

# NIGERIA

## Public Service Reform

Public Service Reform  
for  
Sustainable Development:  
*The Nigerian Experience*

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Wellington, New Zealand.

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#### Mission Statement

Facilitating governance reforms as the change agent for the Nigerian Public Service to work for the people in the best tradition of globally cherished values

#### Vision Statement

An integrity- and merit-based public service driven by national interest and the efficient management of resources and talents

*This monograph is adapted from a guest lecture delivered by the author (being the director general of the Bureau of Public Service Reforms, Nigeria) at the Commonwealth Advanced Seminar, 2006 in Wellington, New Zealand*

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# P R E F A C E

Let me, at the outset, thank the organizers of the 2006 Commonwealth Advanced Seminar, the 11<sup>th</sup> under the theme 'Leadership and Change in the Public Sector' for inviting me to Wellington, New Zealand, to share the Nigerian experience in public service reforms with an array of distinguished participants, made up of eminent public sector officials of member states of the Commonwealth of Nations and of Countries within the Asia-Pacific Region. I wish to commend the Commonwealth Secretariat, through its Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC); the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZ Aid) and Victoria University of Wellington, for keeping the Advanced Seminar Series going, over the years in spite of all odds, and raising it as an enduring platform for exploring new challenges and perspectives in innovative Public Service Management. I believe that the seminar, among others, has contributed immensely not only to sustaining the momentum of reforms in our respective countries but further reinvigorating the various reform initiatives currently being implemented in virtually every country in the Commonwealth of Nations.

I personally feel very humbled to be invited to make this contribution, bearing in mind the array of talents within the Commonwealth. I was a participant at CAS 2005. Choosing me among the distinguished participants of CAS 2005 to deliver the lead paper for the 2006 seminar therefore, is to me, a recognition of the efforts of the Nigerian government in repositioning its public service to work more efficiently and effectively for the Nigerian people. Accordingly, it is an honour to the chief driver of reforms in Nigeria, the President of the Federal Republic, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, who has taken Nigeria to a new horizon with an uncommon vision, exemplary leadership and tenacity of purpose, through his unwavering commitment to the implementation of Nigeria's on-going multi-sectoral reforms, of which public service reform is a key component.

**Goke Adegoroye**

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **Demography, History and Geography**

Nigeria is a country of 140 million people from 373 ethnic groups/nationalities, each with its own distinct language and culture. The population is currently divided between Christians (40%), Muslims (40%), and adherents of traditional religions (20%). Nigeria began to come under British rule from 1864 through separate treaties signed with respective kingdoms like, Lagos, Bonny and Opobo in the Niger Delta etc. Resulting from this were the Lagos Crown Colony 1862, which later became Lagos Protectorate; Oil Rivers Protectorate 1885, which later became Niger Coast Protectorate 1893 and was renamed Protectorate of Southern Nigeria 1900; and the Sudan Province consisting of territories under the shadow control of the Royal Niger Company, which was renamed the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in 1900. From 1900 - 1906, there were three administrations, namely: Southern and Northern Protectorates and Lagos Colony. Lagos Colony was later administered as part of the Southern Protectorate, under the name 'Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria' from 1906 until amalgamation in 1914 when the entire area, Southern and Northern Protectorates, began to be governed as a country. Nigeria gained independence from Britain on 1 October 1960 and became a republic on 1 October 1963.

Geographically, Nigeria is located between latitudes 4° and 15° north of the Equator, and between longitudes 3° and 15° east of the Greenwich Meridian – an area covering 923,800 sq. km with over 800 km of coastline on the Atlantic Ocean spreading northwards through the mangrove-swamps of the oil- (petroleum-) rich Niger Delta, the rain forest and guinea savannah, the Sahel savannah prone to desert encroachment on the fringes of the Niger Republic. As the most easterly country in West Africa, it shares a lot of hydrological, geomorphological as well as maritime characteristics with the Central African countries. Accordingly, Nigeria belongs to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as well as the Gulf of Guinea Large Marine Ecosystem because of its location on the Bights of Benin and Biafra.

### **Evolution of the Nigerian Civil Service**

The Nigerian Civil Service evolved from the colonial service which was established by the British authorities as the administrative machinery for governing Nigeria. The amalgamation of the then northern and southern protectorates in 1914, under Lord Fredrick Lugard, led to the establishment, for the first time, of what seemed like a unified service. The upper echelon of the colonial service was dominated by Europeans on whom were concentrated executive, judicial and legislative powers. Traditional rulers were also co-opted into the colonial power structure.

With the creation of three regions – North, East and West in 1954, there were three regional civil services. A public service commission was also established at the centre and in each of the three regions during the same period. The federal and regional services thereafter nurtured a career civil service within their respective domains. At independence, the role of the civil service shifted from the colonial mould of maintaining law and order to that of facilitating the realization of the nation's development aspirations. Consequently, the civil service became more visible and active both in the formulation and execution of development policies and programmes. With the successful prosecution of the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), increased oil revenues in the 1970s, greater commitment to the expansion of the economy, and the creation of states to replace the regions, the civil service both at the federal and state levels witnessed an unprecedented growth to match its increased responsibilities. Military incursions into governance (and their inexperience in governance) especially between 1966 and 1975 made permanent secretaries to become more visible and powerful. Such visibility, however, created resentment for the service by subsequent administrations and the service suffered for it.

### **Political Structure**

At independence in 1960, there were 3 regions – the Western, Eastern and Northern regions respectively dominated by Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa/Fulani. The Nigerian Civil War, and agitations for self-determination by the various minority ethnic groups as a safeguard against being dominated by the major ethnic groups led to the creation of states by successive governments in Nigeria, from 1967 to 1996.

Accordingly, from 3 Regions in 1960, Nigeria became 12 states in 1967 on the eve of the civil war as a strategy to isolate the Ibos in Biafra; 19 States plus the FCT in 1976; 21 States plus FCT in 1987; 30 States plus FCT in 1991; and 36

States plus the FCT in 1996.

There are 774 local government authorities, 350 federal constituencies, 109 senatorial districts and 6 geopolitical zones.

### Statistics of the Nigerian Public Service as at 2005

#### A. Breakdown of Staff Strength

- Federal Core Civil Servants (Including 47 Permanent Secretaries and 2,000 Officers at the Directorate Cadre)	-	180,492
- Public Officers in the Military, Police & Para-Military Services	-	457,000
- Public Officers in Agencies and Educational Institutions	-	470,000
- Public Officers at the State Level	-	540,000
- Public Officers at the Local Government Level	-	620,000
- Total	-	2,267,492

#### B. Payroll Breakdown At The Federal Level As Percentage of Total Public Service Emoluments

- Civil Service	- 18%	
- Military and Police and Para-Military	-	35%
- Agencies & Educational Institutions	-	31%
- Others, including Hospitals	-	16%

#### C. Average Monthly Pay Per Cadre

- Permanent Secretaries	- US\$1,000
- Director	- US\$700
- Confidential Secretary	- US\$400

#### D. Percentage Distribution of Federal Civil Servants By Cadre

- Directorate Cadre	- 1.7%	
- Non-Directorate Graduate Officer Cadre	-	10.0%
- Executive, Technical & Clerical Class	-	18.0%

- Sub-Clerical, Miscellaneous and Un-established Grades - 70%

#### E. Other Statistics

- Current Average Age of Civil Servants (60% are over 40 years) - 42 years
- Retirement Age - 60 years
- Maximum Service Years - 35 years.

