



PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM UNIT, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

# PROGRESS REPORT ON PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

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**SECOND QUARTER  
APRIL-JUNE 2010**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Report covers the period April-June 2010, and it follows on from the First Quarter activities as articulated in the PSRU Annual Work Plan (AWP) within the Public Sector Reform Framework. While some elements of the reform initiatives were embarked upon during the First Quarter, the period January-March was principally about reviews, strategies and processes. The Second Quarter entailed completion of reviews and the commencement of the implementation of reform initiatives. It must be noted, however, that reviews, strategies and processes, like the wider Public Sector Reform initiatives are not products in themselves. These are undertaken periodically to ensure that new initiatives are accommodated; that initiatives that do not add value to MDAs are discarded, and that the reform agenda is held on track. Therefore, as we embarked on implementation, we also had cause to re-review to ensure value-addition. This pattern will persist throughout the life span of the project.

### **Management and Functional Reviews (MFR)**

We continued to use the Management and Functional Reviews (MFR) as the entry points to access the institutional, structural and human capacities of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA), and to discuss and recommend the way forward. By this means, the Public Sector Reform Unit embarks on creating institutions and developing a critical mass of Human Resources capable of supporting and facilitating sustained improvements in the Public Service delivery systems. The objectives of this exercise are, as always, to ensure that Ministries, Departments and Agencies have:

- i. The right management structures, e.g., Change Management Teams, Policy and Planning Units, Internal Audit Departments, Procurement , Records and Human Resources Cadres, etc.
- ii. The right staff skills
- iii. Correct systems, and
- iv. That functions are aligned and roles clarified to avoid conflict and maximize productivity

We consider these activities as the starting points of any meaningful and lasting Public Sector Reform initiatives. Along this development, PSRU undertook MFR on the Ministry of

Transport and Aviation (the last remaining Ministry to be reviewed). The report is being finalized.

Also, the draft MFR on the National Revenue Authority (NRA) was finalized and presented to the Board and Management of NRA. A Power Point presentation of the Report was made to the NRA Board and Management in **May 2010**. While full implementation of the MFR recommendations have not been undertaken, we are pleased to report that some key recommendations are being pursued. It must be noted, however, that acceptance of the recommendations and the subsequent implementation of those recommendations rest with the Management and Boar of the National Revenue Authority.

The following activities were also undertaken in relation to Management and Functional Reviews:

- Implementation Plan for the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources Completed
- Implementation Plans for the Ministry of Employment, Labour & Social Security Completed
- Finalization of report on the Ministry of Works, Housing & Infrastructure
- Finalization of Report on the Ministry of Tourism & Culture
- Providing Technical backstopping to Ministries on Development of Strategic and implementation Plans

#### **Working with the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO)**

PSRU continued to usefully engage and collaborate with the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) and the Leadership of the Civil Service. We continued to provide technical backstopping in areas that would enhance Civil Service productivity. Through our shared expertise:

- a. Job Descriptions for all Civil Service Positions have been reviewed and updated
- b. Civil Service numbers reduced from 17,560 in 2007/2008 to **13,631** in March 2010 (although this increased to 15,703 in May 2010 due to recruitment to service the Free Healthcare Initiative
- c. Reduce the wage bill by **Le500m** monthly due to achievement in(b) above

- d. Create files for all Civil Servants (Note: at the start of the programme in 2007, only 35% of the over 15,000 Civil Servants had files)
- e. Introduced new Records Management Procedures
- f. Detailed Procedures manual and Desk Instructions Finalized

Plans to Roll-out to five Ministries, Departments and Agencies, commencing with the Ministry of **Education**, Youth and Sports were stalled due to bureaucratic bottlenecks and disagreements between the International Records Management Trust, PSRU, HRMO and the leadership of the Ministry of Education over the procurement of materials and resource control. Discussions are on-going.

### **Staff Rationalisation, Pay and Incentives**

One of the outstanding deficiencies in all Ministries, Departments and Agencies, as evident in the Management and Functional Reviews is the lack of the right skills mix, and the imbalance in existing skills in MDAs. The need exists in all MDAs to immediately recruit quality staff to perform critical functions required to kick start the implementation of the reform programme while in the longer term, a system of optimal staffing levels with adequate compensation is put in place in all MDAs. Arising out of the MFRs, several technical / professional vacancies have been identified. Through UNDP support, modalities have now been established to recruit in excess of 200 professional / technical staff to fill critical positions across ministries, Departments and Agencies. Short listing of applicants has been completed and interviews and prescribed examinations will be conducted in the Third Quarter for selection of suitable candidates.

