



Address by Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa at the launch of the 2014 Public Service Month and endorsement of urban Thusong Centre, Maponya Mall, Soweto...

Date: Sunday, August 31, 2014

Minister for Public Service and Administration, Mr Collins Chabane,
Premier of Gauteng, Mr David Makhura,
Deputy Minister for Public Service and Administration, Ms Ayanda Dlodlo,
Mayor of the City of Johannesburg, Mr Parks Tau,
Heads of government departments,
Distinguished guests, Fellow South Africans,

It gives me great pleasure to speak here at the launch of Public Service Month, because an effective, empowered and committed public service lies at the centre of what we understand as a capable developmental state.

The endorsement of the concept of an Urban Thusong Centre imbues this occasion with greater meaning, because it is a practical manifestation of our determination that government services should be accessible to all South Africans.

If we hope to address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, the public service has to re-invent itself. It needs to find new ways of adding value and effecting change.

Our Constitution requires that all people in South Africa be served by a professional public administration that works fairly, equitably and without bias.

It needs to use resources effectively, efficiently and economically.

It needs to respond to peoples' needs, and be accountable, transparent and development-oriented.

Effective public administration is not a privilege in a democratic society. It is a fundamental right.

Citizens have a legitimate expectation that services will be provided in a timely manner and close to where they live. Where payment is required, these services should be affordable.

They must be delivered efficiently and effectively through appropriately trained public servants.

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, we have made great strides in transforming the public service. We have fostered greater public participation and encouraged greater responsiveness.

We introduced the Izimbizo programme, the Presidential Hotline and service delivery checks at public institutions.

To function effectively, the public service needs to institutionalise a sustainable and holistic approach to innovation in public governance and administration.

Public servants need to become change agents, enablers and facilitators. They need to collaborate with citizens to resolve complex service delivery challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We need to revitalise the Batho Pele programme. We need to go back to the basics. We need to put our people first, treat them with respect and address their needs.

The Batho Pele programme will be included in the strategic and operational plans of all departments.

We will continue to face the same challenges unless we develop the necessary technical skills, nurture committed and motivated officials, and ensure proper coordination across the three spheres of government.

The establishment of service delivery forums that include community members as key stakeholders are a necessary building block towards improved service delivery.

The leadership in the public service is also very important. Leadership determines the direction, controls the acquisition and deployment of resources, and is a repository of knowledge. It needs to be visionary, proactive and responsive.

The state is working to institutionalise the Service Charter. This is because the state, public servants and various sectors of society all have a role to play in rendering professional public services to the people.

The Service Charter is a social contract between the state, public servants and the citizenry.

Based on the recognition by the partners that citizens are at the centre of service delivery – as recipients, providers and custodians of public services – the Charter is a pledge that enables service beneficiaries to understand what they can expect from the state.

Public Service Month, which we are launching today, seeks to instill and rebuild good ethics, morale and pride in public servants. It also puts emphasis on improving the way public servants work in their quest to deliver quality services to citizens.

This year Public Service Month will take place under the theme: ***Reinventing the way Public Servants Work: Batho Pele 'Putting People First'***.

The focus for this year will be on the adoption of a pledge to popularise and promote the Service Charter and consultation on how public servants can reinvent the way they do their work.

During this month multi-department task teams of senior managers will be deployed to frontline service delivery sites. There will be expert-led roundtable engagements to mark Africa Public Service Day, and all activities will culminate in the Public Service Improvement Indaba.

Programme Director,

By locating services closer to communities, Thusong Service Centres ensure that the efforts at improving and integrating our frontline services are enhanced.

An Urban Thusong Services Centre provides integrated services to citizens under one roof, in an urban location that is convenient and accessible.

Underpinned by an uncompromising focus on client service excellence, Thusong Centres provide convenience and ease of access to government services, providing a unified face of government across all spheres. The centres also eliminate duplication of infrastructure by government departments.

Piloted in 2011, the Maponya Mall Thusong Service Centre seeks to bring convenience to the heart of Soweto. It provides services from the Department of Home Affairs, Department of Labour, Gauteng Department of Transport, National Youth Development Agency, Gauteng

Department of Finance, and Gauteng Enterprise Propeller.

We are convinced that the Maponya Thusong Service Centre will become an invaluable resource to this community. We anticipate that its success will be replicated throughout the country.

As we launch the Public Service Month and the Maponya Mall Thusong Service Centre, I am pleased to announce that the inaugural Thusong Service Centre Week will take place from the 15th to the 19th of September 2014.

During this week we will be able to focus on the achievements made by the democratic government in rolling out Thusong Service Centres to even the most remote corners of our country.

The 182 centres we have so far form a critical part of the overall plan of government to promote access to integrated and well-coordinated service delivery programmes.

With the Service Charter as our blueprint, I call upon all public servants to embrace discipline in implementation of government priorities, comply with norms, standards and statutes, and show compassion to the public we all serve.

To the people of South Africa, I invite you to engage enthusiastically in these activities to ensure that the public service works for you.

Thank you.