



PSC urges Parliament to reconsider “punitive” clauses in proposed labour laws



PSC Chairperson Amb. Anthony Muchiri (centre), PS State Department of Labour Mr. Shadrack Mwadime (right) and PSC Director Legal, Ms. Jacqueline Manani (left) appearing before Parliament’s Departmental Committee on Labour at the Boma Hotel on 17th October 2023

Inside this issue:

National Dialogue Committee urged to consider public officers’ welfare	2
HOPS assurance on implementation of recommendations in the Annual Report 2022/2023	3
PSC CEO feted by Institute of Certified Public Secretaries	4
“Excellent job” - Mudavadi says of PSC stand at Nairobi Show	5
Nairobi River Commission seeks help to address HR challenges	6
Capacity building on development of Public Service-wide Charter	7
Additional 300 PSIP Mentors and Coaches certified	8
Adopt best practices in public service delivery— Amb Muchiri	9
Artificial Intelligence for Public Service Delivery	10
Know Your Blood Pressure Reading (BPR)	11
The travesty in Public Service Training and Development	12
The PSELF Third Segment Training	13
Tenets of good governance, transparency and accountability	14
Protecting the Mental Health of Our Unsung Heroes	15
PICTORIAL: Nairobi International Trade Fair (ASK Show) - September 25 to October 01, 2023	16
PICTORIAL: Certification of additional 300 Mentors and Coaches under PSIP Programme	17

By Tom Muema

The Public Service Commission Chairperson Amb. Anthony Muchiri has urged the National Assembly Departmental Committee on Labour to reconsider some of the clauses in the proposed Employment (Amendment) Bill 2022. Amb. Muchiri said this while presenting the Commission's views on the proposed employment bill to the labour committee during its sitting at the Boma Hotel on 17th October 2023.

“We need to be very careful when making labour laws that could negatively affect our job market and, specifically, young people who are already suffering from

high levels of unemployment,” said Amb. Muchiri.

He noted that some of the clauses in the proposed bill were retrogressive and did not put into account the changing work environment.

Equally, he highlighted that some of the issues the proposed bill wants to solve have already been included in a Government policy proposed to allow flexible work environments or arrangements such as virtual and homework stations.

“As an employer, we would support proposed amendments that would address the future of work, progressive labour practices and enable the country to provide a competitive edge that can compare with global trends,” added Amb. Muchiri.

The Departmental Committee on Labour Chairperson, Hon. Muchangi Karemba who presided over

the session, reaffirmed that the committee will consider all views presented before it.

The committee also received views from the State Department of Labour and Law Society of Kenya.

After receiving the views from all stakeholders, the committee will retreat to make final recommendations to the National Assembly for adoption.

Also present were PSC Commissioners; Dr. Joyce Nyabuti and Ms. Joan Otieno and members of the Commission Secretariat, Principal Secretary State Department of Labour Mr. Shadrack Mwadime, Departmental Committee on Labour Vice Chairperson, Hon. Fabian Muli and other committee members.

National Dialogue Committee urged to consider public officers' welfare



PSC Chairperson Amb. Anthony Muchiri (right) makes his presentation before the National Dialogue Committee on 2nd October, 2023. On his right is the Director Legal Services Jacqueline Manani

By Pauline Muriuki

Public Service Commission Chairperson Amb. Anthony Muchiri has expressed support for the national dialogue and is hopeful that the results of the dialogue will improve the welfare of public officers.

He said this will lead to an efficient and effective public service that delivers services to the citizens of Kenya as expected.

While making a submission before the National Dialogue Committee (NADCO) at the Bomas of Kenya on 2nd October, 2023 Amb Muchiri underscored the role of the Commission in ensuring implementation of the two-thirds gender rule in appointments to public offices.

“The Commission proposes that an affirmative action framework in the form of legislation be developed and implemented to comply with the

two-third gender rule for appointive positions across the entire public service,” said Amb Muchiri.

He proposed the restructuring of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) in a manner that makes it more effective, efficient and credible on matters elections.

“The Commission bears the responsibility for improving the capability of the public service to provide strategic and innovative policy advice that spurs growth to meet citizen’s expectations,” he said.

The PSC Chairperson also expressed concern over the current state of the economy and its impact on the mental health of public servants. He said, “The high cost of living coupled with increased taxation has seen thousands of public servants

grapple with mental health crisis,” he said, adding that the inability to meet their financial obligations has resulted in low morale, poor performance and poor social welfare.

The inability to retain one-third of their net salary requirement, even before the deduction of new taxes, according to Muchiri, is embarrassing civil servants.

He requested for a comprehensive evaluation of the taxation regime or, alternatively, a wage increase to ease the financial burden on employees, particularly those servicing mortgages.

