



DECLARATION

**THE 8TH CONTINENTAL 2021 AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE DAY (APSD)
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe on theme *Building the Africa We Want, through
embracing an ethical culture that underpins purpose driven leadership in the
Context of a Crisis***

WE, Member States of the African Union and APSD Champions gathered in the beautiful Resort of Victoria Falls, in the Republic of Zimbabwe, for the Eight (8th) Biennial Continental African Public Service Day (APSD) Celebrations from 21 - 23 June 2021;

EXPRESS profound gratitude to the Government and People of the Republic of Zimbabwe for hosting this edition of the APSD under the auspices of the African Union Commission (AUC).

APPRECIATE that the opening ceremony was graced and officially opened by H.E, General (Rtd) Dr. CONSTANTINO GUVHEYA DOMINIC NYIKADZINO CHIWENGA, Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

FURTHER APPRECIATE that, in spite of the extraordinary constraints presented by the Covid-19 Pandemic, an innovative hybrid format of virtual and physical participation has facilitated attendance at the APSD from across the African Continent.

COMMEND the presence of representatives from African Union Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ministers from South Africa and Zimbabwe, and heads of delegations of Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda and Tanzania, as well as Civil or Public Service Personnel, Public Service Practitioners and Experts from the above-mentioned countries; Members of the African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), African Management Development Institute Network (AMDIN) , the academia, the Private Sector, Civil Society Organizations and the Media.

IN ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of sharing experiences and exchanging lessons, on Public Service Innovations and showcasing good practices in Africa, African Ministers

of Public/Civil Service resolved and instituted 23rd June of every year (for National and June 23rd biennial for continental), as a Day to, reflect, recognize the work of Public Servants and create a platform for sharing and exchanging experiences on best public service delivery practices on the Continent;

IN RECOGNIZING the opportunity and possibility presented by the Covid-19 crisis, to reimagine, shape and institute purpose driven leadership to build the Africa We Want through ethical leadership;

IN AFFIRMING the decision of African Union Heads of States declaring 2021 as the year of **“Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want.”** as premised on the AU's Aspirations stipulated in Agenda 2063 that envisages the understanding and appreciation of the reality that Africa is universally recognized for its rich arts and cultural diversity, given that African cultural heritage springs from different communities all over Africa;

IN EMBRACING the theme for the 2021 APSD Celebrations **“Building the Africa We Want, through embracing an ethical culture that underpins purpose driven leadership in the Context of a Crisis”** consider this as timely and appropriate, given the current climate engendered by the Covid-19 Pandemic;

GUIDED by the following sub-themes:

- a) Celebrating the contribution of the public servant: a story of courage and resilience in the management of the Covid-19 Pandemic;
- b) Embracing Cultural diversity as a lever to strengthen institutions for a responsive and ethical public administration;
- c) Deploying technology to sustain and enhance service delivery in the face of this challenging Covid-19 pandemic climate and;
- d) Achieve inclusivity through harnessing Arts and culture as instruments to inform, market and build demand side capacity for effective and efficient service delivery

Member States present thus, resolved as follows with regard to the main theme and Sub-themes:

On the Theme: “Building the Africa we want, through embracing an ethical culture that underpins purpose driven leadership in the Context of a Crisis”

Delegates:

- a) Acknowledged the negative effects that the pandemic had caused on public service delivery and paid tribute to public servants who continued service delivery during the pandemic while at great risk;

- b) Underscored the need to recognize and reward performance, noting that a disgruntled employee cannot be productive, and in the same vein appreciated the role frontline workers played and continue to play in the fight against COVID-19;
- c) Acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic, which has claimed more than 3 million lives worldwide, had transformed the way of conducting business in both the public and private spheres;
- d) Encouraged delegates to continue to observe the COVID-19 safety protocols and embrace vaccines as a way of managing the corrosive effects of the pandemic;
- e) Agreed that leadership is a shared responsibility, everybody can be a leader at their own levels hence the need to shape and reinforce the leadership in all of us;
- f) Recognized the direct link between service delivery and economic development, a factor that should guide public servants to establish a broader vision for service delivery and
- g) Acknowledged the need to learn from other countries that have made strides in addressing various challenges associated with cultural diversity

On the Sub-theme: “Embracing Cultural diversity as a lever to strengthen institutions for a responsive and ethical public administration”; Participants resolved that;

- a) There is a need to blend indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) with the contemporary scientific approaches in public administration;
- b) Deliberate policies should be formulated and implemented to promote diversity and creativity in public administration;
- c) Cultural diversity can be a deterrent to unethical tendencies such as corruption and rent seeking that is witnessed in the public sector;
- d) Governments should continue investing in leadership development to inculcate sound values and ethics in the public service and;
- e) There is need to promote inclusivity by developing policies to advance the participation of women, the youth and persons with disabilities and all marginalized groups in leadership positions

