



# INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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SCHALKWYK: OK, today is the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 2008, and I'm with Mr. George Yambesi at Utumishi House in Dar es Salaam. Mr. Yambesi is the permanent secretary in the President's Office for Public Service Management. And just before we get started, I'd like to confirm that you've consented to the interview.

YAMBESI: Yes.

SCHALKWYK: All right, thank you. I'd like to begin this conversation by talking about the role that you've played in civil service reform here as well as elsewhere. And if you've worked on similar related issues, you can also bring them up. So, can you tell me what you do now and what jobs have brought you to this position?

YAMBESI: *OK, I'm currently permanent secretary, and of course I'm the chief executive of the ministry, but I'm also the program manager for the Public Service Reform Program in Tanzania. And I've been associated with the reform program in Tanzania for—actually since 1993, so I may say for the past 15 years. I joined the program first as a national expert on redeployment, because initially, when the program started, there was quite a big program of retrenchment, but in Tanzania, we said we would retrench people "with a human face." I was tasked to design the human face part of retrenchment, so I became the redeployment officer, basically working on programs, to offer training, counseling, entrepreneurial training to people who have been retrenched from the public service. And subsequently, I worked also as a national expert on capacity-building: capacity-building for ministries, departments, and agencies, and other institutions. And then subsequently, I went on to become Director of Policy Development, and in that particular function, I was charged with the coordination -- the overall coordination of the implementation of the Public Service Reform Program in Tanzania. And then, of course, subsequently, I became deputy permanent secretary, and after that the permanent secretary.*

SCHALKWYK: Thank you. So most of this interview will revolve around your work in the public service reform and civil service reform. I'd like to begin with some general questions about civil service reform, and then move on to specific areas where you've had experience. So before we start, could you just give me a brief history of civil service reform in Tanzania?

YAMBESI: *OK. Civil service reform in Tanzania... I think we—I don't know where we'd put the line, because when you look even immediately after independence, for example, there was quite a big program of Africanization, to empower Africans, to build their capacity so that they could take over from jobs, which were being done by predominantly Europeans and Asians immediately after independence. Then we had decentralization in 1972 in Tanzania, when we first attempted decentralization. So what I'm saying is that I think we have had reforms of the civil service on and off. But maybe if you look at the current phase, you may say that in earnest recently—we started them in 1989. Yes. Because in 1989, with the support of UNDP [United Nations Development Programme], we did some diagnostic studies on the size of the civil service in Tanzania. We did the civil service census to determine the number of civil servants. We did organization and efficiency reviews, and—so quite a number of diagnostic studies—to try to see exactly what prevents the civil service from making the contribution which it is supposed to do. So those studies ran for almost two, three years. And then the first full-fledged program for the civil service began in 1993 as part of the Structure Adjustment Program. This way, the initial focus was mainly on cost containment: trying to look for ways to reduce the cost of running government. Therefore, the focus was on trying to reduce the size of government, restructuring ministries. I remember departments were reduced by almost 25%.*

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*We retrenched quite a number of people, I think close to 80,000, but that includes people in redundant positions which were still in service. The driver [of reforms] was basically that link to structural adjustment, and that was the program which we implemented between 1993 and 1999. So when that particular program ended in 1999, we did conduct an in-depth internal evaluation to try to see what has actually been the impact of that initial phase of the program. Because one concern was that, it is true we had taken measures to reduce the cost of running government, but the glaring issue which was coming out was that services were not improving. Yes, we had reduced, but services were not improving. So we thought, what was again wrong? Because the objective was to improve services, to improve access to service, and people could get the services which they wanted. So as part of that, when we came to the design of the first phase of the Public Service Reform Program—with a strong emphasis on improving systems, improving policies, to assist in the efficient delivery of services. We came up with the first phase of the Public Service Reform Program in the year 2000, which we implemented until last year. And then, from earlier this year, we launched the second phase of the Public Service Reform Program. This time around, we focused on results, accountability, and responsiveness.*

SCHALKWYK: And could you talk about some of the issues and challenges facing the civil service before the reforms were started? Perhaps when they reformed in 1983 and the reforms in 1998?

YAMBESI: *OK, some of the challenges... Well, I think one is: in some areas, there was excessive bureaucracy. Excessive bureaucracy was one of the challenges. But another challenge was the whole question of incentivizing the public service. Pay was very, very low, which was a big de-motivating factor. Change of mindsets, yes, was still a problem. But also, the cost of running government was still high. For the Civil Service Reform Program, yes. But most of those challenges have remained there, especially the problem of remuneration, much as we have done—quite a lot—because under Phase I we did formulate the Medium-Term Pay Policy.*

SCHALKWYK: And this was Phase I, starting in 2000?

