

Welcoming remarks by Thuli Radebe, Executive Director for the Centre of Public Service Innovation

6th Annual SADC United Nations Public Administration Network Workshop

Venue: Emperors Palace, Ekurhuleni Municipality, Johannesburg, South Africa

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This is a very straightforward task for me this morning: to do the official welcome of all delegates, officials in this room this morning, to the 2015 UNPAN Capacity Building Workshop.

Let me start off by welcoming our Honourable Member of the Mayoral Committee, Mr Aubrey Nxumalo, who is representing the Executive Mayor of the Ekurhuleni Metro. We are extremely touched and humbled and empowered by the way you easily made yourself, Excellency, to give this important gathering of senior officials the status and stature it deserves. In 2013 the Metro was recognised with an international award for their excellent business processes which they went to receive in San Francisco. As my colleagues will tell you, I strongly believe that the company you keep determines your destiny – it rubs off!

Welcome Sir!

We welcome the presence of the UNDP, particularly Mr Gana Fofang, the UN Resident Coordinator & UNDP Resident Representative South Africa, to whom we owe increased member state participation this year.

We welcome the City of Johannesburg who did not hesitate to come on board when we first approached you. We are looking forward to the interaction with you over the next two days.

It is a great honour for me of course and a humbling luxury to be welcoming each and every country represented here, welcoming each and every delegate, welcoming the collective, that is, the SADC member States, and welcoming the biggest SADC representation ever! It is for the first time that we have 12 countries represented and that will have to be applauded at some point Programme Director. We have member states of SADC that we have struggled to attract to past workshops but they are here today. We have Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Tanzania, Namibia, Seychelles, Mauritius, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa.

There must be a reason that we were pushed to hold the workshop during the AU Summit week, preceded by the World Economic Forum last week, also hosted in South Africa. We have been holding our Annual UNPAN Workshop in South Africa since its launch. We can proudly claim that the AU Summit took the cue from us.

I welcome the CPSI team, led by Lydia Phalwane, which has worked tirelessly to make sure that this workshop actually kicks off this morning.

I take my instructions very well but I would like to take a moment to say a few words to make my task a little bit substantive.

What has emerged from the WEC sessions and the initial AU Summit engagements is that the global struggle, including within public administration, is not over, hence the focus on the post-2015 Development Agenda. The OECD recognises that **Global challenges such as environmental sustainability, climate change, global health, private sector development, poverty reduction and the right to food and clean drinking water are universal, and they impact all and not just a select number of countries.** In fact repositioning the world to achieve specific outcomes well into the future is the greatest priority, hence Agenda 2063 of the AU.

As I was perusing documents on the AU Summit I found that in its aim to encourage discussion among all stakeholders "Agenda 2063" is defined as "...an approach to how the continent should **effectively learn from the lessons of the past, build on the progress now underway** and strategically **exploit all possible opportunities available** in the immediate and medium term, so as to ensure positive socioeconomic transformation within the next 50 years". Let's bring it closer and say initially within the next 5 to 10 years so that commitments and undertakings make quicker and more urgent, practical sense, just to emphasize that work has to continue and new approaches start today. I believe it is our job to facilitate the beginning of the journey to 2063.

When I read that statement the penny dropped even louder and clearer for me in terms of the importance of this workshop. How on earth can the above be achieved without a robust programme of knowledge creation and sharing led by institutions such as our SADC UNPAN network? There is going to be even a greater need for easily accessible knowledge and information about our or on our countries. We are here because we have a task to ensure that our knowledge is coordinated and added to the growing world repositories for sustainable development that our public/civil sectors are expected to lead.

When we meet like this no one is superior, no one is teaching everyone but we are engaged in what we call collaborative learning. According to the OECD this is a "sharing model where various partners bring different knowledge to the table, respected by others, and the dialogue or consultation is expected to bring added value to all parties involved". I trust that is the model we will embrace here – we as the CPSI depend on your inputs for the success of the SADC UNPAN Online Regional Centre.

Welcome to all of you and we declare the workshop open!