Hon. Senzo Mchunu, Minister for Public Service and Administration, Republic of South Africa’s, contribution highlighted the following key issues:

- a) Often the fundamental role of public service administration is seldom part of the discussions that shapes how government works, there is a need to have public administration shaping how government works;
- b) The strengthening of the Public service administration in Africa is critical to facilitate the close relation with economic development as an instrument to link demand and delivery –giving context to government’s ability to respond adequately to the needs of its people;

- c) In the 21st century, we look to keep the momentum going on the modernization and public sector reforms to reinforce professional and ethical values as guided by the African Charter on values and principles for public administration;
- d) The first piece of good news is that public services need not work in isolation, rather in collaboration with the private sectors and civil society, all are increasingly involved in delivering services to citizens as we see a growing role of local government;
- e) Any solution must see corruption as both a potential loss of resources and as an obstacle to accessing public services. This calls for policies against bribes and money laundering, the benefits of which are already being seen across Africa.
- f) Public administration needs to be felt by the people in the manner in which it betters their lives-needs to respond to the needs of the young citizen beyond the traditional public services and ;
- g) The role of APRM as a mechanism to strengthen governance, economic development and growth as well as other pertinent issues which plague the continent

On the Sub-Theme; “Deploying technology to sustain and enhance service delivery in the face of this challenging Covid-19 pandemic climate”; Participants resolved that:

- a) In recognition of the substantial benefit derived from digitization to enhance service delivery continuity and recovery during the Covid-19 pandemic, governments are called upon to invest more resources in ICT as well as the 4 Industrial Revolution (4IR) in readiness for the post Covid-19 dispensation and to anticipate the next challenges;
- b) ICT is seen as a potent tool for fighting corruption, illicit financial flows, more particularly the sophisticated money laundering schemes and other related crimes;
- c) ICT security, lack of investment in ICT infrastructure, inadequate electricity distribution and attitudes were identified as key challenges to bridging the digital divide in Africa. Governments should invest more resources in ICT infrastructure and energy generation, especially clean energy to ensure inclusivity in digitization programmes and;
- d) Every government should create an enabling environment to cultivate creativity and spur innovations which should be facilitated to flourish in the public service

On the Sub-Theme: “Achieve inclusivity through harnessing Arts and culture as instruments to inform market and building demand side capacity for effective and efficient service delivery”; Participants resolved that:

- a) In recognition of the fact that good governance and peace are essential for promotion and preservation of cultural heritage, governments should involve traditional leaders in the creative and cultural sectors, mainstream arts and cultural

education into the curricula at all levels and collaborate in the protection of intellectual property rights in Africa;

- b) There is need for policies that promote inclusivity in cultural tolerance to advance and celebrate the rich African cultural diversity whilst subscribing to unified national values;
- c) In acknowledging its massive untapped potential, culture and traditional practices should be harnessed as tools for economic development, which entails development of policies and research that nurtures entrepreneurial skills of creative practitioners and;
- d) Culture is dynamic, therefore there is need to unlearn negative cultural practices whilst integrating positive cultural dimensions to enhance efficient public administration, maintain peace and security, uphold human rights and accelerate development

On the Sub-Theme: “Celebrating contribution of the public servant: A story of courage and resilience in the management of the COVID-19 Pandemic”; Participants resolved that:

- a) The link between public service and development is important for sustainable service delivery;
- b) There is need to provide adequate resources to the public service;
- c) The public service is fit for purpose when there is a triaged phenomenology guided by merit, virtue, resourcefulness and leadership;
- d) Public servants should be resilient against any undue pressure and practice independence in delivery of public services and;
- e) Governments should cater for the social welfare of public servants post retirement

CONCLUSION

- a) In closure, the meeting expressed sincere appreciation to the Government of Zimbabwe, especially H.E. President Emmerson Mnangagwa, for the efficient facilitation, warm welcome and outstanding hosting of the 8th edition of the APSD, and to the people of Zimbabwe for their great generosity;
- b) Delegates also expressed their gratitude to development partners and sponsors for their support, and further acknowledged the speakers, adjudicators of the exhibition, resource persons and exhibitors for their valued participation and;
- c) Ministers commit to implement the Victoria Falls Declaration

DELEGATES FURTHER REGRETTED the Death of the former President of Republic of Zambia, H.E. Kenneth Kaunda a true Pan-Africanist.

WELCOMED and thanked the Republic of Zimbabwe for its indication and willingness to host the 9th Edition of the APSD in June 2023.

Issued in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe this 23rd Day of June 2021