

PRESS RELEASE

FROM THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND LABOR, ON THE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS REFORM AND THE NATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAM

ON 7th November, 2008

The press release is aimed at enlightening on the reform being carried out in the Public Institutions and the National English Language Training project.

Generally, this reform aims at designing the structures and the functioning of public institutions in order to improve the quality of their services to the population; and to accelerate Rwanda's development. The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDRPS) and the Vision 2020 require knowledgeable and committed people to serve in public institutions as well as in the private sector.

In 2007 and 2008, the Government of Rwanda embarked on functional review exercise in public institutions (Central and Local Governments) which revealed that the previous reforms resulted into positive changes in the structures and functioning of public institutions.

However, the outcomes of this functional review also showed that there were issues that needed to be addressed for public institutions to be able to improve their functioning and accelerate the development process. The current reform is being carried out in this framework.

Public Agencies and Commissions are currently being evaluated, and they will also be reformed basing on the outcomes of this evaluation exercise, especially on issues that will be found to be in need of being addressed in order for these institutions to achieve satisfactory results.

Among the positive elements that were revealed by the public institutions function review are: the decentralization process and improved service delivery and improved capacity of Local Governments staff since January 2006, reduced bureaucracy, introduction of Job classification for public institutions; and development of policies guiding public institutions.

Issues that called for change as revealed by the public institutions evaluation:

- 1) Clarification of roles in decentralizing the services to the population to allow the Central Government remain with its main mandate of developing policies and programs, putting in place laws and regulations, strengthening the capacity of all Institutions including the Private Sector and Civil society organizations, monitoring and evaluation in order to achieve improved productivity.
- 2) **Management systems improvement.** It was noticed that some management tools needed to be put in place in order to improve property and staff management and the quality of services at all levels of Government Institutions. Example is the human resources procedures manual, the administrative and operations procedures manual.
- 3) **Promoting collaboration and information sharing among public institutions.** At this point, the evaluation requested that the Government's information communication technology equipments be used to facilitate public servants' work instead of just using them to type the documents. It was suggested that these equipments be used in planning, providing remote services, sharing information in a very quick way, in gathering and analyzing statistics, etc.
- 4) **Strengthening public servants' capacity.** The evaluation revealed that all public servants, and more especially those in charge of developing policies and monitoring their implementation be given enough training in order to allow them carry out their assignments satisfactorily.
- 5) **Power delegation in Government Institutions.** The evaluation suggested that the decision making authority be given to public servants in order to accelerate the work and train them to make decisions that quickly solve the population problems.

After the decision of Cabinet Meeting of 23rd July 2008, that this reform be implemented in the institutions mentioned above, there are already a lot of achievements.

MIFOTRA prepared a concept note explaining the reasons behind this reform, its guiding principles and the reform guidelines in all public institutions. This was discussed in the National Reform Steering Committee and sent to all public Institutions. The public service reform focal points were also trained by MIFOTRA

We are finalizing the process of analyzing missions, core functions and structures, proposals for Central Institutions and local governments and the documents will be sent soon to the competent authorities.

Every institution carries out its own reform, under the supervision of the concerned institution's leaders. The outcome of the reform is submitted to the

National Reform Steering Committee which is composed of MIFOTRA, MINALOC, MINECOFIN, MINICAAF, the Director of Cabinet in the Office of the President, the Director of Cabinet in the Prime Minister' Office, the Strategy and Policy Unit in the Office of the President, the Coordination Unit in the Prime Minister's Office and the Executive Secretary of the Public Service Commission. This committee is entrusted with the mandate of analyzing the outcome-reforms that were proposed in various public institutions and submitting them to competent authorities for approval.

The activities that will follow involve the completion, carrying out job identification, job description and job classification.

After this, other activities which will follow include:

- Review of laws as the case may be;
- Developing the public servants capacity building program
- Putting in place systems and tools that promote the management of public institutions (procedures and manuals);
- Putting in place proper information sharing systems among all public institutions;

- Putting in place staff and power delegation process;
- Putting in place the reform monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess whether its objectives are being achieved.

Some people ask themselves when reforms will come to an end. The reform is implemented in phases. Upon its completion, each phase will be approved by competent authorities and will immediately be implemented.