Amb Muchiri noted that according to data held by the State Department for Public Service, 12,532 public officers sought psychosocial support in the financial year 2022/2023 as compared to 6,616 in the financial year 2018/2019, representing an increase of 84%.

The statistics show that out of 79,253 public officers, 17,132 (21.62%) earn less than a third of their basic salary.

“Out of 31,892 officers in the prisons service, 13,661 (42.83%) earn less than a third of their basic salary. In the disciplined services, out of 106,667 officers, 51,784 (48.55%)

HOPS assurance on implementation of recommendations in Annual Report 2022/2023

By Browne Kutswa and
Pauline Muriuki

The Chief of Staff and Head of Public Service Felix Koskei has assured the Public Service Commission that the policy recommendations contained in the Commission's Annual report for the Financial Year 2022/2023 will be taken up for implementation by respective MDAs and State offices.

In an acknowledgement to the Commission upon receiving the Report for onward transmission to His Excellency the President, Mr Koskei noted the unique mandate of the Commission as a constitutional office.

"I look forward to the Commission's continued contribution towards the achievement of the shared aspirations of the people of Kenya," he said.

The Commission submitted the Report to the President and Parliament ahead of the September 30th deadline as required by Article 254 (1) of the Constitution which requires each Independent Commission to present a report on the activities and financial statement for each financial year.

Section 90 of the Public Service Commission Act, 2017 also provides that every September after the end of each financial year, the Public Service Commission shall present its Annual Report to the President



Chief of Staff and Head of Public Service Felix
Koskei

and Parliament.

The thematic focus of the report "Towards Public Service Transformation" demonstrates the Commission's institutional commitment to a strong and effective public service.

The theme is in sync with the Government's development agenda which focuses on transforming systems, methods and processes in the Public Service.

It calls for the strengthening of public service institutions and the enhancement of their policy development capacity to handle emerging administrative challenges.

It also aligns with the transformative agenda in the Commission's Strategic Plan 2019-2024, through the implementation of four key broad strategies namely: service delivery transformation; performance and productivity management; human resource management and development; and

promotion of good governance, constitutionalism, and compliance with the rule of law.

The exercise of finalization of the report was steered by Commissioners Dr Joyce Nyabuti and Amb. Salma Ahmed, who led the task team under Dr. Sylvester Obong'o, Director, Performance Management & Service Delivery Improvement and Mr. Browne Kutswa (Deputy Director Public Communication) to deliver the assignment as per the stipulated deadline and terms of reference.

"I look forward to the Commission's continued contribution towards the achievement of the shared aspirations of the people of Kenya,"

- Felix Koskei

PSC CEO feted by Institute of Certified Public Secretaries



PSC CEO Dr Simon Rotich (2nd from right) receiving his honorary fellowship award certificate from Dr Vimal Shah. Left is ICS Chairperson Joshua Wambua, at the center is the Convenor, College of Fellows Mr Silas Kobia and on the right is the Institute's CEO Mr Jeremiah Karanja

By Badi Khamis

The Institute of Certified Secretaries (ICS) has awarded PSC CEO Dr Simon Rotich an honorary fellowship in recognition of his exceptional service in the

public service and the society.

The ceremony, which was held on 12th October 2023 at the Stanley Hotel, Nairobi, saw over 15 personalities, awarded the prestigious fellowship.

The Institute of Certified Secretaries of Kenya (ICS) is the professional organization for Certified Secretaries with a statutory mandate of promoting good governance.

National Dialogue Committee urged to consider public officers' welfare

From page 2

earn less than a third of their basic salary," said Muchiri.

This shows that public officers are dealing with a difficult situation, even as they are expected to pay more in taxes and fees from their salaries.

In order to cushion the employees, Muchiri suggested a staggering implementation of the housing levy, basing it on basic salary and not the gross salary – an approach that mirrors the successful reformulation of

NSSF contribution.

"This will cushion employees from the adverse effects of the all-round increase in taxation and ensure all employees are within the one-third net salary requirement," he said.

“Excellent job” - Mudavadi says of PSC stand at Nairobi Show



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi talks with secretariat staff when he visited the PSC exhibition stand during the Nairobi International Trade Fair at the Jamhuri Park grounds on 28th September, 2023

By Virginia Asievera

Public Service Commission participated in the 2023 International Trade Fair hosted by Agricultural Society of Kenya at the Jamhuri showground that took place on 25th September to 1st October 2023.

The exhibition had over 100 participants showcase products and services both in public and private sector.

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi visiting the booth commended the Commission for ensuring efficient and effective public service delivery.

He acknowledged the

PSC Internship Programme that offers a training and learning platform for the youth in Kenya.

“The Public Service Commission is doing an excellent job in providing employment opportunities to the young people, preparing them to be commendable public servants.”

