



Inside this issue:

New Regulations - 2
state corporations
have opportunity
to contribute ideas

Farewell party 3
hosted for Prof
Kobia

ICPSK officials pay 4
courtesy call on the
Commission

PSC scores high on 5
budget
implementation

Wellness and 6
Health Committee
in Naivasha for
skills training

Telephone 6
Operator's job not
for the spineless

Sum Retains PSC 7
welfare top seat

A case for evidence 8
based policy
making

Q&A with Mr. 9
Simon Wachinga

What the pictures 10
say

Prof Kobia farewell 11
luncheon pictorial

PSC seeks State Corporations views on Draft Regulations



Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiyia (2nd left) flanked by Commissioner Titus Ndambuki, CEO, Dr. Alice Otwala and SCAC Secretary Ms Jane Mugambi follow proceedings during the Validation Workshop on the Draft PSC Regulations with State Corporations at KICC Nairobi

By Browne Kutswa

Public Service Commission held another stakeholder validation workshop on the draft PSC Regulations, this time with state corporations and public universities to seek their views on the proposals.

The workshop was held at Kenyatta International Conference Center in Nairobi on 27th March 2018 in fulfilment of the public participation requirement of the Constitution.

It brought together chairpersons and CEOs of boards as well as vice chancellors and other top officials of state corporations and public universities.

Once approved, the new regulations will replace the current ones that were gazetted in 2005 and operationalize the Public Service Commission Act 2017.

The forum was organized by the State Corporations Advisory Committee that oversees state

corporations including public universities. It was officially opened by PSC acting chairperson Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiyia.

Participants were taken through presentations on establishment and abolition of offices in the public service, appointments, conditions and terms of service, disciplinary control, promotion of values and principles of public service, and public service efficiency among other topics.

The first stakeholder validation workshop was held in February this year at Kenya School of Government with participation from ministries, professional bodies, unions, independent offices and commissions among other institutions.

Amb. Nkuraiyia said the new regulations will apply to all public institutions and all persons

holding or acting in an office in a public body except those that are exempted from the jurisdiction of the Commission by the constitution.

He said the Commission will consolidate all the stakeholder views into a final document that will be forwarded to the Attorney General and Parliament.

"I am confident that Parliamentarians will approve the regulations as soon as they are tabled before them," said Amb. Nkuraiyia.

The workshop was also addressed by PSC Chief Executive Officer Dr Alice Otwala and the Secretary of the State Corporations Advisory Committee (SCAC) Jane Mugambi. Also present were Commissioners Titus Ndambuki and Catherine Omweno.

New Regulations - State Corporations have opportunity to contribute ideas



Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiya speaks to the press during the Validation Workshop on the Draft PSC Regulations 2018 at KICC. On his right is CEO Dr. Alice Otwala and State Corporations Advisory Committee secretary Ms. Jane Mugambi.

By Browne Kutswa

All state corporations including public universities and the mainstream civil service have been given an equal opportunity to contribute to the process of developing the proposed PSC regulations 2018.

This, according to Acting Chairperson, Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiya is in line with the Commission's commitment to inclusivity in compliance with the public participation requirement of the law.

Amb. Nkuraiya expressed confidence that the final document will be acceptable to all once all the stakeholders give their views, noting that the validation exercise is an all inclusive and participatory process.

Amb. Nkuraiya was speaking to the press on the sidelines of the Stakeholder Validation Workshop on the Draft PSC Regulations, 2018, at the Kenyatta International Conference

Center on 27th March 2018.

"In order to ensure smooth adoption and compliance, the institutions must feel that they fully own and understand the regulations because their views were included. Without the regulations, it will not be possible to implement the PSC Act 2017," he said, adding that the Act is a strong foundation upon which the regulations are anchored.

CEO Dr. Alice Otwala said the regulations will set standards upon which public servants are expected to perform their duties and ensure inclusivity. They will also provide strict guidelines to be adopted in the recruitment and payment of casuals.

"The new guidelines will outline internship opportunities for students in public offices which will be advertised in both print and electronic media to ensure they reach all parts of the country," she said.

