recoveries from Covid-19.

It is because of their selfless efforts that we have moved with some considerable speed to rebuild our economy, restore growth and create jobs. If we move in the same direction the impetus to create more quality jobs will continue. We have overcome doubt and cynicism to confront the worst public health threat in living memory. We have shown what South Africans are capable of when we join forces. Let us hold on to that spirit of unity and solidarity. Let us move forward with determination and resolve. May God continue to bless South Africa and her people.

Government has set as its Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) goal building a capable, professional, development-oriented and ethical Public Service. We have just launched the Ethical Conduct Framework last week, to help promote the importance of good ethics and professionalism amongst Public Servants. The Auditor-General Ms Tsakani Maluleka summarizes the tenets of a strengthened public service as **Capable leadership**, **Capable Institutions** and **Consequence management**. With these we can build a strong public service which is ethical and professionally driven.

Being a Public Servant is the noblest of callings. It demands dedication, selflessness, professionalism and the utmost faithfulness to the principles of Batho Pele; that of putting the people first. Public Servants have a responsibility to ensure that in the execution of their duties and responsibilities, they adhere to ethical conduct, as well as honoring the provisions of the Constitution and other laws of the Republic; it is an honour and privilege to serve.

Employees are required to put the public interest first in the execution of their official duties and to respond ethically to the needs of its citizens. If it is an illegal instruction or decision, Public Servants has the right to say no and to report such activity to the

relevant authorities. Public Servants must report to the relevant authorities, fraud, corruption, nepotism and any other act which constitutes a contravention of any law.

The public servants being honoured tonight demonstrate how public servants can reclaim the trust that some of our people seem to have lost in the institutions of government. We trust that the cream of the crop that will be honored tonight will continue to encourage the rest of the public service to take this challenge in its stride.

This evening is a culmination of what has been a long and thorough process. Still, as we rightly recognize, reward and celebrate the cream of the public service, it is equally important to keep the big picture in mind as we do so. The National Batho Pele Excellence Awards are an integral part of the ongoing strategy to build a capable state and professional public service cadre on which the realization of Vision 2030 of the NDP depends.

As we celebrate those public servants who have demonstrated their commitment to the people of South Africa, it would be remiss not to recognize the hard work of the various teams that have gotten us to this eagerly awaited evening, even though it was delayed by the COVID-19 disruptions.

I therefore would like to take this opportunity to congratulate tonight's finalists as well as acknowledge the hard work of the many people who have made the evening worthy of the Batho Pele Excellence Awards.

I wish all the finalists the best and that we all celebrate them tonight.

I thank you.