

**SPEECH BY TOMOKO NISHIMOTO,
COUNTRY DIRECTOR UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP KENYA) DURING
THE OFFICIAL OPENNING OF THE KENYA PUBLIC
SERVICE WEEK AT KICC.**

WEDNESDAY, 20TH AUGUST 2008.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister, Raila Odinga,
Honourable Dalmas Otieno, Minister of State for Public Service
Honourable Naomi Shabaan, Minister of State for Special
Programs,
Honourable Ministers and Assistant Ministers
Head of the Public Service, Ambassador Francis Muthaura,
Permanent Secretaries, distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to join you today during this official opening of the 2nd Annual Public Service Week. On behalf of the United Nations Development Programme and development partners supporting Public Sector Reform in Kenya (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the World Bank), I congratulate you for continuing this new tradition of highlighting the public service and bringing government services closer to the people.

The United Nations has long been committed to supporting its member countries to achieve high standards of public service, that will delight their citizens and provide the support needed to enhance economic growth and socio-economic development in the country.

Enhancing the performance of the public sector and ensuring that it is results-focused and citizen-centered is an essential foundation of the pillars of Kenya's Vision 2030. As you all know the Vision looks forward to a Kenya that is a middle income country with a high quality of life for all citizens by the year 2030. The public sector provides infrastructure and services needed by the private sector that is considered the engine for the much needed economic growth. The private sector particularly has an important role to play to ensure the economic growth is an inclusive growth and the economic gain of the country is equitably distributed to all Kenyans as the linkage between economic growth and human development is by no means automatic.

The Medium Term Plan for 2008 to 2012 calls for public sector reforms founded on the principles of results-based management, and reforms that will inculcate values and ethics, strengthen public institutions and ensure that government links up to work together

for greater efficiency in service provision. A modern, affordable and results-focused public service is a critical element in socio-economic transformation. These reforms will also be crucial to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, commonly known as the “MDGs.”

Ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to point out that in 2002, the United Nations determined that June 23rd each year would be declared the UN Public Service Day. The day provides an opportunity for member countries to:

- Celebrate the value of public service to the community;
- Highlight the contribution of public service in the development process;
- Recognize the work of public servants, and
- Encourage young people to become future leaders.

We are pleased to see Kenya expanded this concept and chose to select several days to highlight the achievements and commitments of the public service.

In 2007, we were delighted to stand behind our proud partner, the Republic of Kenya, as she received the UN Public Service award for enhancing transparency and accountability through the

implementation of performance contracting. The annual public service award is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service – it rewards the creative achievements and contributions of public sector institutions to development in countries around the world. Kenya clearly demonstrated an innovation in governance and enhanced professionalism in the public service through implementation of performance contracts throughout the public service. Notwithstanding this, this is not the time to sit back and relax. There is so much more needed to be done. We are pleased to see that Kenya’s plans include extending performance contracting to the entire public sector.

This year’s theme for public service week, “**Citizen Service Delivery Charters,**” also shows that Kenya is working to achieve higher levels of service to its citizens. These newly resolved, or simplified, service charters explicitly set out the commitment by the Government of Kenya to its citizens to provide:

- specified services
- at a specified cost and
- within a specified time

Essentially, the citizens are entitled to know when and what kind of services can be provided and how much they needed to pay to pay.

By simplifying the commitments and ensuring that they are accessible to customers at all service delivery points, the government is ensuring that citizens are aware of their right to quality service – **HUDUMA BORA NI HAKI YAKO!**

All partners has a great hope and expect that the Service Charters also further enhance transparency in the public service – no longer will civil servants be in a position to demand “**chai**” or “ a little something” for service **AND** Kenyan’s will know where and how to seek redress for poor service.

The government’s focus on conducting public service week events across the country further shows its commitment to service. The government is bringing itself to the people, meeting the citizens where they are. Kenyans will be increasingly aware of what services are available from government, what they can expect their government to do for them – whether it is agricultural services, immunization programs, power and water, or how they can expect to be treated by police. Wonderful.

Finally, public service week is an opportunity for the public service to “show off”; to show case it’s services; to demonstrate to people throughout the country that “the public service works”

Together with you I hope to enjoy the displays that public servants have worked hard to bring you and learn about your public service. I urge public servants to speak with each other, and devise new ways to “link up” to provide ever-improving services to the citizens of Kenya. On behalf of all the development partners in public service reforms, I am pleased to reiterate our support for the goals and objectives of the 2008 Public Service Week. I would like to conclude with a question to each and every public servant here with us today “ are you proud of serving the nation?” I hope the answer is a big yes with a smile on your face. Not only during this week, but also every day and each day I hope you wake up with renewed enthusiasm for your high calling to serve the people of Kenya.

Thank you for your attention.