YAMBESI: *2000, yes. We did formulate a Medium-Term Pay Policy, which provided a framework under which the government has been operating to address the issue of low pay. And there has been considerable improvement, but overall pay is still low compared to the private sector. The issue of mindset change, I think it is still a problem. Yes, it is still a problem. We have improved the processes a lot by introducing performance management systems, and they are improving policies and other things. But I think the key challenge still remains the mindset of public servants. You know, to make sure that those systems are put to use—are put to good use—in terms of improving services and making sure we can deliver better services to the general public in Tanzania.*

SCHALKWYK: Could you talk about the goals of the civil service program?

YAMBESI: *The current one?*

SCHALKWYK: Yeah, the current one: specifically, how specific those goals are and who set them.

YAMBESI: *OK. Of course, the goals were set by ourselves, because I think as you can see in the implementation of the program, we are implementing the program as part of the ministerial function. So it's fully ministry. We don't have a Secretariat or a*

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*separate unit which is implementing the reform program. We have [seven] key [results] areas. I think we have quite a number of goals. But as I said, the major theme is improving performance results and accountability. One of the areas is on policy development, in terms of improving policy processes, capacity for policy development, and regulatory capacity within government. That is one of the areas. The second area is this whole question of [performance management systems]. As I mentioned that during the first phase, we put in a lot of systems. Now we are focusing on making sure those systems are really put to good use; they are used in order to improve services and so on. And those include systems for performance management, systems for appraisal performance, systems for monitoring and evaluation, reporting systems, and so on. So that is also another area. A third area is in improving human resource management within the public service. So we are [implementing] systems for managing human resources, human resource planning, and other human resource systems. The fourth area is the whole question of pay. Of course, it is really a challenge, so addressing how we can continue to improve public service pay and other things related to pay. And then another area is on leadership development, because it's critical for reform programs, so having innovating leadership to steer reform but also to make sure the government functions. So it's one of the areas, building capacity of leadership. We are planning to establish a leadership development institute in Tanzania. But already we have the other things, like the Tanzanian Global Development Learning Center, where various training is conducted, including leadership training. And then another area is the whole question of responsiveness: responsiveness and—what I'll say?—stimulating the demand-side accountability. Giving greater voice to our clients and to the general public in terms of voicing if they're getting the right services, or if they think there are things which are not working, to enable them to be able to raise those and be heard. So I would say these are some of the major goals of the [reform program].*

SCHALKWYK: Could you talk a bit about the motivation for civil service reform?

YAMBESI: Yes. *The motivation for...?*

SCHALKWYK: For the reforms.

YAMBESI: *For the reforms.*

SCHALKWYK: Was it—a couple of examples that we've come across—the fiscal needs, public outcry, or political pressures?

YAMBESI: *Yes, one is public outcry for better services; this has been one of the areas, because people have been complaining. For example, people went to get title deeds from the Ministry of [Lands and Human Settlements Development], or people are complaining: why can't passports be issued more quickly? But I will say also, there was a political—given that it was public outcry—political response to try to address some of those issues, which the public is complaining about. So that was also another motivation. But I think also one would say that—how would I put it?—it makes the work of public servants more rewarding in terms of seeing that what we are doing as public servants is being accepted by the people. Appreciating the various steps we are taking to improve services, to cut the service delivery times and so on and so forth. So that also provides a motivation.*

SCHALKWYK: And what relationship do politicians and government have with the reform process?

**YAMBESI:** *I think for Tanzania, I would say we have been lucky, because I think we have been working very, very closely with the politicians. For one thing, all the phases of the reform programs have been approved—have received the highest political endorsement, in that they've all been approved by Cabinet before we start implementation. Yes. So they've been endorsed. But also, secondly, I think we've been lucky in the fact that there has been commitment at the top, because when you look at the president—what President [Benjamin] Mkapa did, the current president, President [Jayaka] Kikwete they're all pro-reforms. And this way, even the launching of the program has been done by President Mkapa in the year 2000 and President Kikwete early this year. So even in the program design, for example, when you take on the area of leadership, I think we are involving quite a lot—the training of ministers and other political leaders, and we have frequent seminars for members of parliament, and so on and so forth. Yes, yes. So there is a lot of [cooperation]. Because we recognize: in order to have an effective reform program, you have to have politicians on board so that you can be able to move.*

**SCHALKWYK:** I wonder if I could move onto a more specific aspect. I know you talked about your earlier work as a redeployment officer, so if we could talk about retrenchment and staff size: Many countries obviously have a problem with the size of their civil service, and Tanzania seems to have done a very good job in controlling and reducing that. So when you were—when the attempts to reduce the size were started, were specific goals set, and what forms did those goals take?