### **Chronology of Administrative Reviews/Reforms and Highlights of Major Recommendations**

Administrative reforms have always been instituted by successive governments essentially, to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service. From 1945 to date, there have been 11 of such reviews with varying focal points and complexities of coverage, in terms of their attempts to install more appropriate structures and conditions of service and the need to improve the efficiency of service delivery, as would be seen in the following table:

Administrative Review/Reform Panel	Focus
Tudor Davis Commission, 1945	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed wages and general conditions of service</li> </ul>
Harragin Salary Review Commission, 1946	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed wages and general conditions of service; and</li> <li>• Divided the Civil Service into "Senior Service and Junior Service" (2 rigid compartments)</li> </ul>
Gorsuch Commission, 1951	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed Remuneration and Structure of the Service and noted absence of viable middle category and created 5 main Grades</li> </ul>
Hewn Committee, 1959	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed integration of Ministries and Departments</li> <li>• Defined the roles and functions of Permanent Secretaries.</li> </ul>
Mbanefo Salaries and Wages Commission 1959	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed of salaries and wages</li> </ul>
Morgan Commission, 1963	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed salaries/wages of junior staff of Federal Government and Private establishment</li> <li>• Introduced for the first time the minimum wage in Nigeria on geographical basis.</li> </ul>
Elwood Grading Team 1966	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examined anomalies in the gradings of posts to proposed uniform salaries for officers performing identical duties</li> </ul>



Administrative Review/Reform Panel	Focus
Adebo Salaries/Wages Commission, 1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proposed establishment of a Public Service Review Commission to examine: the role of the Public Service Commission; the structure of the Civil Service; conditions of service; and training arrangements.</li> </ul>
Udoji Commission, 1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on the issue of increasing efficiency and effectiveness within the context of meeting the challenges of a development-oriented society;</li> <li>• Made recommendations designed to improve the structure and the system;</li> <li>• Introduced Open Reporting System for performance evaluation;</li> <li>• Established a Unified Grading and Salary Structure covering all posts in the Service; and</li> <li>• Created a Unified Senior Management Group for Administrative and Professionals for central management of career.</li> </ul>

Despite all these well-intentioned efforts, as at the mid-1980s, the Nigerian Civil Service was far from being ideal. It was tradition-bound, somewhat ponderous and showing signs of deterioration and several undesirable characteristics of which the following were the most prominent: over-centralization, incessant conflicts between cadres, little emphasis on results and concrete performance, counterproductive separation of authority from responsibility at the topmost hierarchy, dangerously low staff morale and productivity, and inappropriate staff development practices. Indeed, at that point in time, the Civil Service was displaying a patent inability to cope effectively with the challenges of a modern, complex and development-hungry society.

Therefore, the Dotun Philips Reform was set up in 1986 and its recommendations were designed to ensure the following:

- enhanced professionalism
- alignment with the presidential system of government
- decentralization and delegation
- combination of authority with responsibility
- increased accountability
- enhanced checks and balances
- general modernization
- enhanced effectiveness, efficiency and speed of operation

The recommendations were passed into law by the government through the

promulgation of the Civil Service Reorganization Decree No. 43 of 1988. Some of the most important provisions of the reforms were the following:

- (i) The office of the head of civil service was abolished and the minister in addition to being the chief executive also became the accounting officer in place of the permanent secretary;
- (ii) the post of permanent secretary was also abolished. In its place, a new political post of director-general was created. The director-general then held office at the pleasure of the president and would vacate office with the government which appointed him unless reappointed by an incoming administration;
- (iii) The civil service was professionalized in order to stimulate specialization and expertise. In this regard, an officer was expected to make a career in a particular ministry or department;
- (iv) Each ministry was restructured along departmental lines to reflect the basic functions and areas of concern of the ministry. Each department was split into divisions, each division was subdivided into branches, and branches into sections;
- (v) Each ministry was empowered to undertake the appointment, promotion and discipline of its staff under the general and uniform guidelines provided by the Federal Civil Service Commission;
- (vi) Each ministry or extra-ministerial department was allowed to have 3 common services departments, viz. the Department of Personnel Management, the Department of Finance and Supplies and the Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, and not more than five operations departments.

After a few years of operation, it became clear that the reform had limitations, notable among which were the following as listed in the Civil Service Handbook of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN):

- ▶ Inadequate knowledge about the provisions of the reforms on the part of some civil servants and top government functionaries.
- ▶ Absence (on the part of top government functionaries), of a strong commitment to the implementation of the reforms partly as a result of the misconception that full implementation will erode their powers.
- ▶ The problem of human resistance to change and the fear of the unknown on the part of many civil servants.
- ▶ Inadequate funds for the implementation of the provisions of the reforms

and its sustenance.

- ▶ Wrong deployment of officers to duties not relevant to their academic/professional background, training and cognate experience.
- ▶ Absence of a formal programme of implementation incorporating deadlines and lack of sanctions for infringing the provisions of the reforms.

The Civil Service Review Panel was therefore set up by government in 1995 under the chairmanship of Allison Ayida, a former permanent secretary and secretary to the government/head of service. The Ayida Panel recommended the abrogation of the decree and a return to what the Civil Service was before the introduction of the reforms!

My personal opinion is that civil servants never forgave Dotun Philips for his recommendation that the tenure of directors-general should co-terminate with that of the government that appointed them. Never mind that civil servants were also the beneficiaries of the policy as it allowed the top echelon of the service to be injected with fresh, young and bright bureaucrats. Of course the reversal of that policy has now allowed some of the beneficiaries of the policy to occupy their positions for more than a decade!

## **A BATTERED PUBLIC SERVICE BURDENED WITH REVIVING A COLLAPSED NATION STATE**

### **Poverty in the Midst of Plenty**

The responsibility of leadership, not only in West Africa but in the entire continent has been placed upon Nigeria by a combination of its size, and its human-cum-natural resource endowments. This notwithstanding, Nigeria remains a microcosm of the African continent in terms of health and socio-economic woes, political instability and internal conflicts, and missed opportunities. Africa constitutes 12 per cent of the world's population, yet it accounts for less than 2 per cent of the global trade and less than 1 per cent of foreign direct investment (FDI). It is the **most indebted** with many countries requiring as much as 40 per cent GNP to meet debt service obligations. It is also the **most infested** in terms of HIV/AIDS, malaria, polio, typhoid, tuberculosis, etc (with life expectancy at between 48 and 52 years), and the most vulnerable to natural disasters.

Nigeria's debt burden until April 2006 was \$32 billion; life expectancy is 50 years. Polio is yet to be eradicated. The national average rate of HIV/AIDS infection is 3 per cent. Although Nigeria produces 2.3 million barrels of oil per day but with 140 million people, Nigeria's revenue from oil (which accounts for 75 per cent of its foreign exchange earning) even at \$60 USD per barrel, amounts to only 53 cents per person per day! Additionally, while the continental average per capita aid receipt is \$28.00 per annum, Nigeria's aid receipt per capita is \$2.00. The sad irony however, is that Nigeria's is a case of squandered potentials and poverty in the midst of plenty.

In socio-political terms, Nigeria is permanently in an excited state with ethnic and religious struggles acting as ready fuel and potential dynamite for the polity. Indeed, Nigeria has been metaphorically referred to as the 'trigger' of the African gun. Turning the map of Africa 90° counterclockwise from the South African end

shows Africa presenting itself as a pistol, with South Africa as the mouth of the barrel and Nigeria as the trigger! Perhaps this explains why Nigeria is always in an excited and restive state; and this has implications for public service reform. The challenge is to transmute such energies into a productive engagement towards national development.

President Obasanjo has been more traumatized than most Nigerians by the country's retrogression from its high development potentials of the 60s and 70s because he knew where Nigeria was on the ladder of development when he handed over power as military head of state in 1979 (49<sup>th</sup> on HDI ranking) and the abyss (178<sup>th</sup> on the HDI ranking) to which it had slid in the 20 years before he again assumed power as a democratically elected President in 1999. In his address at the swearing-in ceremony of federal ministers in Abuja on 30 June 1999 titled 'The Historic Mission of National Restoration', he said:

*Our beloved nation has been virtually on the brink of collapse. At least the past one and a half decades have been characterized by calamitous retrogression in almost every conceivable sphere of life. Nigerians have, indeed, passed through harrowing times and watched their standards of living plummet drastically, just as their human rights were steadily eroded. Life became almost short, brutish and nasty. Those were surely the most difficult days for Nigeria since the end of the Civil War in 1970.... There are many things crying for attention. Our battered national economy is certainly one of them .... The grim condition of many of our citizens was worsened by the deterioration of public services where access to pipe-borne water and affordable health care became a pipedream and the supply of electricity became epileptic and unreliable in an era in which globalization has made such services ubiquitous and cheap.*

The indices were glaring:

- Economic downturn
- Decay and near collapse of social and physical infrastructure
- Impairment of public sector institutions
- Poor economic management
- High unemployment
- Low investor confidence
- Widespread corruption
- Excruciating debt overhang
- High poverty rate
- Lack of confidence in government

Nigeria also had to confront the external realities of a changing world where the dominant issues were globalization and democracy with pressures being increasingly exerted on public services to render services more competently, diligently and professionally. Our citizens, long traumatized by decades of military rule, saw democratic governance as the panacea and looked up to the public service to effectively complement government's efforts in speedily delivering the dividends of democracy.