State Corporations Advisory Committee Secretary Ms. Jane Mugambi said the implementation of the regulations will curtail holding of more than one State remunerative position besides ensuring harmonization and standardization of human resource matters across all state corporations.

She clarified that teaching and research institutions will continue paying part time lecturers and medical practitioners but double employment on full time remunerative basis from public coffers will no longer be allowed.

The regulations, she added, will remove current disparities in housing allowances, secondment procedures and hiring of casuals.

Farewell party hosted for Prof Kobia



L-R: Dr Alice Otwala, Dr Judy Bwonya, Catherine Omweno, Prof Margaret Kobia, Racheal Shebesh, Amb. Rose Makena, Amb. Peter Nkuraiya, Titus Ndambuki and PSs Lillian Omollo and Safina Kwekwe hold the portrait presented to Prof Kobia

By Browne Kutswa

A farewell luncheon was held for cabinet secretary Prof Margaret Kobia on Wednesday 28th March 2018 with former colleagues praising her for her stewardship of the Public Service Commission during the five years she was at the helm of the organization.

Prof Kobia who served as chairperson of the Commission since 2013 before President Uhuru Kenyatta plucked her into his cabinet in January this year was hailed by fellow commissioners and secretariat staff as a transformational leader who initiated far reaching changes that helped improve the work environment and propelled the Commission to be the respectable institution that it is today.

The farewell ceremony was held at the Intercontinental hotel in Nairobi and attended by the Commission Board members led by acting Chairperson Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiya, CEO Dr Alice Otwala, and secretariat staff.

Prof Kobia was accompanied by the Chief Administrative Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs Rachael Shebesh, Public

Service and Youth Principal Secretary Lillian Mbogo-Omollo and her gender counterpart Safina Kwekwe.

Prof Kobia thanked the Commissioners and secretariat staff for the support they gave her during her tenure and urged them to build on the foundation that has been laid. She reiterated the need for the board to strengthen its decision making and advisory role to government.

"You must fight for your space more vigorously in order to remain relevant and respected as an independent institution that has a clear constitutional mandate," she said.

The CS called on the Commission to listen to the Service more and ask the hard questions such as why employees are not motivated, adding that the commission has a responsibility to help government identify and recruit personnel with the right competencies and skills to realize the President's Big 4 Agenda.

She challenged the Commission to carry out a skills audit and job evaluation in the entire Service with a view to helping the government to bridge the staffing gaps occasioned by an aging workforce. Amb. Nkuraiya commended Prof. Kobia for playing a pivotal role that has yielded transformation in the entire public service.

"Under her leadership, the Commission made tremendous progress and was able to impact the entire service in a manner unprecedented," said Amb. Nkuraiya.

On her part, Dr. Otwala hailed Prof. Kobia for achieving a lot during her tenure and turning the commission into an envy of sister organizations.

"You played a key role in retooling the secretariat and creating the right environment that has contributed to the productivity of the staff," she said.

ICPSK officials pay courtesy call on the Commission



Seated left to right –PSC CEO Dr Alice Otwala, acting Chairperson Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiyia, ICPSK chairperson Mr Julius Mwatu and other officials during the courtesy call at Commission House on 5th March 2018

By Badi Khamis

The Institute of Certified Public Secretaries of Kenya (ICPSK) is developing curricular guidelines that will enhance Governance and Integrity training. The guidelines will also help to promote and facilitate the development, resource mobilization and implementation of governance and integrity programs and projects in public and private institutions.

Speaking during a courtesy call on acting PSC Chairperson Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiyia at Commission House on 5th March 2018, ICPSK Chairperson Julius Mwatu said that his organization has initiated various programmes that aim to enhance governance in state agencies. He cited the Champions Awards Scheme, Mwongozo Code, Code of Governance in the private sector, Code of Governance in the NGO sector, and enhancing Governance Audits in institutions as some of the initiatives that his association has made to promote good governance.

Mr Mwatu called for increased

collaboration between his association and the Commission in order to enhance Human Resource Development and Management.

