



**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 Morning to you!*

I am greatly honoured to officiate at the opening of the 2017 Africa Public Service Day Celebration in Kavango West Region. I am grateful for being here in the same place as the 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 to pay tribute to the hardworking and dedicated public servants and to congratulate them for their efforts in making Namibia a better place, a place where all people have equal access to public services.

The APSD Celebrations is an entrenched annual strategic event on the African Union (AU) calendar, following the declaration of the first Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service held in Tangier, Morocco in 1994, in which the ministers agreed that the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June every year should be celebrated 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 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017 in Kigali, Rwanda. I am proud to say that Namibia, as an AU member state, participated in the continental APSD Celebration. I am also proud to mention to you that the Namibian Institute of Pathology which represented Namibia by showcasing its innovation in Public Service Delivery 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 Organization. At this continental 2017 APSD celebration, Namibia, the Office of the Prime Minister, was elected as the rapporteur of the subcommittee of the African Union specialized Technical Committee on Public Service and Administration. It is for this reason that we are hosting the event on 5 and 6 July 2017 rather than on 23 June, as per the AU Calendar.

The APSD recognises that democracy and successful governance is built on the foundation of a competent public service. The day aims to discover innovations, reward excellence in the public sector, motivate public

servants to further promote innovation, enhance professionalism in the public service, raise the image of public service, enhance trust in government, 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 and reward good initiatives and achievements in the public sector. It provides an invaluable opportunity for public servants to promote values such as professionalism, accountability, responsiveness, ethics and performance in the delivering of public service. The event creates much needed time for public servants to break, reflect, learn and benchmark.

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, i.e. aged 24 years and younger. In Namibia, it is slightly less at 58%. Africa, in general, and Namibia, in particular, cherishes the role of the youth in the development of their communities.

Africa is a continent of spirited and vibrant young people and they have a potential to change the continent for a better future. 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.

The 2017 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 it means 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. Those who deliver government services, the Public Servants, should always bear in mind that the quality of government service delivery can and should contribute to citizen satisfaction, strengthening democratic participation, and create confidence and trust between citizens themselves, and between citizens and their government

institutions. This is because our citizens today expect more transparent, accessible, and responsive services from their public 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), which is an important exercise in determining citizen satisfaction in services rendered by various government institutions. 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, as the central government agency tasked with the planning, design and implementation of all Government ICT solutions, are currently developing e-governance architectures for use by the government officials when providing services to the citizens. The public is also 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 the youth is not part of our development journey. There is no development if the youth is excluded.

According to the Namibia Statistics Agency, unemployment rate currently stands 34.0 %. 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 both the Government and the private sector and individuals.

We, therefore, need to develop and harness our human resource capacity in order to address the challenge of youth unemployment, to capacitate them to contribute towards employment creation and self-reliance. Let us acknowledge the fact that the Government alone cannot address youth unemployment. This is a challenge that should be addressed collectively.

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.

Young Namibians are increasingly restless about earning the economic benefits through employment in the formal economy. The government, therefore, intends to draft and adopt a National Youth Entrepreneurship Policy [PH1] that will coordinate entrepreneurial activities of young people. This includes access to funding; access to markets and integration into local and global supply chains; development and mentorship, business development services and skills, training and development.

To overcome the challenge of access to funds, the Ministry of Finance as the custodian of the Financial Sector Strategy, was tasked to accelerate the SME Financing Strategy, which aims to establish a Venture Capital Fund, a Credit Guarantee Scheme and the Challenge Fund, which is 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.

The Government recognises Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a crucial driver of the national development agenda. It, therefore, features prominently in the NDP5, which targets enrolment in TVETs from around 15,000 in 2015 to 50,000 in 2022. NDP5 further envisages a reform of TVETs in Namibia to attract a wide range of learners and to prepare them effectively for jobs that are in high demand in the labour market.

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. Young people need skills that meet the demands of our private sector, both to find jobs and to create their own businesses.

It is important that our young people have the required vocational skills. 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.