

OPENING ADDRESS BY MR. AMOS GATHECHA, EBS 'NDC' (K) PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC SERVICE DURING THE 28TH ANNUAL NATIONAL HRM CONFERENCE ON 30TH OCTOBER 2024

IHRM National Chairman

IHRM Council

IHRM Executive Director

CEOs and Captains of Industry

Conference Facilitators

Distinguished Guests,

HR professionals,

Good morning.

It gives me great pleasure to join you during the 28th Annual National HRM Conference. This Conference brings together HR Professionals from both the Public and Private Sector to share experiences and strengthen members professional development. Your presence signifies the importance of this conference and the collective commitment we share towards strengthening the HR Profession. I recognize the ever-growing relationship between the Ministry, IHRM and HR community through increased professional interactions organized by the Institute.

Over the past year, this collaboration has yielded remarkable results in elevating the status and recognition of the HR profession across Kenya. Our efforts as HR Professionals

should be geared towards excellence in people management, as the foundation of institutional success and when we get our human resource practices right, other fundamental elements of organization effectiveness, naturally align, such as, increased productivity and superior service delivery.

This year's theme, "**HR Visionaries: Transforming Workplaces, Empowering Africa,**" is congruent to the foregoing, and is fitting as we navigate the ever-changing landscape of work. The theme is critical for HR practitioners to adopt transformative strategies at the workplace for improved productivity, employee satisfaction and overall organization effectiveness. This undertaking, continues to guide our approach to public service transformation.

Distinguished Guests

HR professionals, are at the epicenter of influencing positive change to transform our workplace and build appropriate workplaces for tomorrow. We stand at a point where technological innovation, demographic shifts, and changing workforce dynamics intersect, creating both challenges for reviewing existing HR practices and unprecedented opportunities for development.

Transforming work place calls for review of existing HR practices, embracing effective leadership and assessment of organization delivery infrastructure. Responsibility of HR professionals therefore goes beyond the conceptual sphere of traditional personnel management and is now premised as a catalysts for creating environments where innovation thrives, inclusion flourishes for employees to feel valued, adopting hybrid work

models to accommodate diverse employee needs, re-designing physical work spaces to create favorable work environment, encouraging open communication, leveraging technology to streamline processes, embedding employee wellness and resilience and ensure that these principles become ingrained in organizational culture notwithstanding investment in human capital development.

When we transform our workplaces, we're actively contributing to Africa's journey towards economic excellence and social progress as envisaged under Africa's agenda 2063 that focuses on, high standard of living and wellbeing for all citizens including skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation.

To realize this dream, we must be astute practitioners who guarantee that every policy we implement, every system we improve, and every workplace culture we support should not only strengthen our institutions, but also be the very fabric of our continent's development to compete confidently on the global stage. Let us be instruments of change to create a workplace that is sustainable and reflective of our respective Institutions strategic direction while supporting people's wellbeing.

Distinguished Guests,

Let me share our progress in transforming the work place in the Public Service. The Government in line with the Kenya Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) has initiated reforms in the Public Service to improve the workplace and enhance service delivery to the Citizenry.

The Government is committed to building a Public Service that is strategic, with foresight mechanisms for anticipating change; developing highly skilled, agile and responsive service; digitalizing services and strengthening human capital approaches consistent with merit system principles including modernizing policies and practices for recruitment, retention, training and development. Important initiatives that have been undertaken in the recent past to transform the work place in the Public Service include:

a) **Development of the *Human Resource Information System Kenya (HRIS-Ke), in 2024.*** HRIS-Ke is a web-based system that has been developed and will manage human resource functions in the public sector including payroll. The system will enable allocation of a Unique Payroll Number (UPN) to all public officers under the Payroll Management Policy for the Public Service. The Policy is meant to provide an overarching framework to standardize and harmonize Payroll Management in the public service.

Ministries and Departments migrated their payrolls to the System in July, 2024. All other Agencies are expected to migrate to the system by June, 2025.

Training on the new system has been undertaken for payroll managers from Ministries, Departments, County Governments and State Corporations to ensure staff gain necessary skills and competencies for implementation. Payroll managers from public universities are currently undergoing training on the same. As Directors and Managers of HR in the Public Service you need to ensure compliance to the provisions of the system.

b) **Medical Cover for Civil Servants.** The State Department for Public Service in consultation with the Social Health Authority extended the contract for the provisions

of the comprehensive medical insurance scheme for Civil Servants up to 21st, November, 2024 to facilitate seamless transition and effective service delivery to the scheme beneficiaries. Appropriate mechanisms for continued medical provision upon the lapse of the extension period are being finalized for civil servants. In the meantime, all citizens are required to register under the New Social Health Insurance Fund.

- c) **Managing diverse Workforce** with generational differences possess a number of challenges at the work place. In managing the diverse workforce, the Government has developed and mainstreamed various policies and strategies such as Diversity Policy for the Public Service, Dignity at Work Policy for the Public Service, Gender Mainstreaming Policy, HIV and AIDS Policy at the Work Place among others to enhance inclusivity. I am also aware that the Private Sector has adopted strategies and policies on the same in tandem with our Constitutional provisions.
- d) **Digitalizing service delivery:** The Government continues to leverage on technology for improved service delivery through introduction of interventions such as virtual meetings, e-learning, Teleconferencing and e-communication including the Huduma Kenya Service Delivery Programme. This is a platform that offers one-stop service delivery points where customers access timely multiple government services.
- e) **Automated performance contracting and appraisal processes** is premised on, providing real-time insights into employee performance and organizational efficiency. Our service delivery initiatives emphasize customer service excellence, quality management systems, and rigorous monitoring of service charter implementation.

f) **Managing Mental health:** This is an important function in work place management. Good mental health is synonymous with achieving success in organizations. The government launched the National Guidelines on Workplace Mental Wellness in 2023. The guidelines highlight the importance of creating a supportive work environment and ensuring that employees have access to the necessary resources to manage their mental health.

Distinguished Guests,

The reforms we are implementing represent transformative initiatives of the public service to improve the workplace. As we look ahead, our focus areas encompass strengthening performance management systems, accelerating digital transformation, expanding capacity-building programs, enhancing service delivery mechanisms, and promoting work-life integration initiatives.

I therefore call upon HR Professionals to embrace creativity, transparency, accountability and good governance practices through our individual and collective effort of transforming workplace for better economic development.

To transform the workplace is a call that requires HR practitioners as members of IHRM to stick and adhere to HRMP Act, 2012 and the Professional Code of Conduct. I take note of the importance professional bodies play in Kenya and emphasize the fact that, the government continues to work closely with various professional bodies. This collaboration includes setting codes of conduct, ethical guidelines and qualifications with the aim of protecting the public and ensuring that professional services are delivered ethically and competently.

The HR fraternity, should therefore be at the forefront of supporting activities and programmes organized by the Institute. HRM Act, 2012 requires HR practitioners to register and be bona fide members of the Institute and continuously be in good standing for effective practice. It is incumbent upon us to not only champion the ideals of the Profession but be seen to be conducting ourselves in a professional manner guided by high moral and ethical standards. I need to emphasize the fact that HR practices usually attract Audit queries and it is imperative that we comply with the Government directive on **Zero Audit Fault** by conforming to the tenets of our professional Ethics, Standards and Values and Principles of Public Service.

As we engage in the discussions during the conference, let us remember that our ultimate goal is to build a dynamic workplace with appropriate structures, systems, policies, strategies and infrastructure for a just, equitable and prosperous Nation and Africa at large.

I hereby declare the 28th Annual National HRM Conference officially open.

Thank you.