Workshop on Management of Human Resources in Africa
Challenges for the Third Millennium

Management of Human Resources
Achievements made by Nigeria

Tangier
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1. Introduction

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, it gives me great pleasure to be present at this august occasion and to present a Report on the Achievements by Nigeria on the theme of the workshop titled "Management of Human Resources in Africa - Challenges for the Third Millennium", which is being organized under the auspices of African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD). It is gratifying to note that CAFRAD in the faithful execution of its mandate has become an effective rallying point for discussing key issues of public administration facing the African continent and for sharing experiences on the problems, practices and challenges of public administration in member nations of CAFRAD. Before I go further to address the theme of this workshop, Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I would like to convey the appreciation of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Mr. Abu obe, CON, mni and the entire Public Service of Nigeria for the immense benefits that the Nigerian Civil Service has derived from CAFRAD activities.

The subject of this workshop is very appropriate and timely because the development of human capital is very crucial to the attainment of any result in an organisation. For example, while other factors of production like technology, financial and material resources may be in abundant supply, they have to be coordinated by a human being, who, because he has a will, personal desires and preferences, can direct them to accomplish desired objectives. Thus, the need to have the right quantity and quality of staff with the right knowledge, techniques and skills and the right frame of mind and attitude to contribute optimally to national goals and objectives has been the prime desire of the present democratically elected civilian administration under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFT. The commitment of the Nigerian Civil Service to embark on a vigorous and systematic, as well as an efficient and effective human resource management is anchored on the belief that the ability of the government to meet the yearnings and aspirations of its entire citizenry and the international community both now and in the future depends largely on the ability, compétence, royalty, dedication and the capability of its workforce. Thus, our belief and commitment to the development of human capital is consistent with the saying of an ancient Chinese Philosopher who asserted that if you want to plan for a year, grow crops, if you want to plan for ten years, plant trees but if you want to plan forever, develop men.

I would like to use this opportunity to recall that when the present civilian administration came to power in May 1999 it inherited a civil service which was a mere shadow of an effective and results-oriented, politically neutral, loyal, professional and customer-friendly civil service that had existed before the advent of the military intervention in politics. As a vital chain in the conduct and effective discharge of government business, the government right from its inauguration on May 29th 1999 had given human resource management in the civil service a high priority. This is being done through the series of training programmes especially designed for the entire strata of the Public Service. These have taken the form of Retreat for political office holders, top echelon of the civil service and administrative heads of Ministries/Extra-Ministerial Departments and Parastatals; Seminars and Conferences, Re-orientation Workshops for directorate level staff, in-house training courses, enlightenment programmes, public service lectures, specialized professional seminars etc.
The factors which have shaped Nigerian Human Resources Management Policy since the advent of the present democratic dispensation, include:

1. The réorientation of the civil service
   - as to their primary role as the arm of the exécutive under a civilian dispensation;
   - impacting the knowledge, techniques and skills for performing those functions, which hitherto were either deemphasized or not relevant under the military dispensation.

2. Exposure of the Civil Service to the machinera of Government under a democratic Presidential system of governance;

3. Application of new management techniques and skills in the running of a bureaucracy in consonance with globalization and information technology and for the service to be cost-effective;

4. Familiarization of officers with the systems and procédures for the conduct of government business as enshrined in the reviewedland updated manuais, handbooks and guidelines for operating the service;

5. Acquainting civil servants with the key policy direction of the government in its quest to meet the peoples' mandate and the needs of the international community in areas like management of the economy, national ethical orientation, customer service orientation etc.

The central objective of HRM Policy is to ensure that the Service is run by people whose training, experience, motivation and mental state of mind are positively aligned to the needs and aspirations of the government and the people they serve. In the subsequent paragraphs, I will attempt to highlight the achievements.

2. Methods/Techniques of Performance and Productivity Monitoring and Evaluations in the Public Service

The new system of performance evaluation based on target setting and performance measurement derived its origin from Section III, Paragraphs 19-23 of the Repealed Civil Service (Re-organization) Decree No. 43 of 1988, which requires the setting of targets in terms of quantity, quality, time, cost, behaviour etc. for every civil servant. It also involves setting targets for the entire Ministry/Extra-Ministerial Departments, and its sub-divisions for the year based on the annual budget. Service-wide seminars have been held on the techniques of setting targets and the administration of the new Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER) for individual officers. As a follow-up action through the organization of similar training programmes by individual Ministries so as to proliferate the knowledge and skills of applying the new Performance Management System among other systems.