A total number of 76 technical positions were filled through the Public Service Commission between April and first half of July 2010. These include:

Dental Surgeon

Senior Medical Officers

Inspecting Pharmacists

Deputy Director of Internal Audit

Principal Auditors (Internal Audit)

Senior Auditors (Internal Audit)

Auditors and Assistant Auditors

Total appointments through the PSC since January 2010 is 129.

### **Right Sizing of Staff**

It is a fact that there is an imbalance of skills that exist in MDAs. It is also true that MDAs are severely incapacitated in terms of human resource expertise. However, on-going discussions about right-sizing the Civil Service has been one-sided, i.e., reduce the Civil Service numbers. There is the obvious need to reduce the size of the Civil Service by removing persons who do not add value to the establishment. This has to be done with informed judgement. While it is acknowledged that the Civil Service is bloated particularly at the bottom, it is also a fact that the bulk of the healthcare service providers are within the lower cadre of the service. The numbers in the case of the healthcare providers have grown over the last Quarter. For instance, of the **3,554** recruitment by the Human Resource Management Office between February and June this year, over **95%** are in the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. The numbers for the Health sector do not seem to be subsiding, as more and more needs are established in the peripheral health units.

That notwithstanding, some efforts have been made reduce the size of the Civil Service. As stated above, at the start of the programme, the Civil Service strength stood at **17,560**. In the bid to right-size the Civil Service, a verification exercise was undertaken, which led to a drastic reduction in the size of the establishment to **12,147** in mid/end 2009. This number increased to **13,631** in March 2010. In May this year, the Civil Service number was increased to **15,703**, due to intake in the Health Sector. However, we have identified staff and positions to be retrenched from the Civil Service. Between February and early June 2010, a total of 1818 staff retired, with an additional 917 names submitted for voluntary retirement. Discussions are on-going with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development on a suitable package. A definitive exit package will trigger a wider retrenchment programme.

PSRU is currently undertaking an exercise to determine the Establishment List of the entire Civil Service. This will provide definitive information about size, retrenchment, etc., of the Civil Service.

### **Pay and Incentives**

Attracting, retaining and managing a competent workforce has continued to posed considerable challenges in our Public Service. Our middle level staff capacity is virtually

non-existent and must be replenished. We do not have the right skills mix, and remuneration is uncompetitive to attract and retain the skills we need to maximize service delivery.

Recognizing that pay is critical in attracting and retaining quality staff, a new Pay Structure has been drafted for the consideration and approval of the Cabinet. This exercise is informed largely by a consultancy Report by Saadia Consulting, two Technical Assistance support from the World Bank and other relevant studies/documentation. The report will be provided on or before Friday, 23 July 2010.

### **Improvements in Systems and Tools**

Given the importance of ICT in governance, efforts have been made to install systems and tools in MDAs to enhance service delivery. Action commenced to modernize the ICT platform, with modest supplies of essential equipment to the Cabinet Secretariat, Human Resource Management Office, Public Service Commission and the Public Sector Reform Unit.

An E-Government Unit with its supporting Steering Committee has been established at the Ministry of Information and Communications. This will ensure a common platform for Government and fast-track the E-Governance project.

In line with the UNDP Work Plan relating to the Civil Service Reform, the UNDP Country Director, Mia Seppo on Wednesday, 7 July 2010 handed over one Four-Wheel Toyota Jeep and a consignment of Computers and accessories to the Public Service Commission (PSC). UNDP funded the installation of internet services, and will also pay for these services for six months (July-December 2010) at the PSC

### **Training and Training Policy**

Since the closure of the Civil Service Training College, training in the Civil Service has been extremely uncoordinated and ad hoc, and often not regarded as part of the Human Resource Management process. There is need to train and retrain civil servants in relevant areas. While we recognize that a functional Civil Service Training College is essential, we equally recognize that training cannot wait for the resuscitation of the Civil Service Training College.

A **Training Policy** has been developed which ensures that Civil Servants are exposed to periodic training as a way of capacity development.

For the Short/Medium Term, PSRU and HRMO have designed, and are implementing training programmes for Middle and Senior Level Civil Servants in Records Management, Human Resource Management, Public Policy and Policy Analysis, Procurement Management, Civil Service Ethics, etc. A good number of Middle and Senior Civil Servants have already benefitted from the programme, which is on-going.

Records and Human Resource Officers benefitted from relevant training programmes at the PSRU

Also, 75 officials of the Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment completed Phase I of the training in Geographic Information Systems and related technology at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone.

