



Office of the Principal and Vice Chancellor

Prof Mandla Makhanya

Principal and Vice Chancellor of UNISA

Welcome Address

Address by Minister Ngoako Ramatlhodi: Minister of
Public Service and Administration

Joint Public Lecture of Unisa School of Governance &
Public Service Commission

***“Building a capable, career-oriented and professional
public service for a developmental state as stated in the
National Development Plan Vision 2030.”***


23 March 2016


Senate Hall, Unisa





Programme Directors and director of panel discussions, Dr


Somadoda Fikeni


 Our keynote Speaker and the Minister for Public Service and Administration, The Honourable Advocate Ngoako Ramatlhodi


 Director of the School of Governance, Professor Harry Nengwekhulu


 The Chairperson of the Public Service Commission, Advocate Richard Khaliphile Sizani and Commissioners of the Public Service Commission who are our partners in hosting this programme

 The CEO and Staff members of the Public Service Commission

 Our guests who are part of Minister Ngoako Ramatlhodi's team


 Panel member and director of the Unisa Institute of African Renaissance Studies, Professor Vuyisile Msila


 Members of the diplomatic corps


 Members of Unisa management

 Unisa staff members and students

 Members of the media

 Distinguished members of the audience from your various institutions in our communities and society

 Members of the media present

 Ladies and gentlemen

It gives me a great joy to welcome you to this public lecture that is jointly conceptualized and hosted by Unisa's School of Governance and our partner, the Public Service Commission. A special welcome to our keynote speaker today who has not just come to witness an active potent relationship between government and our university, but to also share ideas on a subject that is both timely and timeless. Given your wealth of experience in the public sector as a premier of Limpopo Provincial Government as well as a Minister in various portfolios, I could not immediately think of any more suitable person to reflect on this topic of ***“Building a capable, career-oriented and***

professional public service for a developmental state as stated in the National Development Plan Vision 2030.”

There is a general consensus in the literature on governance and public administration that state capacity is key to economic and social development as well as the deepening of democracy. The role of a capable, professional and professional public service as well as dedicated mission-driven visionary political leadership is a defining feature of such a capable developmental state. A comparative case analysis of public administrations around the world also reveals that a long-term national vision or plan provides a roadmap or a masterplan to mobilize society or citizenry towards a shared vision and trajectory. In the case of South Africa the National Development Plan is meant to play this pivotal role.

In a competitive and fluid world of smart or knowledge economies state capacity grounded on professional public service is an

indispensable variable that differentiates success or failure of state to realize its vision. The South African situation is compounded by the fact that public service and its executive authority also have to deal with the fundamental issue of transformation that ought to uproot the colonial and apartheid legacy embedded in the system. In the final analysis, it is the quality of life and experiences of the ordinary citizens who are consumers or end-users of state public services that matter most in practical and material terms. We must always bear in mind that these recipients of government services are the final judges of how capable and how effective the public service is. The collective aspirations and hopes of any nation largely rest on the state delivering on its promises and public servants are the primary implementers of government programmes.

The year-old partnership between Unisa's School of Governance, under Prof Nengwekhulu, and the Public Service Commission under Advocate Sizani, is a practical demonstration of joint efforts to join

forces in building state capacity. The first group of students from the Public Service Commission have already been through an Advanced Applied Research programme here at Unisa. It is always my conscious effort and strategy to foster these relationships between our knowledge institutions and public service practitioners in government for mutual benefit. This public lecture is a living demonstrable testimony that this partnership is working and promises to yield more benefits. Unisa's Vision Statement of being "The African University Shaping Futures in the Service of Humanity" is being realized through partnerships and programmes like these. When I witness informative public lectures and programmes of this nature then I am assured that our vision statement does not just well in the realm of abstract ideas but has practical impactful contribution to our society, to the continent and humanity at large.

Before the academic instincts and reflex in me tempt me to deliver a lecture instead of opening remarks and welcome, let me again

welcome you again and invite you to get ready for a feast of ideas from a public opinion maker and a practitioner. Honourable Minister Ramathodi, we look forward to your lecture and panel engagement that will follow thereafter. Let the festival of ideas flourish.

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