“Both Public Service Commission and ICPSK have had good working ties having expanded the relationship in the fields of Governance, Ethics and Compliance,” said Mr Mwatu.

He urged the Commission to come up with a standard recruitment procedure manual for Company Secretaries in both National and County Governments that will guide the recruitment of Governance, Ethics and Compliance officials as well as development of their respective schemes of service and grading structure.

Amb Nkuraiyia emphasized that the development of the Governance and ethics sector is of strategic significance as it is enshrined in the current constitutional dispensation.

He reiterated the need to

strengthen areas of collaboration between the Commission and ICPSK including broadening the scope of governance and management in the public sector, prudent financial management and development of policies that will govern the public entities.

He assured the ICPSK team that the commission will deliberate on their proposals for collaboration and also develop an action plan for future engagements noting that governance and integrity issues fall under the PSC mandate of promotion of values and principles of public service.

Also present was commissioners Catherine Omweno and Veronica Birgen, CEO Dr Alice Otwala, Deputy Commission Secretary Jane Chege, senior management officers and officials of ICPSK.

PSC scores high on budget implementation

By Browne Kutswa

The Public Service Commission has maintained an average budget absorption rate of 98-99 per cent since 2013, a sterling performance by any standards that shows a high success rate in implementation of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan.

During the same period, the Commission obtained three years unqualified Auditor General's Opinion on the Appropriation Accounts and other Accounts of the Commission for financial years 2013/2014, 2014/2015 and 2015/2016. The Commission also scooped the Second Runners-Up award in the Financial Reporting (FIRE) Awards category of Independent Offices and Commissions, for the three consecutive years, a further testimony of its fidelity to good corporate governance practices.

But what does it mean to receive an unqualified opinion from the revered Office of the Auditor General? An unqualified opinion is an independent auditor's judgment that an organization's financial records and statements fairly represent the statement of affairs of the financial dealings of the organization for a given period in accordance with international accounting standards as applied by the Kenya Accounting Standards Board. An unqualified opinion is a seal of approval that means that the report meets the set standards.

The reverse is what is known as a qualified opinion - a



Mr. Dismas Ogot, Director Finance and Planning

statement issued after an audit is done by a professional auditor that suggests the information provided was limited in scope and/or the company being audited has not maintained international accounting principles. Similarly, an adverse opinion can also be rendered in a situation where an auditor is convinced that an organization's financial statements are misrepresented, misstated and do not accurately reflect its financial performance and health.

According to the Director of Finance and Planning Mr Dismas Ogot, the Commission strictly adheres to financial regulations and best practice in corporate governance to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in implementation of its programmes.

"The current strategic plan 2013 -2018 has served the Commission well and enabled it

to navigate the uncharted terrain that the Constitution created when it expanded the mandate of the Commission," said Mr Ogot.

Mr Ogot is confident that the Commission is anchored on solid foundation and will continue to perform even better as it embarks on the next phase of the Strategic Plan period.

The process of developing a new strategic plan for the next five years is already underway and it is expected that the lessons

"The Commission strictly adheres to financial regulations and best practice in corporate governance to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in implementation of its programmes" - Dismas Ogot

learnt from the current one as well as the Government's Big 4 Agenda will influence the direction that the new strategy will take.

Wellness and Health Committee in Naivasha for skills training



The Wellness Committee in a training a session in Naivasha

By John Opondo

PSC Wellness and Health Committee has been trained on wellness, health and prevention and management of HIV/AIDS. The four-day training was conducted in Naivasha from 26th to 29th March 2018 by Psychological Health Services, an institution involved in the provision of preventive health education through psychotherapy, training, research and policy advisory services.

The objective of the training was to enhance the skills of the Committee on prevention and management of HIV/AIDS.

The training further equipped the officers with the relevant counselling skills required in matters pertaining to HIV/AIDS management as well as drug and alcohol related problems.

In December 2017, the committee visited Vision Link Primary School cum Children's home situated in

Soweto in Kayole and donated an assortment of items including foodstuffs and clothing as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility program.