### Reviving a Comatose Service

Barely one week after his inauguration, President Obasanjo set the tone for the process of change in the civil service through a 10-day seminar organized for federal permanent secretaries. The seminar was coordinated by Professor Adebayo Adedeji, former executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and undersecretary-general of the United Nations. The seriousness of the new administration to overhaul the civil service was demonstrated at the conclusion of the seminar when, based on their performance at the seminar, about 40 per cent of permanent secretaries inherited from the previous administration were disengaged from the service and new ones were appointed.

The seminar was extended down the line to directorate level officers, in a series of 2-week re-orientation workshops, with the theme, *Preparing the Nigerian Public Service for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, beginning with the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic under Civil Administration*. There were 20 editions of the workshop, running from 1999 to 2001, covering 1,902 officers. The communiqué released by participants at the end of the workshops put a number of issues on the table for consideration to jumpstart the public service reform process. Some of these issues were:

- ▶ the need to address the massive expansion in the size of the service which had risen 350 per cent between 1960 and 1999 compared with a national population increase of 160 per cent over the same period;
- ▶ dealing with the decline in the institutional capacity, efficiency, effectiveness and commitment of the service;
- ▶ focusing more on ethical and moral issues, and in particular, addressing the popular perception that the civil service was corrupt;
- ▶ placing more emphasis on training and retraining of officers and increasing the annual budget on training and development;
- ▶ reviewing civil service rules and regulations and ensuring their uniform application in the entire public service;

- ▶ restructuring and streamlining the service;
- ▶ establishing a Public Service Capacity Assessment and Administrative Reform Council to lead the process of reinvigorating the Civil Service.

Over the same period 1999-2001, several retreats were organized for ministers, special advisers and permanent secretaries, the most noteworthy being the 4<sup>th</sup> retreat held at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, Jos from 23-25 February 2001 under the theme 'The New Orientation'. The major outcome of the retreat was the *Kuru Declaration*, a series of statements of commitments embodying a new national ideology and code of ethics for public officers, signed by all members.

The apprehension of President Obasanjo on the quality of the public service was confirmed in the findings of a 2001 service-wide study conducted by the management services office (MSO) of the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF), which revealed the following:

- an aging population – 60 per cent of the work force is constituted by officers who are 40 years old and above;
- the preponderance of unskilled staff in the service – 70 per cent of the entire workforce is constituted by officers on Grade Levels 01 - 06 while only 1.7 per cent of the workforce is made up of officers in the strategic thinking directorate cadre (GLs 15-17);
- a prevalence of 'ghost' workers symptomatic of poor personnel record-keeping and payroll control systems;
- about 60 per cent of federal government spending is deployed to servicing the federal bureaucracy (including the National Assembly);
- pervading low morale, especially at the higher levels of service, resulting from non-professional human resource management (HRM) practice;
- a highly centralized, hierarchical and rule-driven system which stifles individual initiative and muffles corporate accountability;
- ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) with neither mission and vision Statements, nor clear corporate and individual schedules of duties;
- Under-resourced public institutions lacking the capacity to make optional use of technological changes to modernize their operations;
- grossly inadequate working tools required to operate a modern management system;
- erosion of professionalism and esprit de corps;
- policy making had degenerated to a routine response to addressing urgent

problems rather than a structured initiative involving painstaking analysis, consultation and monitored control;

- there were serious capacity gaps at all levels due to prolonged absence of systematic training, needs identification and serious commitment towards updating skills;
- the procurement system was fundamentally flawed as it was not transparent.



# 3

## **PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL, CONTINENTAL, AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES**

### **Response Strategies**

President Obasanjo's response to the Nigerian situation was a 2-pronged approach: One, at the continental level in collaboration with key African Leaders namely: Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, to produce in 2000 the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Two, a national initiative called National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

#### **(i) New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)**

NEPAD is a development agenda of African States reflecting the determination of the peoples to shape their own destiny through partnership with global stakeholders who share in the principles and visions enunciated under the initiative. The broad goals of NEPAD are:

- eradicating widespread and severe poverty;
- promoting accelerated growth and sustainable development;
- halting incessant conflicts by strengthening mechanism of conflict prevention, management and resolution;
- accelerating regional cooperation planning and implementation of cross country projects;
- adopting and adhering to best practices in political and economic governance; and
- generally strengthening Africa's capacity in harnessing the gains of globalization.

The corresponding strategic development challenges under NEPAD are:

- resumption of accelerated growth and sustainable development
- reduction of poverty and income inequality

- restoration of peace, security and stability entrenchment of good governance
- consolidation of democratic gains and strengthening of democratic institutions and structures
- rehabilitation and construction of infrastructural facilities
- redefinition of relationship with partners
- reconfiguration of global financial architecture
- bridging the digital divide between the North and the South.

Under NEPAD, the reform instrument is the African Peer Review Mechanism, a self-monitoring instrument voluntarily acceded to by member states of the African Union, to measure the progress in the attainment of the objectives/goals of NEPAD in 4 thematic priority areas:

- democratic and political governance
- economic governance
- corporate governance
- socio-economic governance

#### **(ii) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

There is also the United Nations' initiative, the millennium development goals (MDGs), which commits member states to achieving by 2015 the following targets:

- eradication of extreme hunger and poverty
- achievement of universal primary education with emphasis on girl child education
- promotion of gender equality including empowerment of women
- reduction of child mortality and, in particular, reducing by  $\frac{2}{3}$  the mortality rate among children under five
- improvement of maternal health
- combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases
- ensuring environmental sustainability and development of global partnership for development

#### **(iii) NEEDS as an Overarching National Reform Strategy**

The formulation of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) in 2003 provided a framework for integrating, into an

organic entity, all sectoral reform initiatives that hitherto existed as independent actions, in order for them to be properly aligned within the overall goal of promoting good governance and accelerated national development.

NEEDS is a macroeconomic framework anchored on a tripod:

- ▶ *empowering the Nigerian people* by creating jobs, creating affordable housing, improving health care services, strengthening the skill base, protecting the vulnerable and promoting peace and security;
- ▶ *promoting private enterprise* by creating an enabling environment for business to thrive, stabilizing the value of the Naira, diversifying the economy to reduce dependency on oil, privatizing, deregulating and liberalizing government-owned industries, developing infrastructure, especially power generation, transport, telecommunications, etc. Others are promoting industrial development by targeting 7 per cent annual growth, 70 per cent capacity utilization and 70 per cent of investment by 2007. Improving Agriculture and promoting other key sectors such as information and communication technology, tourism, entertainment and financial services, protect the environment and ensure sustainable management of natural resources;
- ▶ *changing the way government operates* by identifying the core business of government and sticking to them while allowing other stakeholders to run businesses and provide other services for which they have comparative advantage over government. Others include implementing accountability, transparency and anti-corruption measures and curtailing unbridled waste in the public service through pension reform, monetization of fringe benefits, National Health Insurance Scheme, and budgetary discipline.