“The Commission has made a remarkable stride in the public service.” Street Families Rehab Trust Fund Chairperson Hon Mary Wambui commented while visiting the exhibition booth.

The Commission brought its secretariat staff onsite to interact with the public and get

first hand feedback from the public regarding public service delivery.

Over 300 visitors visited the booth to gain a better understanding of the PSC's functions, roles, and contributions to effective public service delivery.

This year's fair theme was “Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture and Trade Initiatives for sustainable economic growth” with a focus on innovative and technological advances. Public Service Commission showcased digitalized services, where the public can remotely apply for jobs and be interviewed online.

Nairobi River Commission seeks help to address HR challenges



PSC Chairperson Amb. Anthony Muchiri (seated in the middle) in a group photo with the Nairobi River Commission board members at the Commission House on 13th October 2023

By Tom Muema

Public Service Commission Chairperson Amb. Anthony Muchiri has assured the Nairobi River Commission (NRC) of PSC's support in addressing human resource gaps in the newly established Commission.

Amb. Muchiri said this while addressing the NRC Commission members led by Chairperson Dr. Pamela Olet, who visited the Commission on a benchmarking tour on 13th October 2023.

"You can only deliver on your mandate when you have an effective secretariat. The commission will do anything within its mandate to support you in building an effective human capital to deliver on your mandate," said Amb. Muchiri.

He also added that the NRC is under pressure hence the need for

human resource gaps to be addressed within the shortest time possible.

"Your scope of mandate is large and expectations from both the citizens and the highest office in the land are quite high," noted the PSC Chairperson.

Dr. Olet called for continuous engagement with PSC in helping the organization set up structures and human resource institutions for effective delivery of the mandate.

"Being a newly established institution, we truly need assistance and handholding specifically from PSC in addressing the many human resource challenges we are facing," said Dr. Olet.

The Nairobi River Commission was established through a Gazette Notice Number 14891 on December 2nd, 2022 to reclaim the rivers of Nairobi as a spine to the city's blue

and green infrastructure for a better urban environment and quality of life. The Commission envisages a collaborative approach together with other stakeholders and development partners to secure, protect and restore the critical River Basin in order to achieve the shared goal of reclaiming the Nairobi Rivers.

Also in attendance were PSC's Vice Chairperson Ms. Charity Kisotu, Commissioners' Dr. Reuben Chirchir, Amb. Patrick Wamoto, Mr. Andrew Muriuki and heads of directorates. From NRC; Vice Chairperson Prof. Elijah Biamah, Commissioners, Prof. Duncan Ojwang, Ms Elizabeth Wathuti and Ms. Eva Muhia.

Capacity building on development of Public Service-wide Charter



Deputy Director Research Dr Philemon Kiprono facilitates during the capacity building exercise on standardization of the service delivery charter.

By Habel Shiloli

The process of developing the service-wide Client Service Delivery Charter (CSDC) has progressed into the second phase.

The phase involves standardizing of the service delivery requirements for core functions across homogeneous public institutions.

This follows the successful conclusion of the first phase of the exercise that standardized the service delivery requirements for common functions across public institutions.

Section 7(1) of the Public Service (Values and Principles) Act No. 1(a) of 2015 provides that the public service shall ensure that public services are provided promptly; effectively; impartially; and equitably.

Further Section 7(6) provides that every public institution shall develop standards for the responsive, prompt, effective, impartial and equitable provision of services; facilitate the introduction

of modern and innovative procedures, technologies and systems for the delivery of its services; and simplify its procedures and ease formalities related to access and delivery of its services.

The institution shall also ensure the adaptability of public services to the needs of the public; ensure that its services are delivered closer to the users of the services; and develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of public service delivery.

The service-wide CSDC seeks to improve efficiency in public service delivery. It will require public institutions to express commitment to service delivery in which published standards of service delivery are maintained; ensure service beneficiary's rights are protected; ensure relationships with service beneficiaries are enhanced; and fast-track the transformation of the public service from a rules-bound bureaucracy to a citizen-centric and results-oriented public service.

The intergovernmental task

team led by the Public Service Commission hosted a five-day stakeholder workshop from Tuesday 26 to Friday 29 September 2023 that sensitized over 100 participants drawn from Ministries & State Departments, Public Universities, State Corporations and TVET institutions.

The proposed service-wide CSDC outline will present organizational background information, including the Vision, Mission, Mandate, Core values, among others.

It will outline the services that the institution is mandated to provide; and set explicit standards of service so that the users are aware of the quality or standard of service they can reasonably expect from each institution.

It shall also contain provisions for effective monitoring and publication of actual performance against the set standards.

The Public Finance Management Reforms Programme is supporting the development of the Charter.

