



Republic of Namibia

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS
AT THE 2023 COMMEMORATION
OF THE
AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE DAY**

BY

**RIGHT HONOURABLE SAARA KUUGONGELWA-AMADHILA
PRIME MINISTER**

**27 JULY 2023
Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Region**

Check Against Delivery

- Honourable Alfea Sampofu, Governor of Zambezi Region;
- Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;
- Honourable Members of Parliament;
- Honourable Matengu Simushi, Chairperson of Zambezi Regional Council and other Regional Councillors;
- Your Worship Hon Lister Shamalaza, Mayor of Katima Mulilo Town Council and other Local Authorities Councillors;
- Dr George Simataa, Secretary to the Cabinet;
- Dr Nashilongo Shivute, Public Service Commissioner;
- Executive Directors of OMAs;
- Ms Regina Ndopu-Lubinda, Chief Regional Officer of Zambezi Regional Council and other Chief Regional Officers;
- Chief Executive Officers of other State Institutions;
- Members of International Organizations;
- Pastor Anoop, Holy Family Catholic Mission;
- Community, Religious and Traditional Leaders;
- Distinguished public servants;
- Members of the Media;.
- Ladies and gentlemen

1. It gives me great pleasure to address you on the occasion of the commemoration of the 2023 Africa Public Service Day taking place in the great Zambezi Region. Allow me at the onset to extend my appreciation to Governor Lawrence Sampofu and the Zambezi Regional Council for assenting to host this event, aimed at celebrating the work of the public service.
2. The Africa Public Service Day, celebrated on the 23rd June every year, follows the adoption by the AU of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration, which came into operation in 2016. The day aims to recognise the value and virtue of service to the community, through, amongst others, the discovery of innovations, rewarding of excellence in the public sector, motivation of public servants to further promote innovation, enhancing professionalism in the public service and raising the positive image of public service, and entrench public participation in public service.
3. This year , Namibia celebrated 33 years of independence. As we commemorate APSD this year, we celebrate the work of public service cemented in the progress, socially and economically, achieved thus far. We also appreciate and honour the public servants who are the center of public service delivery and thus behind the achievements that we have realized.
4. At the 9th Africa Public Service Day Continental commemorations held in Victoria Falls, Republic of Zimbabwe from 21 to 23 June 2023, Namibia (Ministry of Trade and Industrialisation) was recognized through an award for “*1st Runner Up in the Category of Most Accountable and Transparent Institutions*”. I wish to congratulate the participating team for the sterling preparation and for representing us well.
5. The Continental Theme for the 2023 Africa Public Service Day is “The African Continental Free Trade Area will require a fit for purpose African public administration to succeed”. The African Continental Free Trade Area is one of the projects of the AU Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. It is a transmission of the African continent, into a global powerhouse capable of delivering inclusive and sustainable development. The African Continental Free Trade Area commits

Africans to boost intra-Africa trade, by eliminating barriers to trade amongst African States and promote digital transformation, amongst others.

6. As part of this commemoration, extensive discussion were held to unpack this very Theme, alongside with adopted subthemes which focus on ethics, digital transformation and customer service, all of which are priority areas for Government.
7. The public service is at the centre of success of the The African Continental Free Trade Area. It will rely on the competence and skills of public servants in the member States to achieve its objectives of increasing inter-Africa trade and thereby accelerating economic development in AU member States.
8. Some of the key roles that public administration plays towards the African Continental Free Trade Area successes include:-
 - Modernizing the public service delivery spheres, through innovation and transformation;
 - Simplification and reengineering of public service processes;
 - Harmonization of services and processes between public services and with other countries;
 - Easing the travel between nations. An example is relaxing visa requirements, and use of Identity Documents between neighbouring countries.
9. As public servants , we are expected to possess appropriate capacities and skills to operate the public institutions and systems, and enable the public service to respond to changing dynamics and withstand external shocks .