The above multiplicity of interventions are grouped and driven under four domains of NEEDS, namely:

- ▶ **Economic management reforms** to foster macroeconomic stability through fiscal discipline, public resource management/utilization, financial sector reforms (banking, insurance, etc), tax reforms, customs restructuring and accelerated privatization and liberalization of the economy;
- ▶ **Governance Reform and Institutional Strengthening;**
- ▶ **Public Service Reforms**, including Public Expenditure and Budget Reforms with focus on efficiency, responsiveness and service delivery; and
- ▶ **Transparency, Accountability and Anti-Corruption Reforms**, through

the work of the following:

- Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)
- Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)
- Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

The implementation strategies and goals of the four domains can be juxtaposed as follows:

Reform Domains	Implementation Strategies	Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Economic Reforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Growing the Private Sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Wealth Creation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Public Service Reforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Implementing a Social Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Effective and Efficient Service Delivery</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Governance Reforms and Institutional Strengthening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Reforming Government and its Institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Poverty Reduction</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Transparency, Accountability and Anti-Corruption Reform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Re-orientating Values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Value Re-orientation</li> </ul>

#### (iv) Public Service as the Engine of Government's Development Initiatives

All of the developmental initiatives highlighted above would come to nought without an efficient public service. According to Prof. Adedeji, member, eminent persons panel of NEPAD, "without an accountable, efficient, effective and incorruptible public service, there cannot be good governance". Similarly, while the public service reform is categorized as only one of the 4 reform domains under NEEDS, the centrality and critical role of the public service in the success of NEEDS is clear to all operators/stakeholders. Indeed, the NEEDS document states on page xxi as follows:

*Critical to successful implementation of NEEDS is an effective Institutional framework, particularly a Public service dedicated to excellence and support of reforms.*

#### The Charter for the Public Service in Africa

*The Charter for the Public Service in Africa*, adopted at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pan African Conference of Public Service Ministers in Windhoek, Namibia on 5 February, 2001 contains 29 Articles enunciating a set of principles to achieve the

fundamental principles of the public service. The Charter affirms the imperative of professional values of the public service in Africa; it redefines the objectives and missions and specifies the fundamental conditions required for strengthening public service role, competence, ethical values and image; and prescribes a code of conduct for African public service employees. The Charter defines the framework to guide African countries in taking such legislative, regulatory, technical and practical measures as may be required to strengthen and ensure the proper functioning of their public services as well as to improve the quality of service delivery.

For most African countries, the Charter has since become a reference point for measuring the adequacy and performance of their public service. The Commonwealth Secretariat, under the auspices of its Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD), is assisting African countries to achieve the objectives of the Charter on the platform of the Commonwealth Forum for African Heads of Public Service which meets every July. Similarly, NEPAD recently facilitated the establishment of a platform under the African Union (AU) for ministers of public service.

### **Institutional Arrangement for the Coordination and Focusing of Reform Implementation in Nigeria**

The Reforms are being driven at different fronts as follows:

- ◆ Budget at the Budget Office
- ◆ Public Procurement at the BMPIU
- ◆ Accounting and Audit at OAGF and OAuGF
- ◆ Tax Reforms at the Federal Inland Revenue Service
- ◆ Information Technology and e-Government at NITDA
- ◆ Ports and Customs Reforms at the Nigerian Customs Service
- ◆ Anti Corruption at ICPC
- ◆ Economic and Financial Crimes at EFCC
- ◆ Judicial Reform at the Judiciary
- ◆ Public Service Reforms at BPSR

In response to the need to place the civil service at the centre of the various public sector reforms of government, the head of the civil service of the federation proposed, to the president in September 2003, the creation within his office, of a Bureau of Public Service Reforms. The bureau was to be an independent and self accounting body.

### **Bureau of Public Service Reforms**

The president, in approving the creation of the bureau directed that its leadership must be a 'man or woman of impeccable character and integrity, who is reform-minded and broad-minded'.

The Bureau was established on 4 February 2004 and is charged with the following functions:

- (a) initiating action plan on reform at different levels for the attention of the steering committee;
- (b) elucidating government policy on reform;
- (c) coordinating, monitoring and evaluating reform implementation activities;
- (d) conducting research on implementation efforts and present best practices model;
- (e) providing advisory and technical support services to change management teams and working groups;
- (f) engendering an environment of learning among MDAs;
- (g) disseminating information on all aspects of reforms; and
- (h) submitting quarterly progress reports on reform activities.

The bureau is secretariat of the Steering Committee on Reforms chaired by the minister of finance, with 22 other key members which include ministers and chief executive officers of key institutions critical to economic governance, public service, transparency and anti-corruption reforms of government.

### **Steering Committee on Reforms**

The functions of the Steering Committee on Reforms include: (a) providing guidance and technical leadership in reform design and implementation; (b) initiating action on reforms at the different fronts; (c) ensuring monitoring and evaluation of reform implementation for impact and effectiveness; and (d) periodically briefing the Federal Executive Council and the National Council on Reforms.

The Steering Committee operates a team approach and consists of the economic team led by the minister of finance, the public service reform team under the leadership of the minister for the Federal Capital Territory Administration, and the governance and accountability team which is led by the special adviser to the president on due process. Each key sectoral group of reforms is therefore driven by proven champions of reform. Accordingly, the economic team initiates and directs actions on economic reforms, the public

service reform team oversees and drives the implementation of the public service reform component, while the governance and accountability team coordinates anti-corruption, transparency and accountability issues.

### **National Council on Reform**

The National Council on Reform is chaired by the president and the following are members: the vice president, the senate president, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the chief justice of Nigeria, attorney-general of the federation, the minister of finance, the secretary to the government of the federation, the head of the civil service of the federation, and the chairman, Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC).

### **Focus of Nigeria's Public Service Reforms**

The focus of Nigeria's Public Service Reforms is on the following four key areas, all targeted at improving service delivery and promoting good governance:

#### **(i) Budget and Financial Management**

- procurement system review
- institutionalization of fiscal responsibility
- accounting reforms

#### **(ii) Accountability Issues**

- installation of due process, transparency and accountability in government transactions
- establishment of Service Charters
- institutionalization of compliance enforcement

#### **(iii) Human Resources Management**

- personnel records and payroll cleaning
- staff cadre reviews
- remodelling of recruitment and promotion procedures, including injection of competent professionals, young and bright people as well as experts with rare skills into the service;
- instituting a new performance management scheme
- transformation of the present administration departments into professionally manned human resources management departments with competencies for strategic functions such as manpower planning, career and succession manning, training and development, etc
- undertaking pay reform as one of the strategies for attracting and retaining talents in the service

- massive capacity development and training
- organizational culture change
- (iv) **Operation and Systems**
  - organizational restructuring and right-sizing
  - work process re-design
  - information technology applications
- (v) **Value Reorientation and Ethics**

### **Parastatals Reform and Management**

There are over 500 government-owned agencies, parastatals and corporations. Over the years, these agencies have constituted drainpipes to government resources. Some of the emerging structural/institutional reform strategies currently going on are:

- accelerated privatization through the BPE
- scrapping and/or merger of some parastatals
- review of mandate and amendment to legal instruments through the adoption of incorporated legal form to replace the statutory corporation legal status
- possible conversion of some parastatals into executive agencies
- total removal of subvention for certain categories of parastatals
- re-orientation of parastatals' management towards self-sustenance, profit making, cost effectiveness and cost consciousness
- setting benchmarks of recruitment/overhead ratio to capital expenditure
- redundancy management and rightsizing
- re-professionalization
- strengthening of evaluation and monitoring mechanism of parastatals through introduction of such accountability instruments as service charter, regular survey of stakeholders' perception and service delivery, peer review, as well as league ranking of parastatals based on pre-determined corporate performance indicators.



# 4

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Some accomplishments of the ongoing reform programme are hereunder highlighted:

### **Waste Curtailment in Public Expenditure**

#### *(a) Monetization of Fringe Benefits*

The unbridled waste in the Public service has been curtailed through a number of measures, one of which is the introduction of the monetization policy. Over the years, the cost of governance continued to rise astronomically partly due to the huge expenditure arising from benefits paid to public servants on housing, transportation, medical services and utilities (electricity, water, telephone) whose application was devoid of equity. Top public servants were entitled to a number of domestic servants and were also chauffeur-driven. Quite a number of officials had more than the number of vehicles approved for their grade levels and all were maintained at the expense of government. The monetization policy was given effect through the passage of the certain Political and Judicial Office Holders (Salaries and Allowances, etc) Act 2002 which provided the reference point for the review of the salaries/allowances of all categories of federal public servants by the National Salaries Incomes and Wages Commission (NSIWC), fuelling/maintenance of official vehicles and transport allowance. The policy has so far been effectively implemented with commendable success with regard to all categories of political office holders and federal civil servants. The implementation of the policy has been extended in year 2006 to all parastatals and agencies. Based on the monetization policy, the fleet of government cars purchased up till December 2002 were sold to public officers previously using them. Drivers hitherto attached to the vehicles were laid off. Drivers and domestic servants are now personal staff of entitled officers. The sale of federal government houses is presently being undertaken, with public servants being offered their residential accommodation at the discounted

replacement cost rather than at competitive open market price. With the sale of official quarters, leakages in government resources through frivolous furnishing and repair bills would have been plugged.