Additional 300 PSIP Mentors and Coaches certified



PSC Commissioner Dr Mary Mwiandi (Seated in the middle), in a group photo with PSIP Mentors and Coaches during the capacity building programme in Naivasha on 29th September 2023

By Tom Muema

Public Service Commission has officially certified 300 Public Service Internship Programme (PSIP) mentors and coaches after going through a two-phased 5-day capacity building programme.

The exercise that brought together mentors and coaches from all Ministries, State Departments, Corporations and Public Universities was held at Lake Naivasha Resort, in Nakuru County from 18th to 29th September 2023.

While presiding over the certification ceremony, PSC Commissioner Dr. Mary Mwiandi urged the PSIP mentors and coaches to set good precedence and help the Commission shape the future of the public service.

“Don’t be afraid to nurture these interns into better

versions of you, the goal is to have a better public service and a country in the coming years,” said Commissioner Mwiandi.

She also assured the mentors and coaches of Commission’s support in the process of supporting and moulding the interns joining the service.

The PSIP mentors and coaches capacity building programme is part of the Commission's concerted effort to ensure every intern deployed in the public service works under capable and skilled supervision.

In total the commission has certified over 800 mentors and coaches since the inauguration of the PSIP Mentors and Coaches Programme in 2021.

The PSIP Mentors and Coaches Programme closing ceremony was also attended by

PSC’s Director, Performance and Service Delivery Transformation Performance Dr. Sylvester Obong’o, Deputy Director, HRMD (PSIP) Mr. Simon Mwangi, Deputy Director HRMD, Mr. Nelson Njue, Deputy Director, Planning Mr. William Migwi and members of the Commission secretariat.

In total, the Commission has certified over 800 mentors and coaches since the inauguration of the PSIP Mentors and Coaches Programme in 2021.

Adopt best practices in public service delivery—Amb. Muchiri



National Commissioner, Public Service Commission of South Africa Ms. Zukiswa Mqolomba speaking to PSC Chairperson Amb Anthony Muchiri. At the far left is Assistant Director Chairperson's Office Mr. Mustafa Ibrahim

By Badi Khamis

Public Service institutions have been challenged to adopt the best norms practiced by Public Service Commissions across the African Continent.

Speaking when he received the National Commissioner, Public Service Commission of South Africa Ms. Zukiswa Mqolomba who paid a courtesy visit to his office on 6th September 2023, PSC Chairperson Amb. Muchiri said there is a lot that public service institutions can share.

"We are glad to take you through what we do here, as we also learn from you in your quest to have an effective Human Resource in your Country," he said.

In her remarks, Ms Mqolomba said that the South African Commission will mirror

and implement the noble idea of nurturing Emerging Leaders in the Public Service.

"The Initiative by Public Service Commission Kenya and Emerging Public Service Leaders Foundation - Africa to start an Emerging Leadership Fellowship Program is an idea to be emulated by African states if we want to professionally develop our young public servants," she said.

She disclosed that for any country to have a dedicated public service that has an integrity culture, similar programs must be embraced.

Also present during the meeting was Commissioner Dr. Mary Mwiandi and Deputy Commission Secretary Mr. Remy Mulati.

"The Initiative by Public Service Commission Kenya and Emerging Public Service Leaders Foundation - Africa to start an Emerging Leadership Fellowship Program is an idea to be emulated by African states if we want to professionally develop our young public servants,"

- Ms. Zukiswa Mqolomba

Artificial Intelligence for Public Service Delivery

By Nancy Marangu

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become common in citizens' everyday interactions with private sector entities. It is also increasingly relevant for the delivery of public services by national and county governments.

The scale and speed of AI tools presents an enormous potential to enhance the efficiency of government service delivery, but also implies these mechanisms must be employed systematically.

Responsible use of AI and implementation for public service delivery is not a one-time exercise, but a continual process that requires attention every step of the way - from the first contemplation of incorporating AI into a program to the routine use of a fully implemented AI system.

This is with the appreciation that the public sector is responsible for national priorities, investments and regulations, and is thus in a unique position regarding AI adoption and absorption.

Consequently, governments are also in a position to leverage the immense power of AI to innovate and transform the public sector, redefining the ways in which it designs and implements policies and provides services to its citizens.

Such innovation and transformation is critical for the Public Service as it faces the ever-increasing complexity and demands from its citizens and consumers.

The IBM Center for the Business of Government, report on Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector: A Maturity Model 2021, highlights how AI can operate in an autonomous mode such as robotic process automation and can also be deployed to augment human



Nancy Marangu

decision-making.

AI can contribute to augmenting the nature of work at public organizations and how they provide services for citizens. The efficiency, quality, and speed of a citizen engagement can be enhanced, particularly because AI can be used to process large amounts of data and facilitate decision making, modernize service delivery processes, reduce administrative tasks by automating repetitive tasks related to processing service applications and facilitate resource allocation.