The Committee is chaired by Mr John Opondo, Assistant Director/Administration. Other members are Mildred Akelo, Rebecca Kiplagat, Moses Nzyuko, Mueke Mulwa, Mary Ndichu and Alice Chepng'etich.

Telephone operator's job is not for the spineless

By Badi Khamis

Communication is of critical importance in any organization. However, the emergence of new media poses a threat to the role of traditional telephony as the media of choice used to transmit information.

Monica Mburu, a Senior Telephone Supervisor, avers that despite the new communication technologies like Skype, mobile phones and email, telecommunication still stands out as the fastest means of communication that also gives an instant feedback and room for further clarification in case of misunderstandings during conversations.

As a telephone operator, Ms Mburu's day starts as early as 7.00 a.m. The main duty of a telephone operator is to receive both internal and external calls and transfer them to the intended recipients. On a normal day, the telephone

exchange receives hundreds of calls.

A telephone operator speaks to diverse kinds of people they hardly ever see, each having a preconceived notion about Public Service Commission. Tabitha Munoru, a Senior Telephone Operator, recalls how one day while on duty she received a call from an anonymous caller who had tried to call a certain Ministry, but the number could not go through. The caller was very angry and shouted, "I'm calling Ministry X and my call is not going through; what is PSC doing about this as an organization mandated to oversee all government ministries?"

Tabitha had to be polite. She apologized for the inconvenience caused. She also asked for the number the caller used to call the said Ministry so that she could ascertain that the

number was correct.

Ms Mburu vividly remembers an encounter with a customer who called and after being connected to an extension, the call got disconnected. He called back angrily, "You evil lady; why did you disconnect me?" I laughed and then in a 'friendly tone' asked him why he called me evil. The customer cooled down and he became friendly. I asked him if I could connect him to another extension in the same department. He said, "Yes". After he got assistance, he called back to say "thank you".

Indeed telephone operators are the unseen faceless voices that connect hundreds of people and impacts lives in ways we may never comprehend. It is not a job for the spineless!

Sum retains staff welfare top seat



Mr. Daniel Sum addressing PSC welfare members during the Annual General Meeting. On the right is Mr. Dismas Ogot, Director Finance & Planning representing the welfare patron Dr. Alice Otwala. Also in the picture (Left) is Hannah Mwangi (Treasurer) and Evelyn Adhiambo (Secretary)

By Badi Khamis

Daniel Sum retained his seat as the chairperson of PSC welfare society following elections held during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 24th March 2018. He trounced his only Opponent Mr. Alfred Onono.

In his acceptance speech, Mr. Sum thanked members for allowing him to serve them for another term. He singled out the formulation of investment policy, which awaits members input and subsequent adoption, as a key achievement under his previous tenure.

“The investment policy will act as the society’s blueprint for investment,” he said.

Mr. Sum noted that loans, bereavement and hospitalization assistance disbursement period has

drastically reduced and members were able to access them in the shortest time possible.

Due to the huge savings from the members, the society was able to increase loans limit accessible by members from Ksh50,000 to 60,000, an indicator that the welfare society was heading in the right direction.

“We are once again proposing to increase loans limit to members from Ksh60,000 to Ksh 70,000,” said Mr Sum.

Mr. Sum urged members to promptly inform the welfare officials whenever a member was hospitalized or bereaved to facilitate quick assistance.

The society’s patron who is also the Commission CEO Dr. Alice Otwala was represented by Finance and planning Director Mr.

Dismas Ogot.

Mr. Ogot commended the society for its investment initiative and urged members to examine ways of transforming it into a savings and credit co-operative society.

Other officials who were elected are: Hellen Sirima – Vice Chair; Evelyn Adhiambo – Secretary; Stephen Okumu – Vice Secretary; Hannah Njoki – Treasurer; Nelson Mithamo – Assistant Treasurer; Committee members: Jackson Onyango, Chepkurui Kisiro. Supervisory Committee: Joseph Njoroge and Alex Koros.

A case for evidence based policy making

By Sylvester Obong'o

There is considerable debate in the public service today on the use of evidence in policy development. The debate is generated by a view that some governments overly rely on ideology rather than evidence to make policy decisions. They implement policies lacking an evidence base, but clearly mirrors more in supporting their ideology.

