

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SEAPARO SEKWATI ON BEHALF OF THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO ON THE OCCASION OF THE PREMIER'S SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS CEREMONY HELD AT BOLIVIA LODGE, POLOKWANE

22 March 2017

Master of ceremonies,

Members of the Provincial Legislature,

MECs present,

Executive Mayor of the Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr John Mpe,

Executive Mayor of Polokwane Local Municipality, Cllr Thembi Nkadimeng,

Director General, Ntate Nape Nchabeleng,

Members of the Awards Assessment Team, led by Mr Mudau

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me both personally and as Premier of our province to be with you in this evening as we recognise and reward excellence.

As the Provincial Government, we have dedicated this special evening to appreciate, the extraordinary achievements of some exceptional men and women and teams in the public service.

These are the men and women and the teams that always go beyond the ordinary call-of-duty.

It is also befitting that before we start,we pay homage and recognition to one son of South Africa who was born here in Limpopo and in Venda. Bra Joe Mafela Dzulo was not only an art activist,but a comedian par excellence. His death has left us poorer. Limpopo people can be proud that we contributed and donated one of our sons to the world

**Rest in peace Mudau wa Tshiheni, Wa ha nyaphunga.
Mafela Dzulo.!**

Programme Director;

During the day we addressed Batho-Pele Day celebrations at Taaibosch village in Blouberg.

In that address we stressed a point to the audience that Batho Pele principles are about putting people first in everything we do in public service.

We went further to say that the central idea behind the Batho Pele concept is to ensure the transformation of Public Service.

By a transformed Public Service we mean the public service that will be effective in delivering services which meet the basic needs of the people.

In other words, the improvement of service delivery is the ultimate goal of the transformation of public service.

As a result, we indicated to those in attendance that everyone who wishes to be employed by government should at minimum have knowledge of these principles.

In this regard, we were moving from the premise that all those who are privileged to be in Public Service have knowledge and have eternalised Batho Pele Principles.

This award ceremony is therefore a confirmation of the correctness of the assertion I made at Taaibosch village.

I can say it without fear of being contradicted that the men and women who constitute our public servants have personified what Batho Pele is about.

As you would know, Batho Pele Principles originate from the principles contained in **Chapter 10 of our constitution**.

These principles speak about:

- The promotion and maintenance of high standard of professional ethics;
- Ensuring that services are provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
- Ensuring that resources are utilised efficiently, economically and effectively;
- Ensuring that the public is encouraged to participate in policy-making; and that
- Public Service is accountable, transparent and development-oriented.

Programme Director;

We have got no doubt that the men and women to be recognised tonight have personified these principles.

These are men and women whose primary motivation is nothing but the ever burning desire to serve our people effectively and with diligence.

Recognising these men and women speaks to our commitment to building an effective, efficient and responsive public service.

We know that as Public Servants and various teams within the public service you are confronted with a number of challenges that undermines your ability to serve to the best of your abilities.

However, we are inspired by your never-say-die attitude.

This service excellence award ceremony is evidence of your commitment to the service of our people.

We rely on your creativity and critical thinking for us to do our job of taking services to the people.

It is for this reason that we invite you as the people of Limpopo, and as Public Servants to pay less attention to adversities you face on daily basis and adopt courage to strive even in the face of such adversities.

Part of the qualities we require from you as Public Servants are; integrity, honesty, the absolute refusal to tolerate corruption or dishonesty in any form and at any level.

We also expect you to adopt high standards of personal behaviour.

We indeed expect from you the energy that drives you to come to work every day with eagerness to accomplish what you are paid to accomplish.

As we move on you will realise there are a few individuals who are not in the employ of the public service, but their deeds excel in the public. The meaning of public servants is personified in their deeds. As they are announced tonight you will feel it.

Programme Director;

Tonight is about;

- Showcasing and rewarding government teams for excellent service, recognising best practices in implementing the Service Charter and Batho Pele Principles and programmes;
- Promoting a new culture of professionalism, dedication, integrity and effective service;
- Encouraging continuous delivery of quality services that are responsive to the people's needs;
- Establishing an open platform for the public servants and the citizens in general to gauge government's performance in rendering quality and better services; and
- Facilitating a culture of continuous improvement, innovation and excellence in the public service.

Programme director,

Tonight's awards categories will include:

- **Best innovative team,** in this category we recognize creativity amongst employees of government and promote the practice models to be emulated by all. This includes a team or institution that has developed new and creative approach or idea/s in rendering service delivery in the province.

- **Best Support Team/Unit of the Year :** in this category we recognize and award the team or unit that enables the service delivery institution or team to render effective and efficient services

- **Best Service Delivery Team/Institution of the Year (provincial):** in this category we recognize and award institutions or teams that render direct services to the citizens

- **The Special awards** in this category we recognize and award esteemed men and women who stood out and inspired our resolve to perform better.

Programme director,

As I conclude, I want all of us to borrow from former President Mbeki when he said during his first inauguration as President of the Republic in 1999. Using the metaphor of the Comrades Marathon, former President Mbeki said that:

“Those who complete the course will do so only because they do not, as fatigue sets in, convince themselves that the road ahead is still too long, the inclines too steep, the loneliness impossible to bear and the prize itself of doubtful value.”

Indeed let us never relent in pursuit of excellence, even when fatigue threatens to take over, we must always remember that the price is bigger and of much worth than fatigue itself

I thank you!