To ensure compliance, the Federal Civil Service Commission has issued a circular, which stipulates that reports rendered on officers with effect from 1st January, 1999 and which are not based on the new APER form should be rejected. Some people have expressed reservations on whether most civil service jobs are amenable to quantification and targetsetting and wondered about the cumbersome process of recording achievements or failures by officers throughout the year.
3. **Application of the Merit System in Recruitment and Promotion in the Civil Service**

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 in Section 14, Sub-Sections 3 and 4 provides for fair representation of all the constituent parts that make up Nigeria. This is what we call the Federal Character Principle. It is observed not only in the recruitment into the Federal Civil Service, but in the distribution of amenities by the Federal Government across the whole country. Even within a state, there is an effort to ensure local government representation. The merit system of recruitment connotes that the best candidates from each zone, state or local government is employed from among the qualified candidates rather than recruiting candidates on the basis of favouritism or other considerations. Promotion is based on merit, which may be determined by passing prescribed civil service examination and obtaining the prescribed minimum score in examinations conducted by the relevant Staff Committees or the Federal Civil Service Commission. The emphasis on merit is to recruit the best and reward performance. A Commissioner in the Federal Civil Service Commission is always present as an observer in promotion interviews held by Ministries to ensure compliance with these guidelines. The composition of Staff Committees also reflects federal character as much as possible to ensure adherence to merit in the system of recruitment and promotion. Qualifications for vacant positions are usually well publicized in national newspapers and applicants are shortlisted based on the Federal Character Principle. In addition to this, there has been in existence a Federal Character Commission, which monitors and enforces the above Federal Character Principle especially in appointments into all Federal Government Ministries and Extra-Ministerial Agencies.

4. **Improvement in Motivation, Salaries and Wages in the Civil Service Until September, 1998, when salaries and wages, of civil servants**

were substantially increased, civil servants were described by the Ayida Panel (a panel set up to review the New Civil Service Reforms of 1988) as the most "disadvantaged and depressed wage earners in the economy". The Panel further stated that evidence available to it "shows that the gap in salaries between the public and private sectors is 300%-500%" and that "a Director in the civil service is paid only about 20% of that of his counterpart in the Nigerian National petroleum Corporation - NNPC". This state of affairs weakened the purchasing power and resulted in the low morale and standard of living of civil servants.

In June this year, government approved a revised salary structure for Federal Civil Servants with a rise in salaries and allowance of between 200% and 300%.

Pension rates of retired civil servants were also increased so that retirees can have a comfortable living. Pensions Trust Funds have been established for Parastatal Organizations to reduce the pains of getting pensions. As part of the efforts to improve the morale of civil servants, government has embarked on massive construction of staff quarters for civil servants resident in Abuja and the allocation is under the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation for more effective coordination and fairness. Other morale boosting personnel practices include provision of staff buses, working tools and facilities in offices, the abrogation of antidemocratic laws, which allowed civil servants to be removed from the service without due process of the law, conferring of national honours on deserving civil servants, attendance of Federal Executive Council meetings by the Head of Service of the Federation.
5. **The Use of Information Technology (Computerization) in the Public Service**

In respect to the trends in information technology, since 1999, training in the use of computers has been intensified. All the orientation programmes designed for Permanent Secretaries and Directorate Staff Cadres had Information Technology as part of the course module. The intention is to proliferate the use of Computer information storage and retrieval, modelling and simulations etc. in decision-making, and access information on the Internet and most payrolls in the civil service have been computerized, records in the Office of the Head of Service are undergoing computerization.

6. **The Modernization of Statutes**

The operations of our Civil Service are governed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Public Service Rules and Regulations, Financial Regulations, Pension Act, Circulars, Administrative Procedure of the Federal Government etc. many of these laws, regulations and guidelines were found to be out of date. Within this Year 2000, Government reviewed the Civil Service Rules, and the Financial Regulations and has made the copies available to civil servants for use in their activities. For example, until the recent review of our Financial Regulations, Car loan to senior officers was N9,000 - an amount that cannot buy two new tyres in the market. Other recent reviews in the statutes to accord with our democratic governance and current reality in the civil service and wider society include the abrogation of Decree No. 17 of 1984, which allows government to remove civil servants from office on grounds of public interest, reduction in the age for entering the civil service from 16 to 15 years, increase in age of appointment into the service from 45 to 50 years, etc. As new tenders procedure is now in operation in order to plug loopholes in the existing one.

7. **Code of Conduct**

There is a Code of Conduct for all Public Officers including Civil Servants and Political Appointees. All civil servants on Grade Level 10 and above are required to declare their assets periodically and failure to do so constitutes an offence that is tried by the Code of Conduct Tribunal. There is a new ethical orientation for the Public Service whose elements include anti-corruption, transparency, probity and accountability. An anti-corruption commission has been set up to try offences such as using position for gratification, deliberate frustration of investigation, bribery in relation to auctions, contract award without cash backing, fraudulent acquisition of property, offences through postal system, dealing with or concealing gratification, diversion of money meant for a particular project etc.

