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Department of Public Works
North West Provincial Government
Republic of South Africa

Address by MEC Jerry Thibedi during the ``MEC's Excellence Awards'' presentation ceremony held at the Hotel School, Mafikeng, on Wednesday, August 29, 2007

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 29 AUGUST 2007

- **Programme Director:**
- **Honourable Premier: Mme Edna Molewa**
- **Head of Department (DDG): Obakeng Mongale**
- **Members of the Executive Council (MECs) present**
- **Members of Potfolio Committee on Public Works**
- **All Senior Management of the Department present here**
- **Colleagues from Head Office and our four regions**
- **Distinguished guest**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Let me take this opportunity to welcome and pass on my warmest greetings to all of you gathered here tonight.

I am indeed honoured to be present at this evening's ``*MEC Excellence Awards Presentation Ceremony*'' organized by our wonderful department.

It is indeed a big event for all of us in Public Works and I am glad to join you all, to say my congratulations to participants and well done to the recipients of the various awards who will be ascending the podium later on.

Public Servants, on the frontline or in the back office co-ordinate their efforts in providing multifarious quality services to the public every day.

Faced with the rising expectations of our people from various communities, one of the many challenges we face as the Department is:

To actively promote a customer-orientated service culture among ourselves as public servants, at all ranks, in order to meet our people and clients' aspirations in service attitudes, efficiency and quality.

It is once again time for us to look back, reward excellence and honour those in our midst who have made it their priority to go beyond the call of duty.

Those who have as individuals or as a collective actively pulled all stops to ensure efficiency, quality with the sole objective of ensuring that we as a department and as Government deliver quality services to our people.

Programme Director:

When we talk of rewarding excellence, we recognize among others the high level of devotion, innovation, commitment and loyalty to the public service.

To be devoted, innovative, committed and loyal is not an easy task.

The improvement of service delivery in the public sector continues to be a challenge that requires the pledge of all public servants.

Very often, we tend to limit the scope thinking this is only about meeting government's objectives but it is most importantly about satisfying the aspirations of members of the public for access to quality services and a better life.

Nothing should, therefore, justify our failure to respond to these expectations.

As government we may have very limited resources at our disposal but that should not be an excuse for not delivering.

Every single one of us in the public service, whether in the frontline or in the back office, needs to play their part and serve our people with the highest degree of dedication.

For this to be achievable, we need to put People First - *Batho Pele*!

Programme Director:

Just in May this year North West was rated the second best performing province after Eastern Cape following a survey by *Markinor*, a leading and independent market research solutions provider in the country.

As part of this biannual “Government Performance Barometer” study, respondents, who in our case were North West residents, had to rate their provincial government’s performance on scales ranging from:

- very well;
- fairly well;
- not very well;
- not at all well.

Interestingly, the survey results indicated that our province performed better than all the other eight provinces in areas relating to education provision and basic health services.

As the custodian of building infrastructure including schools, clinics, hospitals and health centers among others, the contribution of the Public Works department to these results can therefore not be over emphasised.

It is for reasons like these that we have gathered here tonight, to recognise, honour and reward the outstanding performance show-cased by our hardworking men and women.

Recognising the critical role played by public servants in the reconstruction and development of our country is very key to the achievements of our Provincial Growth and Development Strategy.

Through this strategy, our province aims to halve unemployment by 2014 and realise a 6% economic growth. This bodes well with the targets of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (Asgi-SA).

Tonight we will be honouring teams that have shown devotion, innovation commitment and loyalty in their work in the following categories:

- *Best performing Project;*
- *Best performing Directorate*
- *Best performing Chief Directorate*
- *MEC’s Recognition Awards*

I am informed that in total, 15 nominations were received from head office, regions as well as from our various Directorates.

Only three withdrew, not because of lack of interest, but because of the very strict criteria we used this year in order to align all that we were doing to the Premier’s Public Service Excellence Awards later this year.

I am also informed that assessors were still at work by midday today (Wednesday) having started their assessment on Monday.

This should serve as confirmation to all of us, that the outcome of this process is more than credible, transparent and fair.

I would not be in a position to tell if any of the entries were disqualified or not.

We will also be awarding some of the ``*Long Service Awards*'' to those individuals who have been selflessly serving this department for many years.

Let me emphasise that we could never award such accolades in abstract. For a collective to ascend this stage to receive an award, they must have made a significant contribution towards the achievements of our department's programme of action.

These awards, which will feed into the provincial event where the Premier will honour departments in her ``*Public Service Excellence Awards*''; are central to building and maintaining a culture of selflessness and dedication to the work of building a better South Africa .

Programme Director:

We believe that in order to bring the best out of an individual, one has to show appreciation on what has already been achieved. On that note tonight's event is a simple pat on the shoulder for these individuals and a morale booster for all those still trailing behind to outdo themselves.

We therefore call on those who will go home empty-handed tonight not to be discouraged but rather go back to the drawing board to re-double their efforts. However this should not just be done to win awards but to improve the lives of ordinary South Africans.

As our Honourable Premier Mme Edna Molewa put it following the revelation of the Markinor Survey results:

“Despite the (North West) province's impressive record of delivery, more work still needs to be done ... to address the remaining challenges so that all the people can taste a better life.”

In conclusion:

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen let us roll up your sleeves, get our hands dirty and work even harder in the spirit of *Batho Pele* to help change the lives of our people for the better.

To all those who took their precious time to enter for the awards and the pain of having to fill-in that voluminous questionnaire and written motivations, this was no time wasted at all.

Unfortunately there is no short-cut. If we set uniform standards for ourselves let us follow the rules to the latter.

To all those who will receive awards immediately when I step down from this podium, may your light shine the world.

I thank yoU.

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