In the United Kingdom, for example, a recent survey conducted by the Institute for Government indicated that 85% of people wanted politicians to consult professionals and experts when making difficult decisions, while 83% wanted government to make decisions based on objective evidence—and that these percentages had increased since their previous survey in 2014.

These figures point to the need for a rethinking of what should inform public policy discourse. Evidence-based, evidence-informed or knowledge-based policy development refers to an approach that leverages the best available objective evidence from research to identify and understand issues so that policies crafted by decision

makers can deliver desired outcomes effectively.

The major goal of evidence-based policy development is to ensure that the experience, expertise and judgment of policy-makers is supported and resourced with the best available objective evidence and systematic research. However, the process of gathering evidence, which constitute policy research, does not produce the solutions or decisions. It is simply meant to provide accurate, reliable and credible information, knowledge and analysis to inform public policy.

“To be useful to decision makers, research, data and information has to be contextualized – thus it needs to be analyzed to become policy relevant and meaningful”

The knowledge base that research produces provides an important

ingredient for the policy development process to reduce risk and improve outcomes. But, to be useful to decision makers, research, data and information has to be contextualized – thus it needs to be analyzed to become policy relevant and meaningful.

The setting up of the Research and Policy Analysis Unit in the Public Service Commission is a step in the right direction and indeed an affirmation that research should underpin policy formulation and decision making. The process of fully developing the unit's capacity to undertake applied research, manage research projects and research contracts, synthesize research findings, and fulfill a challenging function of assessing others' research will entail deliberate investment in research infrastructure, research skills, and senior management support and leadership. The Commission is already reaching out to key stakeholders to build a coalition of partners to support this course.

Q&A with Mr. Simon Wachinga, Director Compliance and Quality Assurance



Mr. Wachinga makes a point during the interview

Q. Please tell us about your early background that prepared you for this job?

A. I grew up in Rwathia village, Murangá county and attended local schools before joining the university of Nairobi where I did my Bachelors of Education. On graduation, I taught in various schools in Kirinyaga county between 1991- 1995 and later joined the public service as an education officer. In 1996, I won a scholarship to study in Indonesia for my Msc (management science) specializing in Operations and Management. My Msc thesis was on "Reinventing the government and reaffirming total quality service to the public" that was published in refereed international journal of business. I have widely published on customer service, marketing government and human resource. I joined the Directorate of Personnel Management (DPM) in 2001 as a Senior Human Resource Development officer, and later moved to the Kenya Institute of Business Training as Deputy Director, and IGAD/UNDP in South Sudan as a Management Analyst. I became Director, Compliance and Quality Assurance in the Public Service Commission in 2015.

Q. What's the mandate of your directorate?

A. The Directorate of Compliance and Quality Assurance (CQA) oversees the implementation and compliance of laws, regulations and policies related to the PSC mandate. In the area of governance, the directorate is responsible for promotion of values and principles of public service as well as evaluation and reporting on the extent of implementation by public institutions annually. Regarding ethics, we coordinate wealth declaration and provide custody and access to the declaration forms. Other oversight mechanisms include carrying out compliance audits, investigations and monitoring and evaluation on the organization, administration and personnel practices in the public service.

Q. Please give us highlights on the values and principles.

A. Values are a system of beliefs that guide how organizations work as spelt out in Articles 10 and 232 of the Constitution. How should our ethos be in the public and private sphere? We review and report on the activities and programs in the public institutions that embody values and principles such as how citizens are served and also on representation and inclusivity based on gender, ethnicity and disability considerations in the public service. In doing this, we work within a legal and policy framework that comprises The Public Service (Values and Principles) Act 2015, Leadership and Integrity Act 2012, Fair and Administrative Action Act 2015, and the PSC Act 2017 among others.