Moreover, AI can enable effectiveness of service delivery, for example, through supporting service personalization by using data in customer profiles and previous service interactions. In the context of citizen services, these systems can be categorized into at least five areas, including: answering service inquiries, assistance with finding and filling out forms, translation and routing requests.

It is worth noting that successful design, development, and deployment of AI require an appreciation of the nuances of six elements: big data, AI systems, analytical capacity, innovation climate, governance and ethical frameworks, and strategic visioning.

To build AI systems, agencies need to invest in understanding the value of their datasets. Toward this end, agencies need to be able to discern which datasets are ideal

candidates to be used for designing AI projects. In addition, agencies must identify datasets that may have quality concerns for example not being representative of the population or having a large amount of missing and/or erroneous entries.

In addition to data that resides within an agency, datasets need to be leveraged from stakeholders across the entire ecosystem. As data is the key ingredient for AI, it is vital that there are data governance frameworks that promote responsible data sharing.

It is worth noting that agencies over-focus on the risks associated with data rather than the opportunities they can provide. While focus might be on the risk that arise from data would lead to stringent data controls and processes to assess use cases, most agencies do not have data governance and policy frameworks in place. As a result, data governance frameworks are critical to the development and use of AI and several elements need to be accounted for in it.

In this regard, the World Bank Summary note on Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector, underlines to manage the risks and maximize the opportunities of adopting AI in the public sector. The Public Service needs to design and have in place both an AI policy and governance framework.

The framework will guide the ethical use of AI and to provide clarity about AI principles and priorities. Such a framework may also be grounded in legislation so that the rights of data providers are clear and protected, and the ethical use of data are specified in law and regulations.

Furthermore, to promote human-centered use of AI, the Public Service should adopt

Know your Blood Pressure Reading (BPR)

By Alfred O. Onono, BTech, MA

Blood pressure is a cardinal vital sign that guides acute and long-term clinical decision-making. Given its importance in directing care, measuring blood pressure accurately and consistently is essential. In general, two values are recorded during the measurement of blood pressure.

The first, systolic pressure, represents the peak arterial pressure during systole. The second, diastolic pressure, represents the minimum arterial pressure during diastole. Finally, a third value, mean arterial pressure, can be calculated from the systolic and diastolic pressures. The formula used is as follows: $MAP = DP + 1/3 (SP - DP)$ or $MAP = DP + 1/3 (PP)$. PP = pulse pressure. Another method of blood pressure measurement is in use, termed automated office BP (AOBP).

The AOBP measurement assesses blood pressure after the patient has rested for five minutes, followed by a fully automated series of five readings over five minutes, with the patient resting quietly alone.

This method helps providers get a reading that corresponds



Mr Alfred Onono

more closely with ambulatory-awake blood pressure readings, as it alleviates the possibility of white-coat hypertension.

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure tested. Understanding your results is key to controlling high blood pressure. Top of Form Select where your (BP) falls to understand more about your blood pressure and what you can do to improve it.

The normal Blood Pressure is **120/80mmHg**. (As a reminder systolic is the top number and diastolic is the bottom number of a BP

reading.) The top number refers to the amount of Pressure in your Arteries during the contractions of your HEART. (Systolic Pressure). The bottom number refers to your Blood Pressure when your Heart muscles is between Beats.

Typically, more attention is given to systolic blood pressure (the first number) as a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease for people over 50. In most people, systolic blood pressure rises steadily with age due to the increasing stiffness of large arteries, long-term buildup of plaque and an increased incidence of cardiac and vascular disease.

Most studies show a greater risk of STROKE and HEART DISEASE related to higher Systolic Pressure as compared with elevated Diastolic pressure. If your pressure readings suddenly exceed 180 Hg, please visit your doctor because failure to act fast could land you to the land of the DEAD.

The writer is an Assistant Director, Information Science at the Commission and can be reached on oaonono@publicservice.go.ke

Artificial Intelligence for Public Service Delivery

From page 10

principles regarding protection of personal data and rights to privacy, agency accountability for the use of data.

Besides, roles and responsibilities concerning cybersecurity and transparency, when it comes to what and how AI is being used, fairness and non-discrimination in the use of AI should be observed.

This is particularly important in the context of public service delivery, where governmental organizations have an obligation to provide trustworthy and equitable services to all possible customers.

As AI technologies continue to advance, the Public Service ought to explore mechanisms to optimise AI

for service provision, increase operational efficiency, and deliver tailored, citizen-centric services that meet the evolving needs of its citizens in counties and communities.

