



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KEYNOTE STATEMENT

BY

RIGHT HONOURABLE DR. SAARA KUUGONGELWA-AMADHILA

PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

AT THE OCCASION OF THE

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 2017 AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE DAY

5 JULY 2017

NKURENKURU, KAVANGO WEST REGION

- Director of Proceedings
- Honourable Sirkka Ausiku, Governor of Kavango West Region
- Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers
- Honourable Christine //Hoebes, Deputy Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister
- Honourable Sirkka Ausiku, Governor of Kavango West Region
- Your Worship E.S. Kandjimi, Mayor of Nkurenkuru Town Council
- Distinguished Invited Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

A very Good Afternoon to you!

I have a pleasure to officiate at the opening of the 2017 Africa Public Service Day Celebration in the great Kavango West Region. I am grateful that we have a turnout of representatives of various Offices, Ministries and Agencies, Regional Councils and Local Authorities, Public Enterprises, and the community of the Kavango West Region. To be here, is an opportunity for us all to pay tribute to the hardworking and dedicated public servants and to bring government to the people.

The APSD Celebrations became an annual event on the African Union (AU) calendar, following a declaration of African Ministers of Public/Civil Service in 1994, setting the 23rd of June as Africa Public Service Day (APSD).

The APSD is celebrated biennially at the continental level and annually at national level by the AU member states. The continental 2017 APSD celebration was hosted on the 23rd June 2017 in Kigali, Rwanda. Namibia, participated in the continental APSD Celebration and I am proud to mention that the Namibian Institute of Pathology won two prizes at this event; namely, the Best Innovation in Citizen Centered Service Delivery and the First runner up in Best Managed, Accountable, Transparent and Accessible Organisation.

The APSD recognises that democracy and successful governance is built on the foundation of a competent public service. The day aims to collect, document and share best practices for possible replication within Namibia, as well as across the African Continent. The day also serves as a platform for Public and Civil Service to showcase good initiatives and achievements in the public sector.

The 2017 APSD is celebrated under the theme; **“Entrenching A Citizen-Centred Service Delivery Culture: Partnering with the Youth for Africa’s Transformation”**. The main theme is further supported by the following **Sub-themes**:

- Partnering with the Youth to build a Responsive and Sustainable Public Service;
- Nurturing a Culture of Professionalism and Ethical Values in Africa’s Public Service;
- Promoting Self-reliance and Empowerment of African Youth for Socio-economic Development; and
- Leveraging ICT Skills for Quality Service Delivery.

Director of Proceedings
Ladies and Gentlemen

In Africa today, 60% of the population consist of young people, who are aged 24 years and younger.

Young people in Africa are important resources for the continent's development agenda. It is against this background that the African Union Heads of States and Governments adopted the theme for 2017 as '**Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth**'.

Africa is experiencing a rapid demographic transition, which, if optimally utilised, can lead to economic growth as a result from the population shifting from one with many dependents and comparatively few working-age people, to one of many working-age people with fewer dependents, which represents the youth. To realise demographic dividend, we as Africans must, therefore, invest in the education, training, political and economic empowerment, and employment of our young people.

This year's APSD main theme is "**Entrenching A Citizen-Centred Service Delivery Culture: Partnering with the Youth for Africa's Transformation**" in order to recognise the role of the youth in transforming the Public Service into a Citizen-Centred public service.

We may ask what is meant by a Citizen-centred Public Service Delivery Culture. What it means is that the public service is geared towards the improvement of the lives of citizens through quality service delivery, building trust in government, and to increase their levels of satisfaction with government services, and a public service capable of responding to needs of the people.

In a citizen-centred public service culture, citizen satisfaction becomes the measure of success. This creates confidence and trust between citizens themselves, and between citizens and their government institutions.

To ensure an entrenched citizen-centred service delivery culture, the Office of the Prime Minister is currently rolling out the Citizen Satisfaction Survey (CSS). The survey, amongst others, measures the responses from the citizens and the turnaround times of issues handled in government institutions. All OMAs, regional and local Government structures will be rated on how they treat citizens and how the citizen perceive the quality of their services. Corrective measures will be implemented where it is required as reflected in the outcomes of the survey. The results of the survey will be analysed and will be made available to the public. This is just one way of developing a Citizen-Centred public service delivery in Namibian public service.

Another way of ensuring a citizen-centred public service, which is easily accessible, is the promotion of E-services and E-Governance.

In order to promote transparency and accessibility, the Government of Namibia is committed to the deployment of e-governance to cover all OMAs/RCs and public agencies.

The Office of the Prime Minister, together with the Ministry of Information Communication Technology, are currently developing e-governance architectures for use by the government officials when providing services to the citizens. The public will also be able to engage government through the use of ICT and to acquire services online. This engagement enables the creation of a closer relationship between government and the citizens, and thereby, promoting the culture of citizen-centred public service.

Director of Proceedings

The involvement of young people in the social, economic and political spheres is the key to sustaining our ongoing development journey. We will not reach our destinations if our youth is not part of our development journey.

Disappointingly, 43.4% of the unemployed people are the youth between the ages of 15-34 years old. This is an alarming situation which needs urgent attention from not only Government but the private sector and individuals.

The Government is creating a conducive environment for private sector entrepreneurial start-ups and growth-oriented SMEs, as well as encouraging the establishment of youth-owned enterprises with the assistance of Government interventions.

To overcome the challenge of access to funds, government under the Financial Sector Strategy, will put up an SME Financing Strategy which aims to establish a Venture Capital Fund, a Credit Guarantee Scheme and the Challenge Fund, the latter being a Training and Mentoring Fund aimed at building capacity in the business development service market, as well as enhance accessibility and affordability of those services to SMEs.

Under Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), the government targets enrolment in TVETs from around 15,000 in 2015 to 50,000 in 2022. Further a reform of TVETs in Namibia is underway to prepare the youth effectively for jobs that are in high demand in the labour market.

I must emphasize that TVET is a critical provider of skills, knowledge and technology needed to drive productivity in a knowledge-based economy. They equip young people with work-ready skills and are useful in addressing the challenges of youth employability and unemployment.

TVET should not be reserved for those that do not qualify for university admissions, but should take a leading role in our post-matric education. I, therefore, call upon young people to take TVET seriously.

Let's create opportunities for young graduates by giving them internship programmes, both in government and private companies so that they can gain practical skills and experience and the ability to start their own businesses.

Finally, I call upon young men and women to become more engaged in transforming the lives of their communities.

I would like to thank public servants who have spent hours on planning the hosting of this important event, your efforts and work are highly appreciated.

I hope the upcoming sessions would set the tone for rigorous brainstorming and also serve as an opportunity to share knowledge and ideas on how we can keep improving service provision to our people. I, therefore, call upon all of us to participate actively and make positive contributions to the theme, sub-themes and other topics to be discussed during the sessions.

I thank you!