(b) *National Health Insurance Scheme*

The National Health Insurance Scheme has been put in place to reduce dependence on government for the funding of healthcare delivery and provision of health-related infrastructure and facilities. All Public servants have now been registered under the scheme which has since commenced following its launch by the president on Monday 6 June 2005

(c) *Privatization of Public Enterprises*

The privatization policy became imperative following the failure of public enterprises to deliver on their mandates in spite of consuming a large chunk of the resources of the nation. Their other disabilities include: failure to allocate resources efficiently; failure to engender entrepreneurial development; platforms for political patronage which often times have jeopardized national interest.

In order to ensure the success of the privatization policy, an implementation and coordinating mechanism was put in place through the enactment of the Public Enterprises (Privatization and Commercialization) Act of 1999 which provides, among others, for the establishment of the National Council on Privatization (NCP), with the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) as the secretariat of the council. As at June 2005, thirty-four public enterprises had been fully or partially privatized. The programme is now in the third phase where bids for the heaviest enterprises namely, electric power, telecommunication and refineries have been opened.

(d) *Public Expenditure Management*

Significant improvement has been recorded in the area of public expenditure management under the medium term expenditure framework (MTEF) and the expenditure pattern is now aligned with key sectors accorded priority to the achievement of the millennium development goals. Fiscal discipline is being vigorously pursued. The procurement reform has institutionalized transparency in tendering, contract award and payments. The budget office has been re-organized with an improved

process of budget monitoring, based on key indicators. There is greater transparency in the budgeting process through publications on the review of the performance of the budget and regular dissemination of information on revenue accruals and disbursement to the three tiers of government. The Fiscal Responsibility Bill to further ensure prudent management of resources is before the National Assembly for enactment into law. The Public Accounts Office is being strengthened to adequately discharge its oversight functions in terms of efficient and diligent deployment of public funds. The accounting system has been reviewed and a new chart of accounts is now applied in the preparation of the national budget.

### **Promoting The Effectiveness of the Public service**

#### **(a) Organizational Restructuring**

The pilot ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) which flagged off the reform process in the public service have been restructured. These include the Federal Capital Territory Administration, Federal Ministry of Finance, National Planning Commission and the State House. An outcome of the restructuring exercise was the abolition of the erstwhile Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory and its replacement with the Federal Capital Territory Administration, which has since proved the government right through markedly improved service delivery as well as ease of policy implementation and coordination. The old structure which functioned as a blend, both of a federal ministry and a state government was not only confusing but created institutional and structural problems.

In the case of the Federal Ministry of Finance, it now has a new organizational structure with 10 departments and 5 special units as opposed to the former structure of 13 departments. The National Planning Commission recently concluded its restructuring and is currently staffed by professionals. In the State House, its multiple, partly independent units have been merged into one administrative unit under the principal secretary to the president (a permanent secretary). Diagnostic and structural review had been conducted in the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation with a view to evolving a new organizational structure. The Ministry of Solid Minerals Development has just concluded its own restructuring, leading to the reversal of the old order of one technical department and 4 service departments (mainly administrative) in favour of 4 technical departments and one service

department. The parastatals within the ministry have also been restructured. The essence of the structuring exercise which is going on service-wide, is to jettison the current arrangement of uniformity of structure in the public service in preference for variation in organizational design, taking into consideration the differences in mandates and the scale/diversity of operations as well as to ensure appropriate staff-job fit.

(b) 'Rightsizing' or 'Service Cleansing'

The Nigerian Public service has often been regarded as over-bloated though the over-bloatedness is evident not in number, judging from the total staff strength of the public service relative to the national population, but in the deficiency in the mix of skills and competencies. For example, 70 per cent of the 161,000 officers in the civil service belong to the Grade Levels 01-06 which is composed of cleaners, gardeners, security guards, drivers, messengers and clerical assistants! The university graduate population is about 12 per cent and many are deployed to jobs they have no formal training to handle.

Under the ongoing rightsizing plan, about 30,000 officers in the civil service are to be disengaged from service in the first phase of the severance exercise, based on the following criteria:

- officers that were appointed without proper authorization
- officers that are medically unfit
- officers adjudged as being inefficient or of unsatisfactory character
- officers whose jobs have been monetized, outsourced or abolished (cleaners, drivers, cooks, security men, messengers, lift attendants, etc)
- officers without entry qualifications/mandatory skills for the job
- officers who having failed promotion examination thrice consecutively, were nonetheless advanced because of vacancy constraints
- officers with cases of serious misconduct and
- Officers who have become redundant as a result of restructuring or scrapping of organizations/departments.

In addition, officers opting to retire voluntarily were also allowed.

The BPSR prefers to refer to the above exercise as **service cleansing** since they are largely, the result of a broken down service-wide human resources management (HRM) system, as effective HRM would have taken care of them. This resulted in over 1,000 staff of the National Bureau of Statistics and 1,350 staff of the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development being relieved of their jobs (with their entitlements fully paid) on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2005. In 2004, as a result of the monetization policy, 5,500 drivers were disengaged 285 staff of the State House were declared redundant and exited, while 359 irregularly appointed staff of the National Planning Commission had their appointments terminated. All officers to be disengaged from service are required to first undergo pre-severance training to prepare them for transition to the private sector, and to enable them put their terminal benefits to good use in retirement. In this regard therefore, adequate provision ₦50 billion (\$400 million) has been made in the 2006 budget to meet the full cost of severance in the public service.

(c) **Review of Public Service Rules and Regulations**

A professional public service operates on the basis of rules, regulations and procedures to ensure orderly conduct and application of standards. A major review of the rules and regulations was carried out in 2000 but this was considered inadequate for meeting the imperative of fast tracking the on-going reform of the public service. Accordingly, a 13-member presidential committee on the review and revision of public service rules, regulations and procedures was constituted on 3 February 2005 comprising two ministers of cabinet rank, one retired and five serving permanent secretaries, a commissioner from the Federal Civil Service Commission, the accountant-general of the federation, the auditor-general for the federation, the director-general, Administrative and Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) and the director-general, Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR). The committee was chaired by the principal secretary to the president and permanent secretary, State House, Mr. Stephen Oronsaye. In April 2005, the committee submitted an interim report containing provisions on appointment, recruitment and deployment, performance management and incentives, discipline and exit from the service, pending the conclusion of its assignment. Following the approval of the current severance exercise going on service-wide, the revised rules

and regulations have already been aligned with the underlying principles and practices as enunciated in the *Charter for the Public Service in Africa*. Some of the key elements of the review are as follows:

- removal of the non-functional grade levels (GLs 01-03 & 11)
- removal of the dichotomy at the entry point, between the Higher National Diploma and the First University Degree provided that the classification of the diploma is an Upper Credit
- inclusion of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) as part of the disciplinary procedure.
- removal of detailed listing of allowances and consolidation of such as salaries.
- review and consolidation of foreign service allowances
- change from working days to calendar days in respect of leave entitlements
- delegation of the power of recruitment of officers (GLs 10 & below) to MDAs

(d) Service-wide Capacity Building

At the level of government, there is awareness of the need to sharpen the skills of Public service officers service-wide. This is being done through a mix of strategies including:

- repositioning of existing training institutions such as the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), the Centre for Management Development (CMD), Federal Training Centres, etc;
- establishment of the Civil Service College in Abuja to focus on both Middle level Management and Executive Management Training and Development;
- strengthening the capacity of the Management Development Office (MDO) in the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation for effective discharge of its oversight functions in the area of service-wide staff training and development;
- adequately harnessing the opportunities provided in the area of training and development through the avenues of international cooperation as well as partnership with development partners such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, World Bank, Department for International Development (DFID), etc; and

- realigning training curriculum and current requirements in terms of needs service-wide.