Nancy Marangu is a Communication and Public Policy Analyst

The travesty in Public Service Training and Development

By Gradus W. Kizito, PhD

The Public Service Commission issued circular Ref. No. PSC/ADM/13(6) dated 11th March, 2020, and expressed concerns that some of the requirements and existing courses were not facilitating public servants to acquire envisaged skills, competencies and other attributes required at higher level positions.

In the same circular, the Commission stated that it had initiated a study to evaluate the relevance and suitability of existing promotion courses in imparting necessary skills, competencies and attributes to public servants. The Commission suspended requirements of the Strategic Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) and Masters degree and guided that promotion would be based on requisite experience and individual performance.

After three years of implementing the policy, it is time to reflect on the merits and achievements of the policy as well as any obtaining demerits. On the side of merits and achievements, the policy paved way for implementation of succession management and arrested talent drain from the public service. In addition, the policy has been instrumental in fostering increased motivation and enhanced energy to deliver public services.

Some of the things public servants were delighted to welcome included freedom from the need to spend resources (like money and time) on courses, increased recognition of work experience over possession of certificates, and withdrawal of bottlenecks imposed by schemes of service on their promotion to higher grades.

It is not without justification that the policy was so well received. For many public servants, securing nomination for government sponsored training in relevant courses specified in Schemes of Service was a herculean task. Human Resource Development Departments supported this – they always brought it to the attention of the Commission and the State Department for Public Service that resources available for training and development



Gradus W. Kizito, PhD

were extremely inadequate compared to demand for relevant training based on Schemes of Service. The Departments also highlighted that lack of adequate training budget was contributing to stagnation, reduced morale, poor service delivery and delays in implementation of the Kenya Vision 2030.

In the context of Circulars Ref. No. PSC.3/1/1/IV; 32/35 of 27th June, 2012 and PSC/ADM/13 of 19th October, 2022, emphasis on possession of genuine certificates in areas mentioned in Scheme of Service had inadvertently led to unethical behavior in the area of training and development.

For example, public servants talked about their colleagues who obtained genuine certificates through collusion with trainers who awarded purchased credits and convinced training institutions to unknowingly award certificates to persons who had not actually undertaken training.

Another example are numerous instances of some officials requiring their juniors or paying other people, to undertake assignments and projects required of them, to which they would add their names and present to training institutions as their 'original' work and so get awarded certificates. Unfortunately, no clear strategy to control these vices is in place.

In terms of demerits of the policy, reduced emphasis on competence improvement has weakened the public service in various ways. For example, during the hosting of the Africa Climate Summit 2023 in Nairobi, media reports

indicated that some public servants at both senior and junior levels lacked etiquette and decorum in how they handled dignitaries and transacted official business. In areas requiring professional competence, critics have also accused some public servants of being ignorant, incompetent and incapable of sustaining a knowledgeable discussion on matters affecting the citizens.

Notwithstanding the criticisms, it is also evident that the public service boasts of some of the most qualified, highly rated and best performing human resource you can find anywhere and have provided cutting edge solutions to challenges in service delivery. However, the concerns alluded to attest to the presence of performance gaps and the need to bridge competence gaps.

Recently, the Commission issued circular Ref. No. PSC/ADM/13 dated 19th October, 2022 on Nomination and Approval of Government Training. The core issue is that officers have resorted to undertaking self-sponsored training in programmes aligned to their personal aspirations and thereafter, using obtained qualifications to seek promotion and re-designation.

This threatens to cause either understaffing or bloating in some areas of public service delivery since the training and requests for career mobility are not aligned with human resource plans and the competency framework. Quite clearly, public service training policies and the framework for human resource development requires an overhaul to redress the bedlam and travesty in human resource training and development.

The writer is an Assistant Director, Compliance & Quality Assurance Department and can be reached on gkizito@publicservice.go.ke

The PSELF third segment training



Commissioner Dr. Mary Mwiandi during the opening session of PSELF segment three residential training

By Stephanie Ndiku

The third segment residential training for the Public Service Emerging Leaders Fellowship programme took place earlier in September with the objective of understanding the essential skills and apply practical toolkits for public policy, program design and implementation as well as applying practical skills for effective communication, both in writing and presentations.

The segment training started with two weeks online training prior to the residential training.

This was facilitated by CIG team lead by Mr. Jared Poon, with focus on public policy design, operating with a citizens-first mindset, defining problem statements, and understanding and using public consultation platforms.

In addition to the training on policy design and implementation,

the fellows also received training on effective public policy implementation. Dr. Roger Koranteng, the Head of Public-Sector Governance at The Commonwealth Secretariat, facilitated a session on leadership in facilitating public participation.

This was aimed at equipping the fellows with the necessary skills and knowledge to engage citizens in the policy-making process and ensure their voices are heard.

Zukiswa Mqolomba, a National Commissioner from the Public Service Commission in South Africa, trained the fellows on effective public policy implementation.

