
President's Meeting with Director General and Directors

Minutes of meeting held on the 22 April 2017 at 10:30 am
Venue: International Conference Centre

1. Opening

The Chief Secretary and Head of public Service delivered opening remarks and the President addressed the meeting.

2. Decentralization of budget and a degree of autonomy in managing a section

- 2.1. Seychelles Institute of Technology management raised concerns on internal budget process. The process to receive approval to spend budget is very lengthy. Directors should be given some independence to spend their budget and be made accountable for their spending.
- 2.2. Demands were made to give more autonomy to persons responsible of managing a section/division/department to take certain decisions
- 2.3. Non-technician and non-professional should let the Health technicians do their jobs.

3. Salary Grid

- 3.1. Several concerns were raised with the salary grid. Horizontal progression across the steps of the grid yields very low salary increases. This does not provide incentives and motivations for employees. Propositions for a complete review of the salary grid were put forward.

4. Retention of Government employees

- 4.1. The MEHRD is losing very good employees with good technical skills. It was highlighted that the wage grid and salary limitation is a major concern for retention. This is happening in general in Government where qualified and experienced workers are leaving government for better salaries and prospects.
- 4.2. This issue was raised for retention of very good nurses who are also moving to other sectors. Direct appeal were made for DPA to review the HR requirement and salary package which currently does not incite staff to stay with Government. Some nurses would like to come back but on a part-time basis and there are no structures in place to allow them to do so.

5. Attracting graduates

General concerns were raised that salary package and incentives are not attracting graduates/professionals to work for government. Concerns were raised by most Ministries. Example

was given that a nurse with qualifying diploma enters job at a net salary close to minimum wage of SR 5050.

6. Scheme of Service not accounting period of service and experience of staff

This issue was raised for the Department of Culture who has a number of employees with long period of service and experience. These employees do not benefit from the scheme of service which only take into accounts certified qualifications.

7. Perception is that hard workers are not shown appreciation and the inefficient workers are the ones rewarded and given promotion

8. Lack of resources SNYC

No transport and lack of materials to implement programs with youth. No visual materials to work with young people.

9. Reports written by technicians not being read

The meeting was informed that many reports are being written by technicians but are not being read. Recommendations made in reports are not discussed or actioned however a lot of time is wasted by technicians on writing these reports.

10. Lack of cooperation between organizations.

11. The Structure of the Department of Defense

The power in Department of Defense is distributed in terms of ranks. Speaker proposed that the real capacity of the force needs to be reviewed and not only ranking should be considered. Ranks in the force is gathered with years of services which may not always necessarily commensurate well with the actual capacity of the individual.

12. Electronic Transmission of documents within Government

Possibility of having the digital "infrastructure" set up for Ministries to facilitate the sharing of standard documents amongst their staff so that they can always have it a few clicks away.

13. Resistance on District Council

It was pointed out that there are a lot of resistance within Government on the process of the reforms around the set-up of District Council.

14. Make better use and provide opportunities to Seychellois professionals/consultants.

15. Middle income bracket earners at a disadvantage

Concerns were raised that over the past ten years professionals earning the middle income has been marginalized. Limited incentives are provided for this group even if they are considered the motor of Government.

16. Need more support for the development of technical professional education in Seychelles.

17. The Business Studies Academy and the University of Seychelles Building

The meeting was informed that the building which was occupied by the Seychelles Polytechnic now belongs to the University of Seychelles. The Business Studies Academy feels like they are being kicked out of the building and they are working in an environment not conducive for the level of education BSA is supposed to provide. It was proposed that the Academy get a new building and the assistance of the President on the matter was requested.

18. MEEHRD communication structure

18.1. There is no structure to put forward general education concerns which are not directly related to the Director/DG's Division. **No forum is provided for directors to make contributions towards issues and policies concerning education.** Minister only meets with Director Generals. A forum is proposed to provide Directors with an arena to give their views and collaborate on the development of the Ministry.

18.2. **Employees are not being accorded time to meet with their PS to discuss issues.** There is too much rigidity in the structure. When the Public Service employees themselves are frustrated in their work it affects the service delivery to the public.

18.3. A general concern was raised that Government needs to **engage all staff in decisions to ensure ownership of work and programs.**

19. Employees have no place to leave their children during school holidays

Employees are constrained during school holidays as they have limited options of where to leave their children and sometimes even bringing them to work. Proposition were made that Government considers establishing District Day Care Centers.

20. Transportation Issues

Ministry of Environment, SNYC and IT Section of Ministry of Education voiced concerns that transportation resources remained an important constraint for their activities.

21. Weekend Extra-activity curricular activities dominated by catechesis

Extra-curricular activities like environment or sport are not allocated time in the weekend because of religious/catechesis activities. Appeal was made for a more even allocation between the activities.

22. ICT problem with DICT AG's Office

Internet connections is limited through the DICT. Attorney General's Office feel that the internet service they get is particularly slow, and staff are unable to send off emails.

23. Public Health Laboratory affected by mold/fungus

There is molds/fungus spreading in the laboratory corridors which is not acceptable given it is supposed to be an ISO certified lab and the lab in charge of testing molds/fungus.

A concern was raised on the post of Mr Phillipe Palmyre- in charge of Public health laboratory- the post of Director does not exist in its administrative structure/the Scheme of Service.

24. Capacity constraints to implement PPBB and MNE

The human resource requirement to implement and monitor these newly introduced programs should be considered.

25. Support for teachers to use IT- Underutilization of IT equipment in schools

The IT Section in MEHRD is not able to implement part of their mandate to support teachers in school to use IT in their education programs. There are lots of equipment in the school but teachers are not able to use. Request is being made that when the structure/scheme of service is reviewed that this is considered and that provision is not only made for technicians for maintenance.

26. Lack of resources, technology and training for Customs Division

- 26.1.** Customs Division is face with numerous constraints. Verification and processing are done manually and the verification is not efficient.
- 26.2.** There is no school to provide training for Customs Officer. Programs should be developed to train officers and help them acquire more skills and expertise.
- 26.3.** Customs not included in national training provided for border control.

27. Staff reporting false information on their Managers to higher authorities

System should be put in place to ensure false accusation and reports by employees is verified properly and action taken against staff who misrepresent information and are dishonest.

28. National Museums inadequate locations and insufficient budget

- 28.1.** Requests were made for the President to visit the Carnegie Building which houses the National History Museum and the Herbarium. The environment and space staff are working in is inadequate particularly for the herbarium which has specific requirement to carry out its operation and deliver its service. The proposed relocation of the herbarium to the ex-Magistrate court is not recommended as it is inappropriate environment.
- 28.2.** The budget that has been allocated for the National history Museum to be opened at the Supreme Court is not enough to deliver an adequate museum service.

29. President's Decisions

- i. **Restructuring of Cabinet Office** to be announce the next Monday.
- ii. Secretary of State of Cabinet Affairs will send a circular the next Monday to all Ministers to inform them that a copy of **all official reports that is written by Government Officials should be submitted to the Cabinet Office for onward submission to the President.**
- iii. Put an **electronic system** in place to share documents in Ministries.
- iv. Re-examine the impact of the introduction of the salary grid had on public service. The **review of the salary grid will be undertaken this year.** Subject to the Government resources necessary action will be taken in 2018.
- v. Need to look at a system to **recognize years of experience for scheme of service.**
- vi. **Structure of SPDF being re-examined.** This is also the case for the Department of Police.
- vii. **New Public Service Commission law.**
- viii. From May onwards **President will be visiting Ministries.**
- ix. There will be another **meeting before the end of the year.**