**YAMBESI:** *I think specific goals were set in terms of reducing the size of government and the cost of running government. But as I mentioned earlier, those specific goals were basically driven by the fiscal considerations, because it was part of the structural adjustment strategy. So for example, when you take here—when we started, we had about 355,000 public servants. At the end of the program, the number had come down to about 260,000. Yes, that was bad. But also, what we did was to put in place a system to control the wage bill, so that numbers are now more controlled, we know who is entering, and so on and so forth. So those systems are the ones which helped us to make sure we could control the size. But again, of course, as I think you know, there have been developments now—the Millennium Development Goals, the Poverty Reduction Strategy—and now we have the MKUKUTA [Kiswahili, National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty], our Medium-Term Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty. So again, the numbers now have [increased to meet those developmental commitments]. In terms of improving access to health, education, and so on, now the numbers are again coming up. But at least what we can say for Tanzania is that there is a framework now; the increase is within that framework. Yes.*

**SCHALKWYK:** And so some of those systems that you say used to control the size, what are those? What sort of systems have you used?

**YAMBESI:** *One is, we've put in place a human resource and payroll system, which helps us to manage the payroll in accordance with the resources which are present. But secondly, we have put in place approval processes. For example, if it is new recruitment, first of all, it has to be budgeted for. But again, even though it is budgeted, approval has got to be sought for actual recruitment to take place.*

**SCHALKWYK:** Where is the approval normally sought?

**YAMBESI:** *It's from the chief secretary for new employment, yes. And if it is for replacement—that is, for people who have died [or retired] for example, so that they can be*

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*replaced in the payroll—that is done by the permanent secretary, public service management.*

SCHALKWYK: And how do you think—the fact that the early retrenchment happened as a result of the structural adjustment goals, how did that influence the ways you went about it and how successful you were?

YAMBESI: *I think one of the results—of course, since it was part of the structural adjustment, I would say was sort of overlooked. Yes, sort of overlooked. For example, as a young nation, we were still facing shortages of human resources—yes, in quite a number of areas. But also, by cutting—by reducing numbers just on the basis of fiscal considerations, it means you didn't take into consideration human resource planning and succession planning requirements. And therefore, one of the impacts has actually been: suddenly, now, we find that we have an aging top of the public service, but then there is sort of a gap, immediately, at the senior level, and then at the bottom, you have very young people who are coming up. You can see it now, because when we cut numbers, it's certainly people who would now be in the senior and principal positions. They would take over from the [top people] once these top people retired. But now as these people are retiring, and without people to take over, it's very, very difficult in some of the areas. Those were some of the considerations. So, yes, we may have responded to fiscal considerations, but other considerations were overlooked in the process.*

SCHALKWYK: So when you did the retrenchments, what methods did you use to reduce the staff size? Did you retrench people, did you provide them severance packages, did you...?

YAMBESI: *Yes, yes, exactly. As I said, for here, we said it was retrenchment with a human face. The severance packages were provided, but on top of that we had something which we called "the golden handshake," which was a cash package taking into consideration the length of service. Given the level of salary, the severance package was not very much, so we also offered something which we called a handshake, which sort of augmented the amount which was paid, but there was also payment for transportation, to place of domicile, transportation also of luggage to places of domicile, [payment in lieu of notice], and so on and so forth. And as I mentioned, there was training, there was counseling which was provided for these people, so they could see in which other areas they could then get themselves. We offered entrepreneurial—enterprise development training—to help them start new businesses or improve some of the businesses which they had, or we offered retraining, so some of the people could retrain, so that they could get other jobs.*

SCHALKWYK: And where did you—how did you fund the severance packages and the golden handshake?

YAMBESI: *It was provided by donors—yes—donors provided through a basket funding agreement; they did provide resources for that. Especially under the Phase I, the Civil Service Reform Program.*

SCHALKWYK: And were there any political constraints that limited the success?

YAMBESI: *Of course, there was a lot of resistance in terms of cutting numbers, because, as I said, that meant some of the service facilities were unmanned or couldn't get enough staff to run them, and so on and so forth. So it was something which was—it wasn't very popular.*

SCHALKWYK: And how did you deal with that resistance?