This training focused on the practical skills and strategies needed to successfully implement policies in the government systems.

The fellows learned about stakeholder engagement, resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation, and overcoming implementation challenges.

At the end of the training, the fellows were grouped in teams and given specific sectors in the

government. They are expected to come up with topics and policy documents which are addressing problems and issues in the country. By the end of the programme, the fellows will have developed policy documents that address practical problems in the country and will present their capstone projects to the Public Service Commission Board in December 2023.

The Public Service Emerging Leaders Fellowship programme aims to provide the fellows with a holistic understanding of public service best practices and equip them with the necessary skills to drive positive change in their respective sectors.

Public Service Commission and Emerging Leaders Foundation-Africa have partnered with Chandler Institute of Governance (CIG) to train these young public leaders to enhance government service delivery, citizen outcomes and influence long-term social policy and change.

The writer is a Senior Research Officer in Research unit and can be reached on sndiku@publicservice.go.ke

Tenets of good governance, transparency and accountability

By Juma Gabriel, PhD, MKIM

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) defines governance as the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented.

Good governance is the accountable exercise of power and authority. Johnston Michael in an Article titled "Good Governance, rule of law, transparency and accountability" and published in 2002 defines good governance as legitimate, accountable and effective ways of obtaining and using public power and resources in the pursuit of widely accepted social goals.

This is amplified by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) that defines good governance as the process of measuring how public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption with due regard to the rule of law. Good governance is therefore tightly linked to the fight against corruption. Upholding of good governance assures that corruption is minimized or eliminated.

Similarly, Rothstein & Teorell in a book titled "What is quality of Government? A theory of impartial Government institutions" and published in 2008 has identified key principles of good governance. These include participatory, consensus oriented, ethical, accountable, transparent, responsive to the present and future needs of society, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. In addition, it ensures that the views of minorities are taken into account and the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making.

Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe as defined in the service delivery charter. Good governance also requires fair, legal frameworks that are enforced impartially by an independent judiciary and an incorruptible police force and the full protection of the minorities and marginalized.

Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and



Dr. Gabriel Juma

their enforcement.

Good governance is consensus oriented. Participation by both men and women is also a key cornerstone of good governance. This implies that it requires mediation of different interests in society to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the whole community. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development.

Accountability is also a key requirement of good governance. Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them.

Public organizations need to be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. An organization or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or action. Accountability cannot be enforced, without transparency and the rule of law.

According to the chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability, the fundamental function of good governance in the public sector is to ensure public entities achieve their intended outcomes while acting in the public interest. Thus, both governing bodies and individuals working for public sector entities must endeavor to achieve their entities' objectives while acting in the public interests at all times, consistent with legislative requirements and government policies, avoiding self-interest. Acting in public interest implies primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and other stakeholders.

Given that public sector entities are

established and run for the public good, they are accountable to legislative bodies for the exercise of legitimate authority in society. It therefore behooves that each public institution demonstrates the appropriateness of all its actions and has mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and respect for the rule of law. This calls for openness and use of clear channels of communication and consultation when engaging all groups of stakeholders including citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders.

Article 10(2)(c) of the Constitution provides for values and principles of good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability while Article 232(1)(e) and (f) requires public institutions and officers to observe transparency and accountability in the discharge of their mandate. Other provisions for promoting good governance practices are contained in various legislation and policies including the Public Officer Ethics Act, 2003, the Leadership and Integrity Act, 2012, Public Finance Management Act 2012, Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act 2015, the Public Service Values and Principles Act 2015, the Fair Administrative Action Act 2015.

Policies that promote good governance practices include Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual 2015; the National Values and Principles of Governance Policy 2013; the Framework for Implementation of Values and Principles in Articles 10 and 232 of the Constitution 2015; the Public Service Code of Conduct and Ethics, 2016 that prescribes the ethical standards including mechanisms for accountability and transparency; and the Access to Information Act, 2016.

Public Institutions and officers are required to comply with mechanisms prescribed in policy and the law for promoting good governance, transparency and accountability. They are expected to realize this by committing to the code of conduct and ethics, declaring and recording gifts given to officers and given out by the institutions; and declaring and recording conflicts of interest whenever they occur. In addition, public officers are expected to make declarations of income, assets and liabilities as required under Part IV Section 26 of POEA, 2003.

The writer is a Deputy Director in Compliance & Quality Assurance Department and can be reached on gjuma@publicservice.go.ke

Protecting the mental health of our unsung heroes

By Kenneth Muchira

In the bustling corridors of government offices and behind the closed doors of bureaucratic meetings, civil servants are the unsung heroes who ensure the smooth functioning of our societies.

Their responsibilities are demanding, their tasks intricate, and the pressures they face immense.