As part of the strategy to get the top hierarchy of the service to support and drive the public service reform, all federal permanent secretaries in Nigeria have undergone a 2-week study programme on best practices in the United Kingdom (UK) under the auspices of the Commonwealth Secretariat. In addition, key members of the top hierarchy of the public service have also undertaken study tours of leading countries in public service reforms e.g. New Zealand, Singapore and South Africa.

(e) Tracking Corruption

The anti-corruption agencies of government namely the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Code of Conduct Bureau and Code of Conduct Tribunal have recorded remarkable success in tracking corruption. Anti-corruption units have been set up in all MDAs with direct links to the anti-corruption agencies. The anti-corruption crusade has caught up with top government officials from senators to state governors, ministers, permanent secretaries, key officials in the military, police and para-military establishments, local government chairmen as well as serving judges of courts of superior records. The EFCC has extended the war against corruption beyond our borders, especially those related to money laundering, for which it is getting support from Nigerians and other international agencies. This is a positive signal to the public service that the era of compromising on ethical standards of the service is gone for ever.

(f) Pension Reform

Through the enactment of the Pension Reform Act of 2004, a Contributory Pension Scheme has been put in place to ensure that officers enjoy a peaceful life in retirement. Under the former Pay-As-You-Go System which was fully funded by government, incidences of payment defaults were rampant as the burden of paying pension benefits became increasingly unbearable to government. The current scheme has a number of other advantages, including providing a pool of funds for boosting the economy through savings and capital formation.

### C. Leadership through Experience Sharing to Guide Sister Nations in the West African Sub-Region

The achievements of Nigeria's home-grown reforms resonate throughout the West African sub-region. Accordingly, some leaders of member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been requesting Nigeria to share her experiences with them. For example, the Head of the Civil Service of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on the invitation of his Ghanaian counterpart, led a 7-man delegation to Ghana for a 3-day parley during last year's celebration of the African Civil Service Week in June 2005. In his letter of invitation, the Head of the Ghanaian Civil Service had written as follows:-

*As I stated during my visit to the Bureau of Public Service Reforms in Abuja, I was immensely impressed with the main objectives, strategies, and structures etc of the Public Service Reforms underway in Nigeria and some of the cross-cutting reforms that have taken place so far. And in line with the South-South cooperation, I would like you to share these experiences with us in Ghana. Our civil service, particularly the leadership, can then be exposed to the lessons and best practices that could be replicated in Ghana.*

The president of Togo and the newly sworn-in president of Liberia have also approached President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria to assist in putting together a 'viable and sustainable reform programme' for their respective countries. Towards this end, the Nigerian president has put together a committee comprising the minister of state for finance, the minister of state for foreign affairs, the minister for cooperation and integration in Africa, the economic adviser to the president, the political adviser to the president, the senior special assistant to the president on millennium development goals, the director-general of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) and the director-general of the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR). The committee has already developed strategic documents for the reform programmes of the two countries.



# 5

## CHALLENGES

In spite of the long list of our modest achievements highlighted above, an equal number of challenges confront us as we strive to sustain the present momentum in order to ensure that the gains are not lost. These challenges are highlighted below:

**(i) Consensus Building on Reform among Key Stakeholders**

Building consensus on reform remains a key challenge as there are differences of opinion between the political actor drivers of reform and the bureaucracy regarding the scope, strategy and implementation modalities of the reform process. Rekindling confidence in the reform process through consensus building and building a broad coalition of support to fast-track the process are compelling initiatives which have implications for the outcome of the on-going process.

**(ii) Strengthening the Implementing and Coordinating Mechanism for Reform**

An innovation in the on-going implementation and coordinating mechanism is the establishment of the Bureau of Public Service Reforms as the institutional framework for sustaining reform. This is unprecedented in Nigeria's history. The bureau is designed as the expert Secretariat of Reforms and a problem-solving institution equipped with the required technical competencies to drive the reform process. Attracting the required expertise from within and outside of the Public service, however remains a challenge. This arises from the constitutional role of the Federal Civil Service Commission in appointments, promotion and discipline and the incapacity of the BPSR to act independently having not been established by an Act of the National Assembly. The recent relocation of the bureau from the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF) to a direct placement under the Steering

Committee on Reforms/the Public Service Reform Team, to enable the bureau to connect with the political, technocratic and administrative leadership and coordinate the four domains of the reforms, as encapsulated under NEEDS, has further widened the gulf between the political actor-drivers of the reform and the top-hierarchy of the Civil Service.

**(iii) Strengthening Central Agencies Crucial to Reform**

There are other central agencies which are crucial to the successful implementation of the on-going reform which require further strengthening and consolidation. These include the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, the Federal Civil Service Commission, the National Assembly Commission, the Judicial Service Commission, and similar commissions in the armed forces, police and para-military establishments. The key challenges in this area are removing the passive resistance to reform of these central agencies and to reassuring them that reform, rather than erode their statutory, constitutional and concessionary powers, can in fact strengthen them to effectively discharge their regulatory and oversight functions.

**(iv) Decentralization of Human Resource Management (HRM)**

Good practice assumes that delegation of HRM ensures operational efficiency and transparency in HRM, in addition, it assists in effecting strategic change by providing MDAs with the leverage to control their personnel and hold them accountable for results, while the central commission takes charge of strategic issues in ensuring service improvement. The good practice of delegating authorities of central agencies to MDAs assumes some weakness in the integrity and capacity of the central organ of HRM. Regrettably, Nigeria faces a difficult choice in this area because integrity concerns and capacity gaps in professional HRM have been expressed on the part of both the Federal Civil Service Commission and the administrative departments at MDA level. Obviously, the need for embracing a new paradigm for HRM, involving delegation of the HRM function to MDAs is most compelling. This can only be done however, when the present administrative departments in MDAs are repositioned and the administrative cadre of the service is fully

professionalized to pave way for the emergence of professional human resource managers, with competencies for recruitment and selection, career management, succession planning, manpower training and development, organization development and change management, among others.

**(v) Instituting Safety Measures against Reversal and Inertia Containment**

By our antecedents, the Nigerian policy environment has been criticized as being characterized by both policy inconsistency and somersaults. There are therefore serious anxieties in the policy that the gains of the present reforms might be reversed under a different administration in 2007. In order to ensure sustainable implementation of reform, which is constantly reinforced by continuous improvement, we are faced with the challenge of building appropriate safety valves for containing the derailment viruses of reversal and inertia.

**(vi) Long Gestation of Reform**

The on-going reform in Nigeria is seen as a phase to be consolidated over time. Experience indicates that in many countries where Public Reform have succeeded, it has taken on the average between 5 - 10 years of sustained efforts to reap the benefits of reform. This is a challenge to political actor drivers of reforms in Nigeria, who justifiably seek for quick wins and immediate results against the background of the bureaucracy top hierarchy which pushes for a more gradual approach to reform implementation, an action which raises, in some other quarters, the suspicion of an attempt by the bureaucracy to derail the process. There is therefore the challenge of instituting an acceptable reform agenda with a long term/sustainable implementation arrangement through a well funded and capacity studded BPSR.

**(vii) Succession Potential of the Nigerian Civil Service based on Age Profiles**

The ability of the public service to continue to serve competently depends on its capacity to regenerate itself on a sustainable basis through a pool of personnel in the right mix of ages, skills and competencies and by instituting a viable succession management process to align the future needs of the service with the aspirations of its talented employees.

Effective succession planning ensures that talented employees are retained in an organization, having been provided with growth opportunities that enable available vacancies in key jobs to be filled with internal candidates rather than through external hires.

A recent study covering 20 ministries, conducted by the BPSR examined succession potential of the civil service on the basis of age profiles, by:

- (i) adopting twenty-five (25) years as the optimal age for basic degree graduate entry into the Public Service on GL.08 and based on the maximum allowable 35 years of pensionable service which enables such graduates to attain the compulsory retirement age of sixty (60) years coterminously; and
- (ii) using the FCSC prescribed promotion eligibility, grade level stay of 3 years between GLs 08 & 15 and 4 years between GLs 15 & 17.