Q. What would you consider as your directorate's main achievements?

A. With the support of the CQA Committee and the board, we have determined a values and principles compliance index on the basis of the Values and Principles Implementation Framework 2015. We have developed internal capacity for promotion of values, evaluation and reporting on the implementation of values and principles by public institutions. The Commission convened a Values and Principles conference in 2016 and another one is planned for May this year. We have facilitated enactment of the The Public Service (Values and Principles) Act 2015, sensitized over 300 institutions on governance and ethics, gazetted the Public Officer Code of Conduct 2016 and Administrative Procedures to guide the declaration of wealth, developed operational manuals to guide monitoring and evaluation, compliance audit and investigations. We have also partnered with the Ministry of Education to sponsor Kenya National Music and Drama Festival with trophies for performances that articulate promotion of values. All these milestones have been possible because of the strong support of the CEO Dr Alice Otwala and the CQA Committee under the leadership of commissioners Dr. Judith Bwonya, Prof. Michael Lokuruka and Patrick Gichohi.

Q. What challenges have you experienced so far?

A. The major challenge so far has been budgetary constraints that have curtailed our plans to organize more promotional activities, outreach programs and open days. Being a new mandate area, we are still at the formative stages of developing critical competencies to support areas such as investigations and compliance audit.

Q. What opportunities do you foresee?

A. We look forward to leverage on technology. Specifically, technology provides an opportunity for digitization of financial disclosures, monitoring and evaluation reporting, audit and investigation as well as for promotion of values and principles. We envisage a situation whereby the internet and other social networks can be used to evangelize values and principles. In this way, we shall increase our outreach and improve our analytics in a more cost effective way.

What the pictures say



«««: **SERIOUS** - Amb. Peter Ole Nkuraiyia (Right) confers with Commissioner Titus Ndambuki and Chief Commission Counsel Jacqueline Manani during the Stakeholder Validation Workshop with State Corporations at KICC Nairobi on 27th March 2018 at KICC in Nairobi.

THIS IS THE POINT - Acting Chairperson, Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiyia speaks during a meeting with ICPSK officials who paid a courtesy call on the Commission :»»»»



«««: **POLE SANA** - Ms. Hellen Sirima receives a cash token raised by members of staff from the Deputy Commission Secretary, Mr. Simon Rotich, following the passing on of her mother. Looking on is Assistant Director, Mr. John Opondo

ELECTION MATTERS - Finance and Planning Director Dismas Ogot addressing PSC Welfare Society members during the Annual General Meeting cum elections of new officials held at the Commission House on 24th March 2018 :»»»»



Prof. Margaret Kobia farewell luncheon pictorial



Acting Chairperson Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiya and Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs, Prof. Margaret Kobia during the farewell luncheon at the Hotel Intercontinental



Amb. Nkuraiya addressing staff and invited guests during the farewell luncheon



Prof. Margaret Kobia receives a gift from Acting Chairperson, Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiya and Jacinta Muoka as commissioners Lawrence Nyalle, Michael Lokuruka and Public Service PS Lillian Omollo look on.



Prof Kobia together with PS Omollo, Dr Otwala, Amb Nkuraiya Rachael Shebesh and other guests acknowledge speeches by Commissioners and other staff who spoke at the luncheon

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Vision

To be the lead service commission in the provision, management and development of competent human resource in the Public Service.

Mission

To transform the public service to become professional, efficient and effective for the realization of national development goals.

Core Values

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Equity and Diversity
- Team Spirit
- Transparency and Accountability
- Creativity and Continual Improvement

Public Service Commission departments

- Corporate Services
- Human Resource Management & Development
- Finance and Planning
- Recruitment and Selection
- Board Management Services
- Compliance and Quality Assurance
- Establishment and Management Consultancy Service

Commissioners

Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiyia, CBS	-	Acting Chairperson
Patrick Gichohi, CBS	-	Commissioner
Titus Ndambuki, CBS	-	Commissioner
Judith Bwonya, MBS	-	Commissioner
Catherine Omweno, MBS	-	Commissioner
Veronica Birgen, MBS	-	Commissioner
Lawrence Nyalle, MBS	-	Commissioner
Prof. Michael Lokuruka, EBS	-	Commissioner

Secretary/Chief Executive

Dr. Alice A. Otwala, (Mrs) CBS