In the midst of paperwork and policy-making, there's an essential but often overlooked aspect of their job: the mental well-being of civil servants. Physical exercise, surprisingly, plays a crucial role in sustaining and enhancing the mental health of these dedicated public servants.

Dealing with administrative tasks, policy formulation, budget management, and addressing the needs of the public often leads to long hours, high-pressure environments, and minimal opportunities for relaxation.

Over time, these challenges can take a toll on the mental health of civil servants. This is why we need to continue emphasizing conversations regarding how best we can protect our nation's most important asset: Civil servants.

Exercise has long been recognized for its positive impact on mental health, and for civil servants, it is an invaluable



PSC Staff in a fitness session with fitness consultant Kenneth Muchira (in green t-shirt)

resource.

Exercise triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural mood enhancers. These "feel-good" chemicals act as a natural stress reducer, helping civil servants cope with the pressures of their jobs more effectively.

Engaging in regular physical activity increases blood flow to the brain, which can enhance cognitive functions such as problem-solving, decision-making, and creativity.

This is crucial for civil servants who often grapple with complex issues. Exercise also helps build mental resilience by teaching individuals how to cope with discomfort and adversity. This resilience is an asset in the face of challenging situations and tight deadlines.

It is therefore imperative that decision-makers in the public service come up with creative ways on how their employees can access physical exercise services within their tight

schedules and limited office spaces.

The Public Service Commission, is already leading the way through a noble initiative by the current C.E.O Mr. Simon Rotich, where they have set up a fitness facility right at the commission house. PSC employees take full advantage of this by using their lunch breaks and before/after office hours to exercise.

However, more needs to be done in terms of creating awareness across other government agencies in order to ensure that the country's civil servants are cushioned against the adverse effects of mental health problems that have become pervasive in our contemporary society.

Kenneth Muchira is a Fitness Consultant at the Public Service Commission

PICTORIAL: Nairobi International Trade Fair (ASK Show) - September 25 to October 01, 2023



Amb. Muchiri at PSC exhibition booth during ASK Show 29th September, 2023



PSC Chair Amb. Anthony Muchiri signs the visitor's book at the PSC exhibition booth during ASK Show 29th September, 2023



PSC intern Virginia Asievera addressing visitors to the exhibition booth



Secretariat staff Principal Human Resource Officer Mildred Akelo and Intern Virginia Asievera addressing visitors at the PSC exhibition booth



Assistant Director Public Communication Mr Habel Shiloli talking to the ASK booth Judges

PICTORIAL: Certification of additional 300 Mentors and Coaches under PSIP Programme



PSIP Mentors and Coaches in one of the Training sessions



PSIP Mentors and Coaches light Moments at Lake Naivasha Resort



PSC Commissioner Dr. Mary Mwiandi and Dr. Reuben Chirchir, Deputy Commission Secretary Ms. Jane Chege (seated in the middle), in a group photo with PSIP mentors and coaches, 18th September 2023



Commissioner Dr. Mary Mwiandi issuing certificate to Sgt. Fredrick Kawondo, one of the PSIP mentors and coaches

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Commission House
Harambee Avenue
P. O. Box 30095—00100
Nairobi

Tel. 254 20 2223901
254 20 2227471
Fax No 254 20 214791
Call Centre: 020 4865 000

Website:
www.publicservice.go.ke
psck@publicservice.go.ke

Facebook page:
Public Service Commission of
Kenya

Twitter:
@PSCKenya

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Editor:
Browne Kutswa, MPRSK

Editorial Assistants:
Habel Shiloli
Pauline Muriuki
Badi Khamis

Design & Layout:
Pauline Muriuki
Badi Khamis

Vision

A Citizen-centric public service

Mission

To reform and transform the public service for efficient service delivery

Core Values

- Citizen Focus
- Professionalism
- Innovation
- Team-work

Public Service Commission Directorates

- Recruitment and Selection
- Human Resource Management & Development
- Establishment and Management Consultancy Services
- Performance and Service Delivery Improvement
- Board Management Services
- Compliance and Quality Assurance
- Finance and Planning
- Corporate Services
- Legal Services
- Internal Audit

Commissioners

Amb. Anthony Muchiri, CBS	-	Chairperson
CPA Charity Kisotu, CBS	-	Vice Chairperson
Dr Joyce Nyabuti, MBS	-	Commissioner
Dr Mary Mwiandi, MBS	-	Commissioner
Dr Reuben Chirchir, MBS	-	Commissioner
Amb. Patrick Wamoto, EBS	-	Commissioner
Amb. Salma Ahmed, MBS	-	Commissioner
Mr Andrew Muriuki, MBS	-	Commissioner
Ms Joan Otieno, MBS	-	Commissioner

Secretary/Chief Executive

FCS, Dr Simon K. Rotich, CBS