The Optimal Age Band of officers on the respective Grade Levels 08 - 17, and Permanent Secretary was profiled as follows:

GRADE LEVEL	OPTIMAL AGE BAND (Years)
Consolidated GL.17	51-60 51-60
GL.16	47-51
GL.15	43-47
GL.14	40-43
GL.13	37-40
GL.12	34-37
GL.10	31-34
GL.09	28-31
GL.08	25-28

Summary on Ministry Basis

Ministry	TOTAL (GL 08-17)	Graduate No. (GL 08-17)	Graduate Ratio %	No. Graduate of Optimal Age (GOA)	Graduate Optimal Age % (GOA%)	AGEING %	SUCCESSION POTENTIAL %
Aviation	198	96	48.5%	14	14.6%	89.79	6.52
Commerce	791	258	32.6%	14	5.4%	94.08	3.13
Communication	230	107	46.5%	13	12.2%	88.06	11.11
Cooperation & Integration	115	79	68.7%	15	19.0%	87.56	11.11
Culture & Tourism	178	107	60.1%	9	8.4%	91.82	2.63
Defence	5810	2325	40.0%	126	5.4%	89.82	14.17
Finance	307	217	70.7%	16	7.4%	89.69	4.84
Housing	2238	792	35.4%	58	7.3%	91.03	10.26
Industry	550	252	45.8%	18	7.1%	93.81	7.5
Intergovernmental Affairs	122	85	69.7%	10	11.8%	94.7	2.94
Internal Affairs	414	178	43.0%	14	7.9%	92.17	13.64
Labour & Productivity	844	293	34.7%	16	5.5%	95.37	6.98
Petroleum Resources	145	77	53.1%	10	13.0%	94.87	7.89
Police Affairs	868	262	30.2%	12	4.6%	86.85	15.38
Power & Steel	324	178	55.0%	27	15.2%	88.94	19.12
Solid Minerals	361	193	53.5%	15	7.8%	92.2	6.9
Transport	299	131	43.8%	19	14.5%	90.84	8.33
Water Resources	534	386	72.3%	33	8.5%	90.36	7.14
Women Affairs	139	98	70.5%	13	13.3%	91.97	10.53

Works	1997	883	44.2%	29	3.3%	95.43	2.31
NAPEP	240	210	87.5%	56	26.7%	66.41	66.67
Police Service Commission	96	88	91.7%	16	18.2%	78.02	92.86

In general, the study revealed that the percentage ratio of graduates (GL. 08-17) to total officers (GL. 08-17) was less than 50 per cent in 11 of the 20 ministries analyzed. Police Affairs, Commerce, and Labour & Productivity had the lowest graduate/total officer percentage ratio of 30.2 per cent, 32.6 per cent and 34.7 per cent respectively, while Women Affairs (70.5%), Finance (70.7%) and Water Resources (72.3%) had the highest graduate/total officer ratio within the civil service. **Graduates of Optimal Age/Total Graduates (GOA %)** was less than 15% in 18 ministries out of the 20 ministries sampled. Indeed, 12 out of the 20 ministries, inclusive of all the ministries with the 3 lowest and 3 highest graduate ratio percentages listed above, had a **GOA percentage** of less than 10 per cent. The overall average ageing percent was 91.5% among officers on Grade Levels 08 - 17 i.e. 91.5% of the officers were found to be overaged for their grade levels/position occupied.

**Succession Potential percentage** was less than 20% in all cases, less than 10% in 12 out of the 20 ministries and, indeed, less than 3 per cent in Works (2.31%), Culture & Tourism (2.63%) and Inter-Governmental Affairs (2.94%).

These results have serious implications for both the quality of output and the productivity of Public servants as well as the sustenance of the Service itself. The analysis show that while the total number of graduates is lower than 50% of the total number of officers across the Grade Levels, majority of these graduates are not in the age band that makes them agile for the assignments of their Grade Levels.

## FEDERAL MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

GL (Opt. Age)	No. on GL.	Grad. No. on GL.	GL. Grad. of Opt. Age	Ageing % on GL	Succession Potential
GL. 17 (<60)	3	3	3		
GL. 16 (47-51)	8	8	3	62.5	
GL. 15 (43-47)	8	8	2	75	
GL. 14 (40-43)	10	9	0	100	GL. 12 - 14 = 0.00%
GL. 13 (37-40)	13	12	0	100	
GL. 12 (34-37)	23	17	0	100	
GL. 10 (31-34)	34	24	1	97.06	GL. 08 - 12 = 5.26%
GL. 09 (28-31)	33	8	0	100	
GL. 08 (25-28)	46	18	0	100	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>91.82</b>	<b>2.63%</b>
Total No. on Nominal Roll = 378 GL. 08 and above = 178 % GL. 08 and above = 47.09%					

## FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

GL (Opt. Age)	No. on GL.	Grad. No. on GL.	GL. Grad. of Opt. Age	Ageing % on GL	Succession Potential
GL. 17 (<60)	7	7	7		
GL. 16 (47-51)	5	5	0	100	
GL. 15 (43-47)	5	4	2	60	
GL. 14 (40-43)	5	4	0	100	GL. 12 - 14 = 0.00%

GL. 13 (37-40)	10	8	0	100	
GL. 12 (34-37)	11	5	0	100	
GL. 10 (31-34)	21	18	0	100	GL. 08 - 12 = 5.88%
GL. 09 (28-31)	17	8	0	100	
GL. 08 (25-28)	41	26	0	97.56	
TOTAL	122	85	10	94.7	2.94%
Total No. on Nominal Roll = 322 GL. 08 and above = 122 % GL. 08 and above = 37.89%					

Grade Level detailed analysis of succession potentials of the respective Ministries reveal that the middle levels GL 12-14 and, to a large extent, the lower officer levels GL. 08-10 have virtually collapsed in all the Ministries analyzed. **Zero number of Graduates of Optimal Age (GOA)** with corresponding 100% Ageing were recorded in at least one Grade Level within the Middle Level GL. 12-14, in 14 of the 20 Ministries analyzed. Out of the six Ministries that do not record zero in any of the middle level GL. 12-14, Defence, Housing & Urban Development, Industry, Power & Steel, Transport and Water Resources, three namely - Industry, Transport and Water Resources recorded zero GOA in at least one of the lower officer grade levels GL. 08-10. In other words, only three ministries: Defence, Housing & Urban Development, Power and Steel, out of the 20 ministries analyzed did not record zero GOA in any Grade Level from GL. 08-14. The highest **Succession Potential of 19.12%** was recorded by Power and Steel Ministry.

Eleven out of the 20 ministries analyzed scored a GOA percentage of zero in at least 3 Grade Levels. The worst case occurred in the ministries of Culture and Tourism; Intergovernmental Affairs, Petroleum Resources and Women Affairs with zero GOA percentage in at least 5 Grade Levels. With zero GOA and consequently, 100% Ageing in the five succeeding Grade Levels and another zero on GL 16 for the Intergovernmental Affairs Ministry, four succeeding Grade levels 10-14 for Petroleum Resources, and on GL. 12-15 and another zero for



GL. 09 for the Ministry of Women Affairs, these ministries appear to be heading for total collapse. This calls for urgent recruitment of fresh graduates to invigorate the officer cadre who will later, through programmed training, advance to the middle level cadre and by accelerated movement of the best hands in the middle cadre to the directorate cadre form the nucleus of the future leaders of the service.

The ageing basis for the poor succession potential found above, came about as a result of a number of factors which dominated the civil service from 1990 to date: (i) embargo on unemployment of graduates for several years (1990 - 2005); (ii) stagnation as a result of delaying promotions; (iii) overloading of the Service at higher Grade Levels through transfers; (iv) absorption, regularization of appointment and advantaged placement of staff of defunct agencies by the FCSC; (v) absorption of political appointees into the Service; and (vi) lack of strict adherence to guidelines on secondment, transfers and absorption, one of which specifically states that officers entering into the Federal Civil Service through transfers/ secondment are to be placed on the post they would have attained by promotion if they had joined the Service in the first instance. This invariably means that such officers are to be placed at par with their serving colleagues on account of similar year of graduation and work experience.

