



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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MEDIA RELEASE

STATEMENT AT AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE DAY COMMEMORATIONS

27 JUNE 2024, AT NIPAM, 10H30,

BY COMMISSIONER SALMAAN D. JACOBS, CHAIRPERSON OF PSC

Director of Ceremonies, Cde I-Ben Nashandi, also ED of OPM

Hon. Anna Nghipondoka, Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, is also the Keynote Speaker for today.

Hon. Laura Veendapi McLeod, Governor of Khomas Region

Respected Commissioners of the Public Service Commission

Deputy Bishop Zack Katjirua

Our Respected Executive Directors and their Management Teams

All Dignitaries and Public Servants on all levels,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am happy to be able to speak at this occasion of the Africa Public Service Day Commemorations. This is the Day with the theme: "Empowering a Citizen-Centric Public Service for an Inclusive and Thriving 21st Century Africa: A Journey of Lifelong Learning and Technological Transformation".
2. This theme places all of us within the Public Service of Namibia at the Centre, where we should start asking the serious question of where are we, as Offices,

Ministries and Agencies, Regional Councils, and as Government of the Republic of Namibia.

3. Yesterday, we listened to Dr. Sadrag Panduleni Shihomeka, Head of Department and Senior Lecturer at UNAM, who spoke at length and through academic discourse about this theme, empowering a Citizen-Centric Public Service for an Inclusive and Thriving 21st Century Africa: A Journey of Lifelong Learning and Technological Transformation”.
4. He spoke on the importance of lifelong learning in the lives of every citizen and that learning does not end with formal education, but that it is an ongoing process, which also includes skills training. He emphasized the importance and when coupled with using technology as a tool and acquiring the knowledge of how to use an IT tool to achieve life-long learning, one will go far in becoming a productive citizen.
5. We could not agree with him more, as some of our beliefs are that learning is “from the cradle to the grave”.
6. Dr. Shihomeka was supported by a team of panelists, who also agreed with him on the importance of lifelong learning. They were drawn from the different backgrounds around the theme, in the persons of Ms Rholene Bok, Manager: Marketing of Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL); Dr Lukas Josua, Senior Lecturer, UNAM, Oshakati Campus, and Mr. Manfred! Gaeb, Director of National Heritage and Culture Programmes in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture.

Director of Ceremonies,

7. As the Public Service Commission of Namibia, we want to take a leaf out of the discussions of yesterday and also from the theme of this commemoration.
8. Assel Mussagulove in her book, the Twenty-First Century Public Servant: A Developing Country Perspective, in 2020, wrote that
9. Changing citizenry, complexity, and technology are the three most prominent pressures faced by countries globally. However, the conditions on the ground are such, that developing countries are experiencing far more capability constraints

than their developed counterparts, which, in turn, affect the type of skills needed by public servants to meet the 21st-century challenges head-on.

10. Unfortunately, I could not attend the afternoon session, which discussed the topic: “Capacitating Management Development Institutions for the 21st Century to Secure a Pipeline for Agile and Future Ready Leaders”. These are important topics for the Public Service and our Government, as we are preparing to face the challenges of the 21st century.

11. What are some of the challenges facing Public Services across Africa and the world? How should Public Servants respond to every day challenges impacting within and outside their working environments?

12. The Namibia Public Service Commission recently attended a meeting in SA where the Public Service Commissions of the SADC countries attended and discussed the possibility of establishing a SADC Forum of Public Service Commissions so that we can share expertise, information sharing, and exchange programs. We agreed at that meeting that there is a need to strengthen the public service, professionalize the public service and build the capacity of the public service to respond to modern-day challenges.

13. I wish to share with you some of the challenges highlighted by the meeting, especially the Chairperson of the SA Public Service Commission, who spoke at length and who convened the meeting and motivated the need for such a Forum.

14. Some of the challenges highlighted were as follows:

We live in the era and this moment, which we can call the VUCA Moment.

- The VUCA moment- volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Public service has the ability and agility to respond to these conditions.
- This is an important and timely conversation given the state of the world today – volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) (Johansen, 2007).
- In the rapidly developing world, where new technologies spring up every day, news coverage happens with the speed of lightning, and citizen scrutiny and demand are relentless and omnipresent, public service is under enormous pressure and cannot expect to stay the same for decades on end like the bureaucratic structures of the past. Even the most consummate non-democracies sometimes give in to public demands due to the growing appreciation of the power of social media, and

its ability to shape public opinion and drive civic activism (Gessen, 2019; Kozhanova, 2018).