Institutions need to constantly evaluate themselves to check if all goes well and take corrective measures where necessary. Therefore, changes will always be there so that public institutions can improve on their functioning. Whether changes are major or small, they will always be carried out whenever necessary.

Globally, institutions constantly compare themselves to their peers in order to compete among them. When they realize that some of their services are not well appreciated by the beneficiaries, they carry out some reforms to improve on their functioning. This is now the case in Rwandan Public Institutions.

We can not mention the number of reforms that will be carried out, as this is a process. Reforms will go on even next year. What is important here is that we want to speed up with the major reforms so that we only deal with improvements in the future; the private sector will also have a support from the Government so that the development process can be accelerated.

The objective of the reform is not to retrench public servants but to put in place well structured institutions which deliver and yield satisfactory results.

There is no planned number of public servants who will be retrenched. However, the analysis of the assignments and activities of public institutions showed that some activities might be shifted in other institutions or completely be cancelled. Another possibility is that other institutions can see their activities increased due to increased assignments. Therefore, the consequences would be that some public servants may be transferred to other Institutions, like the Sector (Umurenge for example) for the purpose of serving better the population.

As for those who will be retrenched after their posts have been cancelled and they have not been transferred to other institutions due to insufficient capacity, this is governed by the good practices of capacity building and business development.

If there are public servants who are retrenched, the law provides for their benefits including payment of 2/3 of the net salary they have been getting and this is for a period of six months and a retrenchment allowance that will help them, should they fail to get a new job in public service within six months following their retrenchment.

One of the major aspects of this reform is salaries. Some of the posts will be given more assignments and put at a higher grade, and the corresponding salaries will also be increased.

However, the objective of this exercise is not to increase salaries. This will be done in the future basing on the level of the national economic growth; and we hope that the new institutions' structures that will come out of this reform will have a critical role in building the national economy and the population welfare.

We will consider the current salary structure at all levels in order to formulate the Rwandan long term salary policy with special attention to those institutions where salaries are low like Teachers, Police and the Army.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROJECT (NELT PROJECT)

Concerning the decision ruled out by the Cabinet Meeting on 8/10/2008 that public servants should learn English, the decision aims at sensitizing Rwandans to learn English in mass as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda whereby the Official Languages in Rwanda are Kinyarwanda, English and French.

MIFOTRA will help public servants learn English in collaboration with Rwanda Institute of Administration and Management (RIAM). Due to the fact that the expertise in teaching English is not enough in Rwanda, we approached our friends and sensitized them to help us for English Teaching.

So far, we have already identified the number of public servants in higher level public institutions, Ministries, Public Agencies and Commissions, Provinces, Districts and Sectors. The provisional figures indicate fifteen thousand (15,000) public servants who want to learn English.

The first phase of this project will last for one year and we want it to start in January 2009. However, the preparations of looking for trainers and the necessary logistics are underway.

Despite the fact that public servants are too many, we want them to be learning English from as near their working places as possible. They will use the available meeting rooms and equipments where possible.

Due to the fact that the levels of public servants English knowledge differ, they will be put in different levels. All the levels will start their training at the same time. After one year, it is obvious that public servants will have reached different levels of knowledge. As a public servant completes one level, he/she will sit for an exam testing his/her level of knowledge. After completing all the levels, He/she will be given a final certificate upon completion of all the phases of the training.

After one year, the project will continue with those who will have not got full knowledge of English. A total of three years of active mass teaching of English for the public servants are planned for this special program.

In order to allow the public servants practice and write English, we will sensitize them to prepare documents in English and to speak English at their work places and during meetings.

We will invest a lot of efforts in this project given the benefits that our Country expects from it. The fact that we joined the East African Community implies that we have to communicate with others from the member States. Public servants and business community have also to expand their knowledge from all sides of the world in areas of science, technology and business.

Other public institutions like Teachers, Judiciary, Police and the Army will also benefit from special programs of learning English in collaboration with the concerned Ministries. We also plan to work closely with the private sector for learning English, so that they can join their hands with public servants in the move towards Rwandan rapid development. We will closely work with the concerned institutions to develop English training modules, and employers in the

private sector and the civil society are requested to facilitate their employees to participate in this developmental program.

Hope the release will help the Rwandans to support the programs aimed at reforming public Institutions and teaching English in our Country, Rwanda, where good results come from hard work.

Anastase MUREKEZI

Minister of Public Service and Labour