

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE HONOURABLE KZN PREMIER, MR ES MCHUNU DURING THE PREMIER'S SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD**

Programme Director

First Lady, Mrs T Mchunu

MEC's

Mayors

Representatives of the Office of the Premier at Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and North West

HOD's and Municipal Managers

Senior Government Officials from All Spheres

DPSA Team

Members of the National and Provincial Batho Pele

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I think it is appropriate to begin by congratulating all the 2015 Premier's Service Excellence Awards finalists for going an extra mile in their call of duty in the service of our beautiful province of KwaZulu-Natal. We are all gathered here tonight on an occasion that marks the recognition of different teams that have displayed commitment in the execution of their tasks.

We pay tribute to all these humble servants of the people who continue to strive for the improvements of the quality of lives of our citizens. The Premier's Service Excellence Awards

is an exercise of sharing with the citizens of our province and government employees that excellence in service delivery is central to everything that our government expects from all of us. Tonight's function is to bring into the open the lonely and unrecognised efforts of all those who have exceeded the ordinary expectations, and are doing their work diligently, efficiently and effectively. Tonight is an important milestone where all of us gather to reflect on what service excellence is all about, and what our province is doing to encourage and monitor the culture of continuous improvement of the service delivery and greater accountability to the public sector customers and stakeholders.

The original thinking behind the Premier's Service Excellence Award was the desire to move public servants away from bureaucratic culture of an inward focus dominated by regulations and procedures. It was envisaged to be an externally focused, whereby citizen would be put first in everything we do, and uphold their dignity through implementation of Batho Pele. The idea of the Premier's Service Excellence Awards was to generate maximum participation of all provincial departments. Recognition and celebration of those employees who reached the desired levels of excellence was to be seen as a catalyst for others to emulate. It was also envisaged that these awards will generate further participation and the cycle of continuous improvement would be completed. The office of the Premier with its partners including ABSA Bank deemed necessary to review these Awards with the view to interrogate the extent to which it has been able to fulfil its intended objectives. It was also imperative to check if the Premier's Service Excellence Awards have kept abreast of the governments initiatives aimed at enhancing service delivery improvement in our province.

The Premier's Service Excellence Awards are a dependable barometer of measuring continuous improvement benchmarked by international standards, including the United Kingdom. Premier's Service Excellence Awards tap into the already researched and agreed

principles of taking our nation forward by offering exceptional service delivery. This is a continuation of the notion of stewardship and selflessness. **Martin Luther King Jr, the African American Civil Right Activists once said, “If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, ‘Here lived a great sweeper who did his job well”** In a similar vein, **Henry Ward Beecher said “We should not judge people by their peak of excellence, but by the distance they have travelled from the point where they started.”**

The KwaZulu-Natal Citizens Charter that was launched on 15 November 2005, was a means to give effect to the revival of good governance and transformation of the public service. There is much improvement that has been registered since then, but there is still more to be done.

There is no contradiction between the Premier’s Service Excellence Awards and Batho Pele. In fact, these two are complimentary initiatives by our government to reinvigorate the culture of service delivery as encapsulated in the White Paper on Public Service Transformation of 1995. It is important to constantly refer to Batho Pele’s principles with specific mentioning of the following:

- All citizens will have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.
- Citizens will be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.
- Citizens will be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and where ever possible, will be given a choice about the services that are offered, amongst others.

Service Excellence Awards has been with us for a while, with notable progress in some areas. We can no longer tolerate ad hoc and disjointed approach to service delivery. For us to guarantee a coherent level of service delivery, it became necessary to create a mechanism to honour and award those who have exceeded the required expectations so that even those who still falter can be motivated. The Premier's Service Excellence are aimed at enhancing the extent to which the desired system have been successfully operating in government departments over the past year. Continuous improvement and management involvement and commitment is very important to the long-term success of these Awards.

Management at various sectors and departments play a pivotal role in the success of the Excellence Awards. These Awards must be seen as a pioneer of change. We need to look at ways of growing the influence and success of all institutions in government, and this process can be realised if it is driven from the top. To drive this process with determination, we need a calibre of leadership that will set and communicate the direction for change, and they must also be role models in that culture. The Premier's Service Excellence Awards is not only about winning trophies. There is a need for us to look beyond that. This must be the exercise to ensure optimum service delivery improvement. I would like to challenge every government employee tonight, to be part of the creation of an organizational culture that cares, to develop the leadership skills necessary to create a compelling vision for all to emulate. I want all of you to seek and find gratification that comes with dedicated service to our people.

It is my personal wish on behalf of KwaZulu Natal Provincial Government to congratulate and challenge achievers tonight to sustain service excellence. There is no room for complacency in government, and there are no challenges that are minor. It is important to belong to the achievers league, but also to keep lifting your standards even higher

All of us, as a collective have a responsibility to strive for excellence of KwaZulu-Natal. We must unanimously proclaim that “We do Care”

I thank you