10. It is important in this regard to recognize and applaud the health workers and other frontline workers for the important role they played during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure protection of lives and continuous provision of critical services , both in the public and private sector.
11. The African Continental Free Trade Area promote access for member States to markets on the continent thereby promoting opportunities for increased trade and economic growth. This however requires preparedness through development of public systems and institutions, amongst others.
12. Further, we must align and coordinate our efforts at all levels and promote a spirit of partnership with other stakeholders beyond the public service, in order to leverage on the resources and capabilities of all Namibians to optimize economic growth and development.
13. This is important for our country to be able to compete well with others in an integrated African economy and therefore benefit from this integration. Failure for us to prepare ourselves for the The African Continental Free Trade Area could result in negative consequences for the economy including failure to industrialize, threat to infant local industries, loss of jobs and reduced public revenue.
14. As we commemorate this Africa Public Service Day, we rededicate and commit to our Namibian Public Service Charter, which entails:-
 - STANDARDS - Set, publish and monitor clear standards of service public servant should uphold.
 - INFORMATION - Provide information about public services in a prompt straightforward and open manner that is readily understandable.

- COURTESY AND HELPFULNESS - Provide a courteous and helpful service suitable to the convenience of those entitled to the service.
- CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION - Ensure that there is a regular consultation and communication with our service users and taken their views and priorities into account, provide a choice wherever possible.
- ACCOUNTABILITY - Provide details of performance against targets and identify who is responsible. Such services are being provided by public servants who can be identified readily by their customers as they should be wearing name badges. To ensure that public servants are accountable for their actions at all times.
- TRANSPARENCY - Disclose how public services are managed together with the cost and performance of specific services which are open to public scrutiny in all actions taken in public office.
- NON-DISCRIMINATION - Ensure that services are available and provided equally and fairly to all.
- QUALITY OF SERVICE – Publicize straightforward feedback procedures. Provide where errors have been made, an apology, full explanation and early correction of the error.
- VALUE FOR MONEY - Provide efficient, effective and affordable public services.
- ACCESSIBILITY - Ensure accessibility to public service by accommodating the service needs of our service users.

15. It is pleasing to noted that, in living with the aforementioned Charter commitments, the public institutions have undertaken reforms aimed at strengthening the public service delivery commitments. These reforms include:-

- Developing and displaying of service charters in all OMAs , which are reviewed and updated regularly. There is need to ensure we monitor our continued adherence to this as it is living these charters, rather than their mere existence, that leads to public service improvement.
- Maintaining of official websites and other media, in order for OMAs to ensure timely dissemination of information. These websites contain crucial information. We encourage all to access these platforms.
- Institutionalizing suggestion boxes and feedback mechanism in all OMAs, and ensuring continuous engagement with the public, and provision of responses and remedies where services were found to fall short.
- Publication of annual reports for OMAs, as a means to ensure accountability and information sharing.
- Strengthening Performance management systems (PMS).
- Transforming services through business process reengineering (BPR) and online services.

16. It is pleasing that the 2023 commemorative activities for the Africa Public Service Day have been scaled up and also diversified. I am confident that you benefitted from the rich discussions held through the different panels that enabled the sharing of experiences and perspectives from the diversity of the stakeholders that were represented at the panel discussions.

17. I wish to encourage all public servants to continue to honor the noble duty of service to our people, and to propel the change that we all want to see in public service provision.
18. I further urge all of you to help foster a culture of innovation in the public sector and nurture the innovations to bring about the improvement in public service delivery. You should also leverage on the digital era to improve public administration and public services and ease the public accessing of public services.
19. Government has put in place a public service innovation policy, and the innovation champions established in all OMAs must now nurture new ideas and make public service responsive to the changing needs and landscape. We shall introduce innovation awards to recognize these noble ideas.
20. At this Africa Public Service Day 2023, awards will be given to public institutions for championing reforms. I wish to congratulate all of you for this for partaking in this initiative.
21. Government appreciates public servants' continued dedication and commitment to public service delivery. Therefore, amidst the challenges caused by economic downturn, the Government, has continued to prioritize the wellbeing of its staff. Staff wellness and health remain paramount to government.
22. In this regard, Government has started structural reforms to allow each OMA to have structures dedicated to developing and implementing the health and wellness of the staff. This includes interventions to address mental health issues while it's early.
23. As I conclude, I wish to once again thank Governor Lawrence Sampofu and the regional council of Zambezi Region for their excellent hosting of this remarkable Africa Public Service Day 2023. Together with your team, you worked hard to

ensure that a platform is created for our public servants to discover innovations, motivate each other, enhance professionalism in the public service, raise the positive image of public service, and take the government services to the public through well set-up exhibitions.

24. Finally, as the Public Service is the implementing arm of government, I urge all public servants to strive to embrace professionalism, innovations, transparency and accountability in public service.

25. I wish you a rewarding and exciting journeys in public service!

I thank you!