

## PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION

The unions' response to the Public Sector Transformation Team's Green Paper.

### INTRODUCTION

In general the Unions are in agreement with the principle of Public Sector transformation and of such support the efforts of the PSTU to implement a process of transformation under the vision **"A transformed cohesive Public Sector that is performance-based, efficient, cost effective and service oriented"**. However we wish to add to that vision, our vision to deliver "quality Public Service" and a transformed public sector which includes effective human resource management and development.

Over the years the Public Service has seen many initiatives to effect change, in all of these initiatives under different brandings such as Public Sector Reform and Public Sector Modernization the missing link has been the workers input. We who are to be reformed or modernized were never given the chance to be a part of the change in a tangible way. However we note and support, that this time around the efforts of the transformation process includes the formation and implementation of the Interdisciplinary Transformation Teams that is to be set up in every Ministry, Agency and Department. This is such an integral ingredient in the process that we wish not only to acknowledge the strong recommendations of the PSTU for its formation and implementation but also we believe that strong action should be taken against any MDA where this team has not been active in the decision making process and subsequent recommendation coming from the MDAs.

Public sector workers have long recognized the need for transformation, however, our rationale for transformation is hinged on the tenets of professionalism and as said before, the delivery of quality public service. Therefore, in our presentation today we intend to provide a profile of the transformation process focused on our vision and objectives of professionalism and the delivery of quality public service. This is not divergent to the need to have Jamaica become "a place to live, work and raise families".

It is important to note that since we share in the common vision that the Public Sector needs transformation our recommendations are not aimed at resisting changes but more so to achieve critical changes that are necessary to prevent changes that are going to be injurious to the delivery of quality public service or those that will harm human resource development and efficient human resource management.

As operatives in the public service we note that the issue of government spending, controlling the wage bill and savings can be realized in areas that will be strategic to the public sector budget going forward and we wish special attention to be paid to these

1. The rationalization of MDAs. An important aspect of this is being the establishment of key ministries and departments that are agreed on so that they are not subjected to changes and reorganization. In recognition that every ministry change or reorganization is a costly exercise
2. The rationalization of location of ministries and departments to minimize and or eliminate the payment of exorbitant rentals and incidentals such as parking and amenities
3. The rationalization of not only regular staff but also ministers, consultants, and advisors to effectively control the public sector wage bill
4. An effective Human Resource Management and Development Policy Unit to control the size and quality of the public sector
5. An energy policy that includes the use of cost effective alternative energy, IT and communication strategies.

We note the criteria with which the PSTU evaluated the functions that the governance machinery perform in order to determine the strategy for transformation. We have noted these as;

- a) What government should do and pay for
- b) What government should pay for but not do
- c) What government should not do and not pay for

While in agreement to these broad concepts we ponder the prescription for determining these criteria in the context that the delivery of some services will be affected negatively for example with privatization or contracting out the level of service could be affected by the ability to pay for these services.

The concept of shared corporate services must be applied judiciously while some services will lend itself to this concept it is not to be applied universally to all services that are common to departments or ministries. In this regard the services to be considered, Human Resource Management, Financial Management, Asset Management, Procurement, Legal Services, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Internal Audit and Communications and Public Relations, to allow Ministries and Departments to concentrate on their respective core functions are broadly speaking acceptable however lesson learned in earlier models of share corporate service it was seen for example that centralized treasure management could have disadvantages in that access to funding could be limited to the Ministries and departments subjected to the availability of funds determined by the Account General Department. This could seriously affect the operations of the ministries and departments. In addition if the cases of emergencies are not readily accommodated to be dealt with expeditiously this could lead to difficulties in the ministries handling emergency situations thus affecting their efficiency.

The concept of Shared corporate services in Human resources management and development is endorsed and should reside with the office of the Services Commission. In this case the human resource deployment and management could be maximize and made very efficient through centralized services. However the reasons for the abandonment of the ministry of the Public service in the 1990's must be uppermost in our thoughts including the effect that this would have on delegated authority.

## **DEVOLUTION AND DE-CONCENTRATION OF AUTHORITY**

The PSTU rationalizes devolution of power would be “Devolution that propels the leadership of the Public Sector to achieve the desired results. A new and different approach must be adopted regarding terms of employment and an appropriate Management Accountability Framework which defines expectations and results must be implemented to inculcate a performance/results-oriented mindset”.

