



MINISTRY
PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MINISTER N. KIVIET ADRESS ON THE GRADUATION
CEREMONY FOR EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF
GOVERNMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE
STATE ON THE 16TH AUGUST 2023 AT 09H00**

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof Francis William Petersen

The Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, Prof Philippe Burger

Ms Adele Kotze, Acting Head: of the Centre for Business Dynamics

Prof Busani Ngcaweni, Principal of the National School of Government,

Senior officials from Departments,

Faculty members,

Executive Development Programme Graduates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Congratulations on reaching an important milestone in your lives. I am privileged and heartened to celebrate this special occasion with you particularly understanding the difference you will make in your communities and government in various unique ways. You have set the tone to many others for self- discovery, transformation and great achievement.

The time was well spent in ensuring that you will change the society for the better. The time you have spent and the knowledge that has been instilled in all of you will remain forever in your memories. You will cherish those memories for the rest of your lives. It is now time to pursue your dreams and make a positive impact to society through the skills and knowledge you have gained. I would encourage you to take some time to reflect on your passion and consider your goals in life.

When you joined the programme you were told that learning and education is a partnership of mutual commitment to the pursuit of wisdom, knowledge and understanding , to the development of expertise and skills , and to the embrace of appropriate values and attitudes.

Your graduation today is testimony that you have fulfilled your side of the partnership. You have displayed the necessary commitment to learn , to acquire and produce knowledge and develop expertise.

You have had the honour of studying at a very special and distinctive university, one that deservedly commands an enviable academic reputation nationally and internationally. We celebrate the fact you are in an environment in which knowledge and the intellect can flower. We further take pride that this university is committed to the pursuit of equity and excellence as a cosmopolitan institution with many students from other countries and it is one of the leading research institution in the continent. For this programme in particular, we acknowledge that the participants come from different National and Provincial departments, 140 of you enrolled in the last two years. 25 of you are graduating today.

We are celebrating your achievement as senior management graduates of the Executive Development Programme at a challenging time for our country, the continent and the world. The EDP is one of the flagship leadership and development interventions of the National School of Government (NSG). Its aim is to enhance the capacity of public service leaders in a dynamic, democratic, and developmental state. In partnership with other African countries, South Africa has reached out to warring nations to seek peace beyond the borders. We have sent a contingent of firefighters to Canada to assist with the bushfires that threaten our global environment.

The EDP is one of the programmes addressing the need to build uniform effort and competence across the entire public service as envisioned in the National Framework Towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector. Whilst still struggling to address corruption, maladministration, and malfeasance. Well-trained, capable and ethical public servants and senior managers go a long way to stemming this tide. South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the state's capacity, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society.

With programmes like the EDP in place, the Public Service can build capacity through research, analysing and applying research results, while preparing these managers for the challenges like those mentioned above and others that they are likely to encounter. To achieve this, the government must implement key interventions, including professional, meritocratic, and ethical public administration, improved leadership, governance, and accountability.

In addition it must pursue the principle of functional, efficient, and integrated government; mainstreaming of gender, empowerment of youth and people with disabilities; and social compact and engagement with key stakeholders.

The public sector orientation should embody public administration's basic values and principles as enshrined in Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. These values and principles are applicable to the administration in every sphere of government, organs of state and public enterprises. The framework draws an essential distinction between being professional and professionalisation.

Being professional and professionalism encompasses the practices, conduct, values and behaviour that a person exhibits regardless of training, qualifications and levels of responsibility. On the other hand, professionalisation is about changing individual attitudes, behaviour and performance towards serving the public.

The professionalisation of the public sector requires a non-partisan approach which embraces the merit principles in all staffing practices in the public sector. For this to be realised, the public sector must be nonpartisan by insulating it from the politics of political parties.

The national priorities for 2023 include restoring energy security, growing the economy and jobs, building better lives , fighting corruption , making communities safer, and making government work. The cohort of senior managers graduating today will uphold the values of the Constitution and work together to achieve these priorities within their specific workspaces.

You are amongst the most talented people in our country. It is you who will lead , re imagine and reshape the future of our country through forging just and humane ways of conducting the affairs of the country through ensuring human development and social justice are at the heart of our conduct and actions. We look upon you to exercise with humility leadership whenever you are given the opportunity Remember when you go out there that whenever there is power , greed and money there is corruption but greed is unsatisfiable and corruption corrupts absolutely.

Today is your day to remember , to celebrate and cherish. You have earned it and I wish you a wonderful day of your achievement and celebration.

But it does not end here. We expect you to proceed and enrol for post-graduate qualifications so that you can advance your knowledge, and sharpen your abilities to serve our people with care and diligence. Return to this university, and apply for post-graduate studies. The doors are open for you.

To the leadership of the university, we want to see more public servants return to here, and other universities, for programmes in advanced project management, contract management, performance management, financial management and conflict resolution. Design more bespoke programmes that address the specific skills deficits, not just generic programmes designed to credentialise people.

Let us all return to the simulator, to sharpen our abilities to serve our people with pride.

Once again, dear students, good luck for all your future endeavours. We look forward to seeing you return for your post-graduate graduation ceremony.

I thank you.