

LONG SERVICE CERTIFICATE AWARDING CEREMONY

ADDRESS BY HOD: MR I OSMAN

DATE: 15 DECEMBER 2011

VENUE: PHILIP SANDERS

Programme Director

Long Service Awards Recipients

Members of the Management

Supervisors

Ladies and gentlemen

Programme Director today is yet again one of those special moments to both the employees and the employer when the relationship of long years is cemented when loyalty and commitment is acknowledged. The fifty employees being honoured here today account for a collective of almost 700 years of public service among themselves. This is indeed a remarkable achievement for both employees and the department.

Programme Director, the celebration and acknowledgement of the long service to our people bears testimony to our renewed commitment to the principles of Batho Pele. This event, Ladies and gentlemen, serves as a reminder to us individually and collectively of what we undertook as values when we joined the public service. We have to constantly remind ourselves of the values and the virtues of service to the communities we have committed to serve.

The celebration and acknowledgement of long service gives expression to those values which include professionalism, accountability, responsiveness, ethics and performance in delivery of services to our communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we celebrate this special achievement each one of us should make a frank introspection and measure his or her own commitment towards improving the image of public service, particularly of this department in the eyes of those we serve. The recipients of the Long Service Awards have demonstrated their commitment by spending no less than two decades of their working life serving the people of the Free State, the very reason for existence of the public service in this province.

For government in general, Long Service Award is one of integral part of government employee retention strategy to make sure that skill and knowledge needed much by government to deliver its mandate are retained.

Programme Director today will be handing out certificates to 11 employees who completed 30 years continuous service during 2010 and a further 39 employees who completed 20 years continuous service during 2010. This year's recipients are a combination of senior managers, middle managers, junior staff as well as general workers. When other public servants looked for greener pastures elsewhere, these men and women chose to stick with the public service.

All these people receiving recognition today, started working in government during the apartheid regime and therefore suffered a lot, partly because there were no opportunities especially for the previously disadvantage groups. These people have endured a lot of pain inflicted by the then regime and deserve special acknowledgement for their resilience and commitment.

Ladies and gentleman, as long serving staff members; you bring a wealth of knowledge and institutional memory to the tasks at hand. Even more than that, you have developed a deep understanding not only of your individual jobs but of the larger workings of the department. Your completion of 20 and 30 years of service bears testimony that it is possible to remain loyal not only to the department but to the public we serve even under adverse situations you had to endure at times if not most of the times.

We can only hope and trust that you have developed your own customized system of mentoring younger ones and those who have joined the department long after you. We will appreciate if you can make sure that you impart your skills to those who remain behind when your pension days come. We want you to have a truly restful pension without us calling you back to come and help us out.

Programme director a good and professional relationship between subordinates and supervisors can also contribute a lot in creating a conducive work environment that allows people to be productive and creative. Supervisors and managers must make it their responsibility to support their subordinates with relevant material and equipment so as to make it easy for them to do their jobs. We spend most of our time at work so it is vital to make the conditions acceptable and bearable.

In the short time that I have been here, I have noticed with concern the extend of polarization of the shop floor due to lack of decisiveness and at time reluctance to execute instruction and follow prescribed processes and procedures in the public service. Relatively, this is not a big department and should not be difficult to manage. Results however point to the contrary. This situation will need our collective attention and should be corrected at the earliest possible time.

Among other interventions introduced by this government to ensure that working conditions are acceptable and bearable, is the Employee Health and Wellness Programme which is aimed at assisting employees with coping mechanisms with regard to personal and work related problems that impact negatively on their productivity in the workplace. Our employees are very important to us, that is why we

will continue to invest in them. Skills development is therefore another important intervention to ensure that public servants are continuously improved.

This event should not just be relevant to the recipients of these awards. It should be a reminder to all public servants if do we as civil servants identify within our own work environment and elsewhere models of best practices. In this way, we will be able to identify those ways of working that are most effective in serving the people of the Free State. As public servants we need to know what works for the people the service is intended for and how we can learn from others in order to achieve better results all the time.

Once we have reached that stage as an institution, we will then be able to;

- Identify and replace poor practices
- Bring performance of poor performers closer to that of the best
- Avoid reinventing the wheel
- Minimize rework caused by using poor methods
- Save costs through better productivity and efficiencies
- Combat dysfunctionality, i.e deadlines not met, complaints from customers
- Improve service to clients

In deed, we honestly appreciate the selfless service you gave to the people of the Free State. Our gratitude also goes to your family members who gave you the support and at times had to put up with you in your endeavour to serve the people who need your service.

For those that are yet to reach 20 and 30 years of public service, this is a challenge indeed to make sure that we rise above the rest in executing our departmental mandate and making sure that we maintain that high standard service delivery for generations to come.

I conclude by calling upon the public servants in this department to recommit themselves to the public service pledge which in part reads, ***“As a public servant of the Republic of South Africa, I am firmly committed to the Code of Conduct for the Public Service and therefore promise to serve our people with loyalty, dignity and integrity”***.

I wish every one of you a merry Christmas and prosperous new year.

I THANK YOU