The position of the devolution of power as prescribed by the PSTU needs some adjustments in regards to the human resource management. In the present context of the devolution of power the industrial relation practices leaves much to be desired and as such has resulted in an escalation of grievances including the abuse of power to hire and fire. Our request therefore is for a radically transformed human resources policy in these entities that allows for the framework prescribed by the PSTU but allows for the principles and practice of the LRIDA, the Jamaica Labour code and the ILO code of Practice be adhered to. This may require a return to the Office of the service commission having a central role in the HR management or a standardization of the HR Manuals that reflects HR policies in keeping with the Public Service Regulations.

## **REVIEW OF MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS**

### **CABINET OFFICE**

The proposal for the **Offices of the Services Commission** to be repositioned in the cabinet office is on the surface intended to bring together like with like however the offices of service commission is more effective if it remains as a ceteralised independent body with its own autonomy and authority. This is so to ensure that human resource management and development is managed in a manner that will promote equity, justice and efficiency.

The proposal for the establishment of a **Public Sector Salary Review Board** is certainly not in keeping with the gains made under the MoU and the establishment of a monitoring committee

that has as its members key Ministers of government and union leaders. Displacing the MoU monitoring committee and the mechanism that is place for its functioning, would displace a body that has a great impact on not only public sector Industrial Relations growth and development but also for nation building.

**There is no objection to the other recommendations at this time**

## **OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

Under the **Information and Telecommunications** portfolios the recommendation that The functions of the CPTC which deals with cultural productions should be subsumed under the PBCJ and the commercial component to include training should be repositioned. Existing PBCJ Act to be reviewed is not supported as the functions of the CPTC are mainly cultural and should therefore remain with the ministry of culture. The anticipated efficiencies that are intended would not be realized

The phasing out of the **Parish Councils** and the creation of Local Authorities should be an area closely managed so as to ensure that the necessary skills, experience and expertise that now exist in the Local Government department is captured in the parish councils with their expanded responsibilities

The intended transfer of the **National Housing Trust** to the Ministry of hosing is objected to this is another area where like being put with like will not realize the kinds of efficiency that we are hoping to achieve in the transition. The impact of the National Housing Trust goes to the core of national development and should be retained in the Office of the Prime Minister. In past experience the NHT was moved to the Ministry of Housing but given the broad impact of the policy of the national housing trust and the need for the type of authority that can only come from the Prime Minster the NHT was repositioned in the OPM. Any thought to remove the trust must be informed by past experience.

We disagree to the recommendation for the **National Solid Waste Management Agency** to be considered for Executive Agency Status if this is going to mean more emphasis on a cost being imposed on the public for garbage collection. In its present form the NSWMA has been mandated to remove garbage and refuse from the public as a matter of public service with an indirect charge being imposed on the public. If however Executive Agency status means improved waste management strategies like the utilization of plastics and metal extraction for recycling and the improved disposal site management then this can be supported. However the privatization, quasi or otherwise is frowned upon by the Union movement and there is an

international campaign now being waged against the privatization of certain public services including sanitation.

The **merger proposed with the Jamaica Social Investment Fund and the Constituency Development Fund** under one umbrella with distinctly separate streams of funds, appraisal criteria and project management. While the accounting is simply a matter of assigning codes to differentiate streams of income and related expenditure, this may be difficult to achieve operationally from an administrative point of view, with different streams of funding and the blurring of the lines between what is a CDF and what is JSIF. However if the projects that are funded are merged this may be achievable.

The **privatization of parish Cemeteries** cannot be supported one can just imagine that the social status of the public clients that are being catered to under the present arrangements would have difficulties under a privatized arrangement. This is certainly a service that government should pay for and provide.

All other mergers and transfers are agreed with.

#### **MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

Again we state our disagreement and strong objection to the merger and subsequent movement of the Office of the Services Commission the Cabinet office and transfer of the CHASE Fund to OPM. The rational that like with like would certainly apply in this scenario

The movement of the public service department of the Ministry of finance is not objected to however the efficiencies that are realized with public service ministry twinned with the ministry finance must be examined in relation to the efficiencies that we gained with this combination

#### **MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE**

**No recommendations.**

#### **MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY**

the recommendation for contracting out of management facilities of Juvenile Correctional Centers is one that needs further examination against the background that it is a privatized facility the opportunity for abuses against the inmates may be heightened. This may be a way of removing the responsibility for the ills from Government but retaining the regulatory and policy control and also the financial burden Maybe some other concept of the transition entity may be considered such as Executive Agency?