- Institutional culture - entrenched and resistant to change.
- Key trends- geopolitical changes within countries and across the world e.g. what should be the response of the public service to coalition governments? Belgium an example
- The 2007–2011 Belgian political crisis was a period of tense communal relations and political instability in Belgium, which was rooted in the differing opinions on state reform. Until 541 days after the elections, no agreement could be reached among the parties on a coalition to form a new government and during that period the country continued to be governed by an interim government.
- Globalisation and inequality- what's the role of the public service
- Climate change & Business continuity during disasters
- Response to Artificial intelligence and cyber surveillance
- Intra-country migration- Management of population movement
- Professionalization of the public service- moving from a rules-based to a values-based approach for impact- meant to build state capacity. Service delivery and corruption are rife in poor state capacity. Continental integration. Need to capacitate each other such as scenario planning.
- Mental health- Emotional and Diversity IQ & EQ, conflict resolution and effective oversight.
- High unemployment rate, impact of COVID-19
- We therefore agreed to work together, to set up the SADC Public Service Commissions Forum, where we could share information, learn from one another, safeguard the provisions of the Constitution and relevant laws that make these Commissions independent and impartial, and interrogate whether the public service has the capacity and the agility to operate under all conditions and different types of governments, with technological challenges and disaster facing the SADC region, the continent and the world at large.

Director of Ceremonies

15. As Public Service Commission, our mandate is clear as derived from the Constitution and relevant Acts, like the Public Service Commission Act, Act 2 of 1990, and Public Service Act, Act 13 of 1995.
16. We are primarily advising and recommending on recruitment of Public Servants to different OMAs and RCs. It does not end with appointments, but the Public Servants promotions, transfers, requests for financial assistance for medical reasons, disciplinary proceedings, conditions of service, and creation and abolition of structures and posts in the OMAs and the RCs.
17. The theme of the Public Service Day is about life-long learning. As Commission, we recommend continuous learning, through requests for study leaves, thereby ensuring that after the recruitment and probation period, staff members should have the opportunity to upgrade themselves, as long as they are employed within the Public Service.
18. The Public Service Commission, therefore, is entrusted with quality assurance in the regulation of human resource management and development of policies; compliance to ethical standards; and norms and standards in the recruitment process.

Director of Ceremonies, Hon. Minister,

19. We will continue to encourage all Executive Directors and Chief Regional Officers to uphold Human Resource issues in their respective Offices, Ministries, Agencies and the Regional Councils. Human Resources, the Public Servants, are the most important people, upholding the integrity, day-to-day management, standards and culture of that Institution. Without Human Resources, our Institutions will not function.
20. We may have Budgets, which the FISCUS allocated to us. But if there are no Human Resources to manage and administer those budgets, these finances cannot operate on their own.
21. Therefore, the same or more of the attention we provide to Financial prudence and fiscal discipline over financial resources and the immaculate manner in which we

report on financial matters, similarly, when our Audit Teams reach your Offices, please give them the same or more attention and care. Human Resource Audits are done by the Public Service Commission Monitoring and Evaluation Team. Please give them your attention and care.

22. If the working environment is conducive and accommodative, and we create an enabling environment, we will have happy Public Servants, which in turn will result in productive public servants. In some Ministries, we are told, the HR Practitioners are owning their territories, resulting in staff members demoralized, and victimized, and managers are passing work to subordinates. 21st Century leaders and future-ready leaders will develop their subordinates and lead by example.

23. Our appeal to our Accounting Officers is to give their fair share to HR issues so that anomalies found can be reduced and become a thing of the past.

Director of Ceremonies,

24. Public Servants across Africa are celebrating Africa Public Service Day on 23 June, and this year under the theme “**Empowering a Citizen-Centric Public Service for an Inclusive and Thriving 21st Century Africa: A Journey of Lifelong Learning and Technological Transformation**”.

25. While the PSC is embracing the theme, management of Human Resources and Administration is manual, which results in misplacement of documents and there are other challenges such as delays in service delivery etc.

26. Human Resource matters must be **automated** to speed up the management of cases coming to the Commission for recommendation, and through automation, staff data could be consolidated so that information on all staff members is easily accessible.

27. We should speed up the E-Governance and Digitalization drive, we were encouraged last year when the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology announced that they are embarking on a Digitalization drive for the whole country. Efforts currently underway at OPM could be augmented to speed up the process.

28. Concerning lifelong learning, the Institute where we are sitting today, the Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM) was established by the Government through an Act of Parliament (NIPAM Act 10 of 2010). The purpose was to capacitate the Namibia Public Service through training, consultancy and

operational research. Section 5 (b) of the NIPAM Act states that NIPAM is “to provide such training or cause such training to be provided, and to conduct such examinations or tests as may be necessary as qualifications for appointment, promotion or transfer of persons in or to the public service”.

29. NIPAM should spearhead continuous learning and lifelong learning of the public servants, and it is therefore important that modalities should be developed to implement Section 5 (b) of NIPAM Act 10 of 2010.

30. To realize the goals of lifelong learning, some of the OMAs and RCs should have annual development plans in place, for those staff members who want to undertake their journey of lifelong learning.

Director of Ceremonies,

31. Lastly, the Commission would therefore like to position itself as an independent and impartial body, as stipulated in the Constitution and relevant laws. The Commission wishes to recruit Public Servants who are Citizen-Centric, taking into consideration the demography and diversity of our population, in conformity with the type of Africa we want, ensuring that the digital transformative process drives the recruitment process, and public service, becomes the employer of choice.

32. I THANK YOU.

END

**Issued for immediate release by:
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Office of the Prime Minister

Mission

To act as centre of expertise that transforms, facilitates, coordinates and capacitates Public Service for effective service delivery

Vision

A better Namibia driven by an innovative and citizen-centric public service



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