



MINISTRY
PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS Minister for the Public Service and Administration Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi, MP, at the Strong Nations for Africa Fellowship Programme - North-West University (NWU)

Potchefstroom, North-West Province: 29 July 2024

Thank you, Programme Director, Professor Dumisani Moyo – who also serves as the North-West University (NWU) Executive Dean for the Faculty of Humanities.

The Hon. Premier of the North-West Province, Mr Lazarus "Lazy" Mokgosi.

North-West University (NWU) Vice Chancellor and Principal, Professor Bismark Tyobeka.

Secretary-General of the African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), Professor George Scott.

Members of the Executive at the Chandler Institute of Governance (CIG).

Distinguished guests and delegates.

It is a profound privilege and an honour for me to address you all this morning.

I wish to warmly welcome all the international delegates present to our country.

As we begin this fellowship programme on South African soil, I want to remind you of one of our principles as South Africans which is unity in diversity and furthermore to always remain committed to serve, to grow, to innovate, and to work in collaboration with others.

The Strong Nations for Africa Fellowship Programme (SNAFP) is an example of our collaborative nature in pursuing goals that will improve, uplift, and build a better tomorrow for all.

South Africans know that when we put our minds together and take collective action for the betterment of our people, we can achieve greatness.

I am delighted to learn that the fellowship programme has already had a successful inaugural run.

This venture has established a firm foundation upon which we, as South Africa, were more than happy to have lent a supportive hand together with our partners in the various sectors represented here.

We are immensely grateful that this fellowship programme which is anchored in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063, as both frameworks advocate for building a capable state with robust institutions, which are essential for the prosperity of all our nations.

A strong state is characterised by transparent governance, inclusive policies, efficiency, and effective public services. It is built on the pillars of accountability, resilience, and innovation, thus ensuring that the needs of all citizens are met.

Indeed colleagues, for us to meet the needs of our people in an ever-changing public service landscape, it therefore necessitates that we must work together - because we can only grow stronger when we work together.

I am comforted in knowing that the programme curriculum was designed based on Chandler Institute for Governance' Strong Nations Blueprint, which provides government leaders with a framework to build nations that are wise, prosperous, and unified.

In our collective and unified attempts in building state capacity, not just in South Africa, but Africa and the entire African Diaspora - by investing in the development of our public sector leaders - we are laying the foundation for sustainable progress and enhancing our ability to tackle future challenges with confidence and competence.

I applaud the collaborative approach across continents that have made this fellowship possible. Such partnerships are crucial for sharing knowledge, experiences, and best practices.

The themes which mark the segments of this fellowship curriculum will lead to a more unified and empowered Africa.

If our public sector leaders are empowered through knowledge, skills and innovation, the entire public service will benefit from their growth and development.

This means that frontline services which serve all our people can and will become better.

As the saying goes, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." This aptly speaks to the importance of upskilling, reskilling, and building people.

Programme Director,

South Africa has embarked on a journey towards becoming a strong nation, evolving through dedicated reforms and strategic initiatives.

Our commitment as Government, in building a capable state is reflected in our efforts to improve cooperative governance, foster innovation, and strengthen our institutions.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has through various policy reforms - prioritised transparency and accountability across the public service. Through this we are ensuring that our government and our public servants operate with integrity, honesty and truly serve in the best interests of our people.

Colleagues, as you deliberate on the challenges we face within the public service in your respective countries - I am looking forward to the outcome of this year's fellowship cohort as it is going to be of significance in influencing the various sectors which make up the public service.

Be rest assured that the knowledge, skills and innovative ideas and solutions you will be gaining from this fellowship, will find expression in my department's programmes.

Over this medium-term development period, the South African government and in particular, the Department of Public Service and Administration, will be investing heavily in technological advancements that will enhance public service delivery and make government services more accessible and efficient.

Distinguished guests,

Innovation is at the heart of our strategy as government in driving economic growth and creating opportunities for all.

In our efforts to build a resilient economy, which is supported by investing in infrastructure and sustainable practices – we are laying the groundwork for long-term prosperity.

Vice Chancellor, you together with the Secretary-General of the African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), and the leaders of the Chandler Institute of Governance (CIG), have my absolute support for the Strong Nations for Africa Fellowship Programme.

I want you to know, personally, that innovation will be key in driving reforms within the public service of our country.

Once more I must stress, that we can only move our respective nations forward, if we work together.

It is therefore heartening that we will work together in this fellowship, in nurturing a culture of continuous learning and development for our public sector leaders.

If we are to tackle the contemporary challenges which face our respective countries, we must deal with it through providing solutions that unlock our best talents, that are fresh and that are in keeping with the generations to come.

Moreover, let us work together in strengthening our institutions by promoting inclusivity and equity, ensuring that every voice is heard, and every individual has a stake in our nation's progress.

Colleagues,

Make the most of this opportunity presented to you by this meaningful collaboration with our international partners.

Be pro-active in sharing knowledge and best practices to enrich our collective approach to governance on the continent.

Think beyond borders, as you try to find local solutions that will address global challenges. As you engage with your fellow colleagues in potentially producing the next best innovative idea that will transform the public service, always remember the millions of people you all serve.

As delegates of this fellowship programme, try to avoid the types of solutions which may appear “nice on paper” but are a nightmare to implement - let alone find any buy-in from the very people it was designed to serve.

Our innovations must leave no one behind.

Our solutions must not be too “overly” sophisticated.

Whatever we do - we must never lose sight of who we serve.

As I conclude my address, allow me to extend our heartfelt gratitude as the Department for the Public Service and Administration in South Africa to - AAPAM and the Chandler Institute - for developing this exceptional learning programme, which plays a crucial role in strengthening governance across Africa.

Your dedication to fostering leadership and capacity-building is invaluable to our collective progress and development.

I also wish all delegates a successful training experience and a memorable stay in South Africa.

May this fellowship programme inspire and equip you with the knowledge and skills to drive meaningful change in your respective countries.

We hope you will find your stay here enriching, both professionally and personally, and that you forge lasting connections with fellow leaders in the public service.

Let us now continue to work together towards building strong and resilient nations for the betterment of our entire continent.

Lastly, consider this colleagues: It could be true, that the reason we fail is not because we lack in anything or due to ineffective systems.

We may have many more of these fellowships and we may attend many more seminars, conferences, and we may have good innovations - and even be good leaders and servants of our people - but if our attitude is not right - all our efforts are meaningless.

Thank you.