8. **Training, Retraining and the Revitalization of the Top-echelons of the Civil Service**

A massive programme of training, re-training and the revitalization of the top echelons of the civil service is being undertaken by the government since the advent of the present administration. The top echelons of the civil service include Permanent Secretaries, Directors-General, Directors, Deputy Directors, and Assistant Directors. The strong presence of top political
leaders like the President and Vice President, retired civil servants and highly skilled facilitators
drawn from various walks of life at the various training programmes underscores the importance,
which government attaches to them.

9. Special Seminar for Permanent Secretaries

The two-week special seminar for Permanent Secretaries was one of the first official
engagements of the President shortly after assuming office. The seminar had the objectives of
sensitizing them to the manifesto of the ruling party, the relationship with the political class, the
tools and techniques of planning, budgeting and policy implementation. It also included
preparation of council memoranda, circulars and other tools, which were relegated during the
military administration but are vital under a democratic governance.

10. Retreat for Directors-General/Chief Executives of Parastatals

Early this month, a two-day retreat was held for Directors-General/Chief Executives of
Parastatal Organizations. It was presided over by the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed
Forces. The President used the opportunity of the retreat to sensitize the Chief Executives to the
policy direction of the government and especially as to the expectations of government and people
of Nigeria from Parastatal Organizations; The need for Parastatals to perform to justify their being
funded by government and the strict enforcement of the guidelines regulating the relationship
between Parastatals and their supervising Ministries were emphasized.

11. Re-orientation Workshop for Directorate Levels Officers in the Civil Service

This workshop is organized for all Directors, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors in the
Federal Civil Service. So far 14 editions of the workshop have been held and each edition was
attended by 100 officers. It is intended that by the time all Directorate Staff undergo the
programme, over 2,500 staff would have benefited from it. All Directors and Deputy Directors
have undergone the programme.

The workshop has the following objectives among others:

1. re-dynamizing and re-engineering the civil service to make it more responsive, more
   transparent and accountable;
2. to focus and re-invigorate the civil service to match the challenges of the 21st Century;
3. to refocus the civil service and enhance its capability to deliver services efficiently and
effectively;
4. to create a civil service whose personnel are competent, development and customer-service
   oriented and able to apply information technology in the conduct of government business.
12. Monitoring the Cost of Governance

World over, the cost of governance is high. In Nigeria, recurrent expenditure consumes well over 2 13 of annual revenue. The cost of running the democratic system of government in Nigeria have added to the costs of governance since May, 1999.

Hence in order to avoid escalation in cost of governance, it is imperative to keep them under constant monitoring and to put in place cost-saving devices, policies and programmes such as:

1. enhanced discipline;
2. curbing corruption in the system;
3. reduce overpricing of government contracts;
4. judicious retraining and redeployment of staff to areas of most urgent need;
5. reduce the paraphernalia of office; and
6. undertake detailed study of how to reduce costs while simultaneously adequately remunerating staff to enhance productivity.

The Idea of National Rebirth This is predicated on the following ideas:

1. Unity & faith;
2. Peace;
3. Reconciliation;
4. Economic recovery;
5. Sound basic education;
6. Good work ethics; and;
7. Anti-corruption.

In launching the National rebirth programme, the President promised to lead by example and pledged to fight corruption, improve the security of the nation, revitalize education, resuscitate our decaying infrastructure and food security.

13. Conclusion

In conclusion, I have attempted to highlight the Human Resource Management efforts and practices in Nigeria in the last one and half years. The main characteristics of the efforts and practices are:

1. Development of a systematic, work-oriented training programmes for all the top echelons of the civil service to equipment with the knowledge techniques and skills, which will enable them meet the challenges of democratic governance;
2. sensitizing civil servants to the policy direction of government including its ethical orientation of anti-corruption, accountability, transparency etc.;
3. installing new performance management system of target setting and performance measurement as a basis for evaluating individual and corporate performance;
4. motivating civil servants for higher productivity through improved remuneration, recognition, provision of working tools and facilities;
5. consistently updating rules and regulations to make them relevant to the needs of the service and society; and
6. training civil servants to meet the challenges posed by globalization, information technology and to become the vanguard of development.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, these achievements would not have been possible but for the political will to retool, rekit, reenergize and re-dynamize the civil service. In addition, our modest achievements were realized because of adequate funding and the necessary tools and facilities provided for the purpose.