

**REMARKS BY FINANCE MEC NOMUSA DUBE-NCUBE ON THE
OCCASION OF THE PROVINCIAL TREASURY LONG SERVICE
AWARDS**

***THE IMPORTANCE OF SERVING THE PUBLIC OFFICE WITH
COMMITMENT AND HONOUR***

HARRINGTON HOUSE, HILTON

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Programme director; Ms Thembi Mgujulwa

*Provincial Treasury Acting Head of Department; Ms Neli Shezi and her
management team*

Deputy Director-General at the Office of The Premier; Dr Fikile Ndlovu

Our sponsors from MTN represented by Mrs B Dlamini

Our sponsors from Tsogo Sun in their absentia

Our hosts

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I greet you all,

Today marks exactly 32 years since the release, from prison, of our political struggle icon and former President of the Republic, Nelson Mandela.

I am remarking on this iconic date because Tata Madiba was the embodiment of commitment and honour in his five years of service in the public office between 1994 and 1999. It is also quite fitting that today we are enjoying the fruits of that commitment through the combined hundreds of years among our colleagues that we are here to celebrate.

The 27-strong cohort receiving their awards today boast a combine 430 years of experience among them. These are some of the brains that

keep Provincial Treasury in a healthy position with rare skills and experience reserves.

We are mindful of what Madiba taught us which has been the guiding light of some of our colleagues here today. Their staying power in the department gives testimony of a life well-lived in service of our people.

As public servants we are called to make a difference in people's lives. We are charged with ensuring that the lives of our people, their dreams, aspirations and prospects are realised. I would like to believe that Madiba had this in mind when he said: ***“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead,”***.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fellow staff members that we are here to honour today have proven that the difference can be made and knowledge can be imparted owing to their long stay in public service. I would also like to believe that those with whom we are celebrating 40 years of service have, over the years, planted a seed to those that have come behind them.

I am envisioning a public service that is in tune with the changing world, a public service that embraces change management, innovation, technology and Ubuntu. The principles of Batho Pele envision a caring public service. I want to believe that your stay over the years at the Provincial Treasury has not only changed your bank balance, but that it has made tremendous change in our people's lives.

We need to ask ourselves difficult questions about our commitment and honour as public servants. While our type of employment almost guarantees job security, it is critical that we should not take this lightly.

Fellow colleagues,

Serving in the public office should be an honour. That honour goes with commitment. That commitment is not quantified by the number of hours you work on a day, but by what you do with those hours. It cannot be that public servants make their workplace a comfortable home away from home while ordinary people out there have not received their services. Serving with commitment means from time to time you that answer that ringing phone and assist someone. It means you also dial that number of a gogo whose pension issue remains unresolved, that businessman whose company is about to go under because he has not been paid for 90 days.

I am challenging you today, I am throwing down that proverbial gauntlet that from here you go back to your desk and dial that pinned number on that piece of paper and call that person whose call you redirected to someone “because this was not part of your job description,”.

When we start to care about the needs of our people we start to create a public service rooted in the realms of absolute honour and commitment.

As the MEC deployed to lead this department, I am very aware of the challenges that beset public service. I believe I understand how it has functioned and how it should function to gear itself for a public servant of the future.

I should be quick to point out that we, the people in the public service, are a melting pot of cultures that has transformed the Public Service to what it is today. The progress we have made and the values we seek to espouse have meant that our policies give meaning to our aspiration. Through rigorous policy formulation we have been able to impact society

with our culture of equality, women empowerment and service-focused programmes.

Acting HOD, Mrs Shezi,

A few weeks ago we held our Strategic Planning and I understand that some of your staff members were not present. One of the things I opined on was that as a Department, despite the economic and budget challenges that are characterizing our management of public finances, we need to continue to contribute to the achievement of two of the Provincial Priorities which are “Economic Transformation and Job Creation” as well as “Building of a capable, ethical and developmental state”.

Amongst some of you here are men and women who have helped us steer the ship to that direction of building a capable and ethical state. This is best demonstrated through a “tough act to follow” by KZN Treasury that of attaining 12 consecutive clean audits. This has always required a committed public servant serving with honour.

The National Development Plan requires of us as public servants to give priority to the development of socio-economic infrastructure as the foundation for social and economic development. What are we to be remembered for when our long service does not manifest into economic well-being of our people, when our legacies do not create efficiencies that allow us to build a public service of tomorrow pinned on the culture of service and restoration of human dignity?

Some months back I spoke of an ideal Public Service and among the pointers I made was that we need to take stock of the lessons we have learnt on how our organisational culture can positively impact not only the world, but the ordinary person on the street.

My message, especially to those recipients with 30 and 40 years of experience is that the baton you are holding must be passed from generation to generation with honour. The institutional knowledge you have attained over the years must be the guiding light that shines the way for the younger generations.

To those with 10 and 20 years of experience, it is important that even though you may hold a position and level higher than those that have served 40 years, there is just no substitute for experience. A good leader is the one who continues to consult those who came before him or her. In isiZulu sithi ***“indlela ibuzwa kwabaphambili”***.

Serving with honour means you go the extra mile and that you do right even when no one is watching. It means you take at heart the needs of the organisation you serve. Commitment means you go beyond what your APP and AOP state and demand. It means you have to be a team player because teamwork is dream work. Commitment means you are able to impact even your colleagues who would eventually want to emulate your commitment and honour.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you for this individual milestone and the feat you have achieved. We are extremely proud that you have walked this journey and showed us that working for government can be truly fulfilling when one is committed. We celebrate with you and we wish you the very best as you continue to take this department to higher and stratospheric levels.

As I close, perhaps it is also fitting that I revert back to the wise words of Madiba who said and I quote: ***“Remember to celebrate milestones as you prepare for the road ahead,”***.

I thank you.