**There is no objection to the other recommendations at this time**

#### **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**There is no objection to these recommendations at this time**

#### **MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**

The recommendation is made for these training institutes to remain with the Ministry of Justice in keeping with the format to put like with like maybe the **Norman Manley Law School and Justice Training Institute** should be transferred to the Ministry of Education it is believed that this would be a better fit or maybe transferring the Justice Training Institute to the faculty of law at the University of the West Indies.

#### **MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, INVESTMENT AND COMMERCE**

Recommendations are accepted

#### **MINISTRY OF WATER AND HOUSING**

The following Entities are to be transferred to the Ministry of Transport & Works

- National Water Commission
- Rural Water Supply Ltd.
- Water Policy & Monitoring

Given the intention to attach the water portfolio to this ministry this proposal and subsequent transfers are inevitable. However, we are also recommending the National irrigation Commission be considered to be a part of this mix. While the recommendation to transfer these entities to transport and works because of the impact on the significant infrastructure development and maintenance to be undertaken, the NIC should also be considered on the basis of the connection with the distribution of water albeit not being potable water so that all water management initiative could be from the same source.

The planned transfer of the NHT is again objected to for emphasis, in addition the transfer of the NEPA is being questioned against the background that this is a transfer worn entity and the staff and operations may be battle worn and fatigued from the many transfers. However NEPA has some priority areas that need urgent attention and we are supporting the need to attend to these urgently

The recommendation to merge the Housing Solutions Division (MWH) with Squatter Management Units (HAJ and MWH) is also cause for some concern and we would urge a more scrupulous examination of this merger before a decision is arrived at. The squatter management unit has national implications and is in need of additional staff to accomplish its mandate. Against this background perhaps a more thorough examination of the merger needs to be undertaken

**There is no objection to the other recommendations at this time**

#### **MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

**There is no objection to the other recommendations at this time**

#### **MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

**There is no objection to the other recommendations at this time**

#### **MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINING**

The divestment/ privatization of the rural electrification project is objected to in the regard that it may lead to the slow down of the progress of this project in the rural communities of Jamaica where it is intended to serve persons, districts and communities. This segment of Jamaica may not receive the kind of public service this unit was set up to provide and the provision of electricity is considered to be a national security issue where policing is concerned.

#### **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES**

##### **Recommendations accepted**

It must be noted that the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has achieved significant gains arising from its reorganizing initiatives started in 2006 and which are still ongoing. The level of human resource and project management skills which was brought to the table is exemplary and the Unions, particularly the JCSA, who worked closely with the team at the Ministry, wish

to congratulate encourage that Ministry as it sets the standard of what Transformation should look and feel like.

## **MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS**

We note the merger of Port Authority of Jamaica/Airports Authority of Jamaica and development functions of the Jamaica Railway Corporation- to be named Ports Authority of Jamaica with a critical eye on whether or not this not creating a super department that may be slow and cumbersome in its response as its area of responsibility is very wide. These arrangements may be burdened by complexities that are not easily handled or would not necessarily give rise to the intended efficiencies.

The rebranding of the Ministry Transport and works to the **Ministry of Transport and Water** is a development that we shall observe with interest given the synergies that are expected to be derived.

## **MINISTRY OF YOUTH, SPORTS AND CULTURE**

Recommendations accepted however, in the area of tourism a consideration be given to Health Tourism as another area where Jamaica can be explored for expansion

## **OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT**

**There is no objection to the other recommendations at this time**

## **SYSTEMIC AREAS FOR TRANSFORMATION**

- **Shared Corporate Services**
- **Devolution Of Authority**
- **Standardisation Of Administrative Regions**
- **National Identification System**
- **Government Of Jamaica Network Infrastructure (GOVNET)**
- **Cost Savings Initiatives To Be Undertaken**
- **Human Resource Management Issues Under Review**

All the areas mentioned above have far reaching impact on the public sector on a whole and therefore requires further consultations to discuss these issues. However in summary, the standardization of the administrative regions, national identification system and government of Jamaica Network infrastructure are concepts that are readily acceptable and welcomed. On the

other hand, shared corporate services, devolution of Authority and Human Resource Management issues are areas that requires more in depth discussions and rationalization.