



GOVERNMENT DIALOGUE

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

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Reinventing the Public Service to meet developmental objectives



Minister Collins Chabane, Minister of Public Service and Administration.

The Public Service needs to make a strategic contribution towards the elimination of poverty and reduction of unemployment and inequality by 2030 as envisaged by the National Development Plan (NDP).

The delivery in this regard puts emphasis on public servants to become, among other things, agents of change, enablers and facilitators of networked and integrated good governance and public administration, and to work with citizens to resolve the complex service delivery challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. The future success of South Africa is therefore intrinsically linked to the strategic transformation of the Public Service.

September is a critical time for the Public Service as we celebrate Public Service Month. During this period we reflect on the Public Service and its ability to deliver quality services that meet the expectations of our people.

Bold in its assertion that the Public Service is key in delivering on our development objectives, the NDP calls for the Public Service to reposition itself to assume this momentous responsibility. This requires well-run and effectively coordinated state institutions with skilled public servants who are committed and capable of delivering consistently high-quality services.

Of significance in our quest to create a Public Service that is an efficient engine room of the State, is the emphasis on revitalising the Batho Pele programme. None of what we achieve will enjoy the necessary recognition without going back to the basics, which is putting our people first and serving them in a manner that illustrates we care.

Batho Pele is a Sesotho phrase meaning 'People First', a phrase that the Public Service has embodied as part of an initiative to get public servants service-oriented, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit to continuous service delivery improvement. It is a simple and transparent mechanism, which allows citizens to hold public servants accountable for the level of service they deliver.

The front office is central to enhancing the public's experience and perception of government. Our implementation of the Batho Pele programme will be enhanced to ensure that the efforts at improving the frontline for enhanced service delivery bear fruit.



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September is Public Service Month and it's a time for public servants to deliver quality services and meet the expectations of all South Africans.

To this end, the Department for Public Service and Administration (DPSA) will be strengthening the institutionalisation and mainstreaming of the Batho Pele programmes with a specific focus on capacitating frontline officials. This will be done by ensuring that government departments embed the Batho Pele programmes within their strategic and operational plans, as well as accommodate the programmes within their organisational structures.

These efforts will be further enhanced by streamlining and aligning individual departmental complaints and compliments systems to the national Complaints and Compliments Framework.

The Auditor-General has raised challenges regarding operations and financial management in departments. To address these, the DPSA is supporting departments in implementing an operations management framework, with a particular focus on improving business processes and standard operating procedures within their departments. Through this process we will be able to improve the services we provide to citizens.

We also seek to promote a new culture of professionalism, dedication, integrity and effective service; encourage continuous delivery of quality services that are responsive to the people's

needs; establish an open platform for public servants and citizens to gauge government's performance in rendering quality and better services; and facilitate a culture of continuous improvement, innovation and excellence in the Public Service.

In gauging citizens' satisfaction levels, the Service Charter will be critical in creating a platform for engagement between government and recipients of public services. 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 enables service beneficiaries to understand what they can expect from the State and forms the basis of engagement between the government, citizens and organs of civil society.

From a disenfranchised citizenship that had no political or economic power and no influence over decision-making to improve the quality, quantity, accessibility, affordability or efficacy of public services that were made available to them by the government of the day, the charter provides for the advancement to a culture where citizens are proactive in enforcing their role in public service delivery.

As a department that is strategically located to not only create an enabling policy environment for the rest of the Public Service, but to also support the effective implementation of such policies, the DPSA will play a more proactive role in supporting departments going forward, to build their own capacity, fulfil regulatory requirements and improve service delivery.

As we embark on Public Service Month, we seek to ensure our delivery of services is enhanced by putting citizens at the centre of public service planning and operations. It is a major departure from a dispensation which excluded the majority of South Africans from government machinery to the one that seeks to include all citizens for the achievement of a better life for all through services, products and programmes of a democratic dispensation.

Batho Pele calls for public servants to be service-oriented, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit to continuously improving service delivery.

**Mr Collins Chabane is the Minister of Public Service and Administration.*