Similarly, we continued to benefit from higher level training supported by the African Capacity Building Foundation at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration.

Action has been initiated for the construction of the Civil Service Training College, as well as a National Records and Archives Centre.

### **The Civil Code, Regulations and Rules**

Over the last five decades, the Civil Service has been locked up in old-fashioned “Regulations and Rules”, which although useful in the past, was no longer tenable in a fast-moving, knowledge-based environment. The Civil Service and indeed Civil Servants have to overcome entrenched attitudes as part of the Change Process. To address the obsolescence of the General Orders, a new “Civil Service Code, Regulations and Rules” has been prepared.

### **Visitation to MDAs**

Between March and May, the PSRU embarked on audit visits to Ministries. These meetings were meant to complement regular monitoring of the progress of implementation of the recommendations from the MFRs. The meetings were held between PSRU staff and the

senior management team of the various Ministries. During these meetings discussions were held on the progress of implementation, constraints, and the way forward. The meetings were very productive and both the PSRU and individual Ministries were able to determine priority actions to be pursued in the immediate term. They also provided opportunities to discuss the development of Service Charters and to verify the existence of Change Management Teams.

These monitoring exercises revealed the urgent need to provide assistance to a number of Ministries by way of tools / equipment. In particular, the following Ministries stand out clearly in need of basic computing equipment:

- i. Ministry of Information and Communications (E-Government Unit)
- ii. Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (creation of Directorates following the Management and Functional Reviews)
- iii. Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs (Relocation and creation of new divisions to revamp the Ministry – MFR reports)
- iv. Ministry of Works, Housing and Infrastructure (creation of new functional department and need to revamp the Ministry – MFR report)
- v. Ministry of Internal Affairs, Local Government and Rural Development (Support to Internal Affairs Division)
- vi. Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security (enhance service delivery – MFR report)

### **Joint evaluation of Diaspora Project**

The Diaspora Programme is a short-term stop-gap measure through which technical experts from the Diaspora are recruited to work in MDAs for an initial period of one-year. The Programme, which targets specialised skills, effectively started in 2008 with support from UNDP. The first set of contracts ended in May and June, and the Office of Diaspora Affairs expressed a desire for contract extensions. Some of the experts have made significant inroads in their TORs, and there is still need for their services in the MDAs. However, to determine the continued relevance or otherwise of the Diaspora Programme, a joint evaluation exercise was undertaken in June. The main reasons for the evaluation were to,

- Assess the performance of the experts
- Assess the impact of their engagement in the various MDAs
- Determine the continued need in the MDAs.



- Verify the observations made in the Performance Appraisal matrix prepared by ODA and PSRU, already submitted to the Diaspora Advisory Group.

The evaluation team comprised representatives from the Office of Diaspora Affairs, UNDP, PSRU and the HRMO. Separate meetings were held with the experts, their counterparts/ co-workers, and their supervisors. The information gleaned from these meetings was valuable, especially in terms of fine-tuning the programme itself. Some of the key conclusions include;

- Programme should be implemented concurrently with pay reform as well as recruitment of middle level professionals in the Civil Service
- Recruitment framework adopted by Diaspora Advisory Group should be adhered to
- Basic tools and equipment should be present in the MDAs prior to experts arrival
- Orientation for experts must be provided upon arrival and prior to start of duties
- Counterpart funding should be provided
- Possibilities of absorption into Civil Service must be discussed with the experts in the beginning and not as an afterthought
- An information-sharing session arranged for MDAs on the Programme
- Needs assessment submitted by the MDAs and deployment of experts should be informed by the MFRs
- A meeting must be held for all experts and senior management, including Ministers, in each MDA at the beginning of their tenure
- Communication channels within MDAs should be clearly defined for the experts
- Monthly progress reports must be submitted to ODA/HRMO/PSRU through the Supervisor/PS in the MDA
- Joint monitoring visits (ODA/ HRMO/PSRU) must be made to all MDAs benefiting from the Programme on a quarterly basis

## **Conclusion**

Following PSRU presentation to Cabinet on the status of Public Sector Reform on 9 June 2010, Ministers and Civil Servants now understand and have accordingly embraced the reform agenda. The Presentation was followed by monitoring visits to all Ministries. We were encouraged by the participation and contributions made by both the Civil Service and the political leaderships (Ministers/Deputy Ministers) at the monitoring sessions. However, much effort has to be made in continuing to capacitate the Ministries, particularly by way of

recruiting and retaining quality skills, providing basic equipment and training programmes. Partners are encouraged to pay particular attention to meeting their commitments (in time) in these areas.