



MINISTRY
PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

LAUNCH OF THE REGENESYS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

REMARKS BY

MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND
ADMINISTRATION
HON. INKOSI MZAMO BUTHELEZI, MP

*Regenesys, The Maslow Hotel, Sandton
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Honoured Guests, Partners, Participants, Esteemed guests and colleagues

I greet you all!

There is no better way to demonstrate our commitment to a brighter and a more sustainable future than through initiatives like this one we are gathered for today.

Today's launch marks a critical step forward in advancing leadership capability within South Africa's public service and I am deeply honoured to be part of this moment.

To me – and possibly to most of us gathered here - the launch of the Regenesys Executive Leadership Development Programme is more than just a programme inauguration **but** one that symbolizes a dedicated and collaborative effort to professionalize and enhance public sector leadership by drawing on the strengths of both the public and private partnerships.

Together with Regenesys and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), we are working toward a future where our public sector leaders are equipped not only with the technical skills and strategic insights they need, but also with the ethical foundation essential for public trust and efficient governance.

In both my capacity as a Minister and as a value citizen, I am encouraged by this initiative because it also aligns deeply with our Constitutional mandate.

Section 195 of our Constitution articulates clearly the values that must govern public administration - stressing high professional ethics, efficient resource management, and accountable governance.

And to fulfil these principles, it begins with us as leaders to embody both skill and ethical leadership – thus in turn transforming our government into a capable and developmental institution - as envisioned by the National Development Plan.

Therefore, this programme is a direct response to the gaps we see in public sector leadership capabilities.

The comprehensive and forward-thinking approach by this institution has provided participants with a solid foundation of skills and insights needed to meet the demands of leadership in a complex and rapidly evolving public sector environment.

Likewise, the journey to professionalise the public sector is a top priority for our department as Public Service and Administration.

This is evidenced by recent public service reforms that include the implementation of the National Professionalisation Framework. As I also highlighted in my recent Budget Vote Speech that this framework is aimed at elevating standards across our civil service while ensuring that leaders at every level are technically skilled, ethically grounded, and that are committed to Batho Pele principles - the “People First” ethos that places citizen needs at the core of public service.

Our commitment to fostering a culture of accountability and professionalism has led us to introduce mandatory entry requirements for Senior Management Service positions.

These include completing the Nyukela Pre-entry Course administered by the National School of Government, holding relevant qualifications, and undergoing rigorous competency assessments.

This approach ensures that our leaders are well-prepared, not only for the complexities of governance but also to inspire confidence among the citizens they serve.

This exact programme steps in to address those gaps by leaders cultivating leaders who are prepared to guide government performance with a clear focus on service delivery.

Colleagues, it is a known fact that we are a nation that looks to the state as the primary vehicle for socio-economic progress – and for that - the importance of effective public service leadership cannot be overstated.

Our fellow citizens expect us as government leaders to act as responsible custodians of state institutions and resources and that we work efficiently to improve service delivery.

This is especially relevant within the 7th Administration, where expectations for responsiveness, accountability, and measurable results are heightened.

Through initiatives like this Executive Leadership Development Programme, we empower our leaders to embrace their roles as agents of

development because once they are equipped with enhanced skills, they can drive socio-economic progress and elevate the standards of service delivery that our citizens deserve.

However, we must also confront the reality that leadership in the public service is often lacking. It is the proverbial “elephant in the room” that cannot be ignored.

Too often, we find technically skilled individuals that are highly educated and well-versed in their fields – but whose leadership qualities fall short. This weakness in leadership ends up undermining even the most expertly crafted policies and initiatives.

Our public sector does not need leaders who merely masquerade as such but what it needs is leadership that is grounded in a deep sense of duty that is fuelled by a genuine commitment to drive the changes people want to see and a readiness to serve with integrity and purpose.

If we can be honest with ourselves, we need to understand that leadership is NOT about singing praises or receiving accolades – but about building character, taking responsibility and having the courage to make tough decisions.

Colleagues, the stakes are high. While weak leadership has contributed to failures within government, strong and competent leadership should be the foundation upon which lasting success must be built.

In today’s era, the need for programmes like this one that seeks to cultivating the culture of impactful leadership – has never been more urgent.

It marks a transformative moment for our public service – especially since we celebrate 30 years of democratic governance.

This collaboration between Regenesys and the United Nations Development Programme signals a commitment to embracing new ideas and innovative solutions that address our most pressing challenges – and by uniting government objectives with the insights of academia and developmental organizations - we can foster a leadership culture that

values open dialogue, that tackles challenges head-on, and that inspires a new generation of capable and ethical public servants.

Our vision for a professional, ethical, and capable public service is rooted in a **simple** yet **powerful** belief – and that is “every South African deserves respectful and high-quality service”, regardless of their status or background.

Therefore, through this Executive Leadership Development Programme, we aim to achieve several critical outcomes, including:

1. Improved public trust in government services;
2. A leadership that embraces digitization and Information Communication and Technology innovations to enhance impact and efficiency;
3. A caring, responsive public service, recognized as an employer of choice; and
4. A professional and accountable public service that serves South Africa with pride.

As part of our continued commitment to reforms and strategic training, the Department of Public Service and Administration has developed a new Human Capital Strategy for the Public Service, which complements our in-service training initiatives to re-orient public servants.

These reforms are critical to advancing our goals of professionalisation and will be further reinforced through strategic partnerships, such as this one - as it reflects our unwavering commitment to reforms that elevate public sector standards and contribute to a merit-based, ethical, and efficient administration.

As I look ahead in conclusion, I extend my best wishes to all participants embarking on this journey. I urge you to document the lessons you gain, as these insights will be vital to institutionalizing the programme’s impact.

Together, let us envision a public service that is not only professional but that is also committed to a purpose greater than itself, that demonstrates integrity, efficiency, and responsiveness in every interaction.

Through this programme, let us strengthen our leaders in political, economic, and strategic governance and ensure that we align diverse ideologies for the common good.

By doing so, we will be positioning them to navigate the complexities of today's public sector environment and drive a public service that adapts to South Africa's evolving needs.

I am confident that, through this partnership, we are paving the way for innovative service delivery solutions that inspire public confidence and that strengthen the bonds between government and the people it serves.

As we build a public service that is both capable and ethically sound, we commit to a shared vision of renewed, purpose-driven public leadership in South Africa.

Thank you.