#### (viii) Diversity Management

Prior to its emergence in 1914, the Nigerian nation state, was forged out of several nationalities and ethnic groups which hitherto existed as independent kingdoms and mini chiefdoms. Managing this huge diversity has been a huge challenge to successive administrations. The need to heal the wounds of the Nigerian Civil War from 1967-1970 and keep Nigeria as one indivisible and indissoluble state, as well as the imperative of addressing the imbalance in the civil service (which was perceived to be skewed in favour of the states in the southern part of the country on account of their being more educationally advanced than the northern states), led to the introduction of the quota system to ensure that all states and ethnic nationalities are fairly represented in the Federal Public Service. The policy has since been entrenched in the Constitution. The quota policy prescribes that the 'federal character' principle be observed in both the recruitment of officers into the public service and in the appointment into the top most hierarchy of the service (ie at the level of permanent secretaries, directors-general and heads of extra-ministerial departments and agencies).

Nigeria, as earlier stated, has 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), 774 local governments, 109 senatorial districts, 360 federal constituencies,

and 373 ethnic groups. Even the two main religions, Islam and Christianity operate under myriads of competing denominations. The algebraic permutation of ensuring balance in the sharing of government portfolios among these complex groups is a nightmare. Yet, that is what is expected of any government administration in Nigeria, where appointment into public office is celebrated as an 'honour' for the community, ethnic/religious group, each of which expects unfettered favour during the appointee's tenure.

There have been several calls for the review of the federal character principle and quota system because, while the underlying principle for their introduction is sound, the application of the policy has been seriously abused. The policy has also been criticized for sacrificing merit in favour of mediocrity, undermining the Civil Service ethos of objectivity and rationality and contributing to the widening gulf in the Public service along ethnic and religious lines. More recently, there have been calls for balancing appointments into the public service along religious lines which is considered reprehensible in many quarters. The key challenge therefore is to adopt a best practice model that will ensure that the federal character policy and merit are not mutually exclusive and opposing values and that in carrying out recruitment and promotion, central agencies like the Federal Civil Service Commission, the National Assembly Commission and the National Judicial Service Commission, etc, are guided by the imperative of recruiting the best candidate from each of the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory. Indeed, if Nigeria is to produce a new generation of public sector leaders that will adequately respond to national, technological and global initiatives on development, it is evident that we would need to demonstrate extra courage to institute structures that would appoint the best hands without necessarily jettisoning representation of all nationalities and interest groups. This however, remains a knotty issue as there are entrenched interests to deal with in modifying the policy.

(ix) **Managing and Sustaining Disengagement before 2007 Elections**

A new government is expected to be sworn-in in Nigeria on 29 May 2007. Managing and sustaining disengagement in any public service, a year before general elections, presents an unusual kind of challenge to even the most charismatic and popular presidents. This is because it presents a most potent weapon of blackmail against the incumbent administration by the opposing political parties in their desperation to win the sympathy of the electorate. The critical challenge is not only to ensure that the disengagement process is

transparently carried out with strict adherence to the approved guidelines so that only those who fall within the approved criteria are exited, but also setting up a good Social Assistance Scheme with diligent management to mitigate the possible hardship which the exited staff may possibly encounter in the transition from paid to self-employment. Probably the most important challenge is to ingrain the lesson that wage bill reduction as a result of staff severance is a short time gain because in the medium and long terms, the gains are wiped out by rising wage bills from fresh recruitment of skilled hands to replace those exited. The development of a strong and effective communication strategy is therefore required to highlight the continuous improvement in the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the service, under reform.

(x) Removing Error of Parallax in the Alignment of Reform Drivers

This last challenge is essentially my conclusion on this presentation - *Public Service Reform for Sustainable Development: The Nigerian Experience*. The main driving force of the Nigerian reforms is the president himself. This in itself has generated wide spread anxieties among Nigerians on what will happen to the reform process after his tenure. The president is supported by a handful of political appointees, who also constitute the economic team. Buoyed by the success achieved in their respective portfolios, this group of political appointees readily gets the listening ears of the president. Arising from this, is the emerging trend where they are constant targets of most attacks on the president by people who feel uncomfortable about their perceived influence on governance and the president.

The economic team regularly derides the civil service as being anti-reform, too slow, ultra-conservative, lacking in initiative and utterly incapable of reforming itself. The top hierarchy of the civil service, on the other hand, sees political appointees as a bunch of 'short-timers' who show no respect for laid down rules, regulations and procedures in their inordinate pursuits of political goals. This has arisen because the reform response trajectories of both the bureaucratic and the political drivers are out of alignment. In the middle of the divide is the Bureau of Public Service Reforms whose success in facilitating reforms in all sectors of governance is largely contingent upon its ability to bridge the divide. Reviewing my first 12 months in office as the director-general, BPSR on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2005, I wrote under the title: Challenges of a Public Service Reform Administrator, First Year Analysis, as follows:

*I believe that we have broken down the initial divide that existed between*

*the political appointee drivers and the core Civil Service drivers of reform, and begun to remove from our vocabulary the stereotype-induced stigmatization that enveloped the reform agenda at inception ...*

The positive note of my assessment was more deliberate than out of conviction. It was designed to engender a centrifugal spin of the polar divides a perfect alignment at the centre.

In August 2005 at the presidential retreat on public sector reforms and public private partnership, the president in his vote of thanks to chairmen of plenary sessions said of the head of the civil service of the federation as follows:

*As a Civil Servant, the Head of the Civil Service is often caught between loyalty to the Civil Service, his constituency and national interest, but I am happy to say that more often than not he has stood on the part of national interest.*

Of course there was a resounding applause for this statement, particularly from civil servants, but for me, over several days later, I could not stop ruminating on the full meaning of the statement. This was because, like Dr Ahmed (the head of the civil service), the civil service is my constituency and I owe it my loyalty. Many questions went through my mind: Are loyalty to the civil service and national interest mutually opposing/exclusive? Is the bureaucracy not the traditional guardian of national interest? At what point was the bureaucracy overtaken in this sacred duty by the 'short-timers'? Outside national interest, what other interests do civil servants pursue?

I believe, and very strongly too, that when political leaders, particularly the president of a nation, begin to think that the interests of the civil service are outside of the national interest then there is a crisis of confidence. It is not enough to strive to align civil service interests with national interests because no matter the perspective (political drivers' or the bureaucracy's) from which one looks at such an alignment, there would always be an error of parallax. The underlying issue is the speed and projectile of the responsiveness of the bureaucracy to reform initiatives.

This perhaps explains why the president, buoyed by the achievement of the economic team, has been persistent in his criticism that public service is not delivering effective and efficient service. He agrees with the economic team that the civil service cannot reform itself. He equally agrees with the head of the civil service that the service cannot be reformed without the support of civil servants. Accordingly, he has always approved any initiative aimed at exposing the top hierarchy of the service to best practices in other nations with a view to getting

them attuned to the imperatives of reforms. At the same time, he gives backing to the efforts of the political drivers to keep the momentum for reform in the public service. Within a period of 12 months he has ensured that:

- a total of 47 federal permanent secretaries undertook a 2-week study programme under the auspices of the Commonwealth Secretariat;
- he set up a presidential committee to review the public service rules, regulations and procedures with a view to making them reform-friendly;
- the rightsizing of the service through the removal of deadwoods, has begun;
- he took the first step in this direction by carrying out a personal assessment exercise of each permanent secretary in the federal service through which, with the check scores of the head of the civil service and the ministers with whom the permanent secretaries worked, seven (7) permanent secretaries found to be performing below expectation were prematurely retired from service in February, 2005; and
- he repositioned the Bureau of Public Service Reforms, in the belief that moving it from under the control of the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation would get it to respond more quickly to meet the challenges of reform throughout the entirety of the public service.

The service, in my opinion, has a serious challenge in its hands – the challenge of soul searching and convincing demonstration to ascertain and prove to all that our interests are not self-serving but indeed the national interest. The operative words here are not ‘the realignment of interests’, an act prone to error of parallax, but the institutionalization of ‘a service proactively responsive to change and driven by national interests’ based on globally cherished public service ethics and values.



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