YAMBESI: *I think that resistance is—as I mentioned, it was driven by fiscal considerations, so the explanation was that to restructure the economy, we had no options except to take some drastic measures to make sure that we can return the economy on the only path for development. So a lot of communication was done by the leadership, to try to explain why that is happening and what will be expected.*

SCHALKWYK: Could you talk briefly about the work the UNDP did at the beginning and the help that they provided?

YAMBESI: *OK, UNDP, initially, as I said, they mainly funded the diagnostic study.*

SCHALKWYK: And what sort of the diagnostic studies were those?

YAMBESI: *As I mentioned, one was on the size of the civil service. So trying to get to the bottom—for example, what was behind the expansion of the civil service? What were the key considerations, and how they could be addressed? That was one of the studies. But the other study was to carry out the civil service census, to determine exactly how many public servants we had, so that we could compare that to the size and see whether it is affordable or not affordable. So that was also one of the areas. The other area was to look at skill gaps within the civil service. Where we had the skill gaps, in what areas, what specializations were lacking, and so on and so forth. That was another area.*

SCHALKWYK: Do you know what skill gaps they found?

YAMBESI: *The particular...?*

SCHALKWYK: Yes. If you can't remember, don't worry.

YAMBESI: *Yes, it has been some time. But there are quite some skill gaps in quite a number of areas.*

SCHALKWYK: And how did civil servants react to the changes, to the rightsizing?

YAMBESI: *Of course they resented the retrenchment. But some volunteered. Some did volunteer, because we also said that it was an option for people who wanted to volunteer to go, they could do so, and some did volunteer. But others did resent the...*

SCHALKWYK: Was that just those who were retrenched or those who remained as well?

YAMBESI: *No, especially those who were retrenched. But even those who remained expected that once the size was reduced, maybe salaries would go up much faster. But again, that did not happen.*

SCHALKWYK: I've got some questions about pay policy coming up. And do you have any sense of what people who were retrenched are doing now, what they did with those severance packages, and was the human face effective?

YAMBESI: *I think it was effective, because most of them—most of the people did with that were either reemployed elsewhere—because as I said, we did offer some*

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*retraining. And others did start businesses. Yes, they started small businesses, and so on and so forth.*

SCHALKWYK: So if I can ask you some questions about pay reform... You mentioned that you attempted to do pay reform—increase the salaries.

YAMBESI: Yes.

SCHALKWYK: Could you talk about the major changes you've made to pay policies in the recent reforms?

YAMBESI: *One was, of course, the enhancement of pay. As I said, we have a policy where we are consistently improving pay, and there has been quite a remarkable increase over the past eight years. The other one was also to [consolidate] pay—reducing the number of allowances which were paid. Because in the past, we used to have quite a number, but we have reduced them. I think those were the two major issues which were contained. In the first few years, we even attempted [on top of the general salary enhancement] to implement the Selective Accelerated Salary Enhancement scheme—the SASE scheme—which was basically meant to fast-track [additional pay increases for] those key professionals towards the Medium-Term Pay Policy. But that program was discontinued for lack of resources. So I think the major focus has been improving pay, but also streamlining pay within the public service. Those are the key focuses of [the pay reform strategy].*

SCHALKWYK: So could you talk about—

YAMBESI: *—the Medium-Term Pay Policy.*

SCHALKWYK: —the Medium-Term Pay Policy?

YAMBESI: Yes.

SCHALKWYK: What exactly was it? When was it implemented?

YAMBESI: *We started to implement it in 1999. And basically, it was focused on the enhancement of the pay for public servants. But with focus—with major focus—on mid-level professionals, because they are the ones who make the public service tick. So they were to be given priority. So if the increase, the general increase, was, for example, 10%, professionals would get 15 or 20% increase.*

SCHALKWYK: So the pay changes that happened, happened at different rates at different levels?

YAMBESI: Yes.

SCHALKWYK: And did you—do you use the private sector wages at all in your—in setting the Medium-Term—

YAMBESI: *No, we used them just in the analysis, but in terms of setting, I think because—I think they are too far apart. But we use them as sort of a goal, because one of the aims was to make public service more competitive in relation to the private sector. So we've been using that as a guide, but I would say public service, for some areas, has become quite competitive, especially when you look at the cooperational cadres within the public service. You know, the general staff. But when we look at professionals, I think that's where pay is not yet competitive.*



SCHALKWYK: You've mentioned earlier in this interview that you haven't been particularly successful in getting pay up to the levels you'd like to. Do you have any thoughts as to why you've struggled?

YAMBESI: *It's resource constraints.*

SCHALKWYK: And do you have any ideas about how to get around those resource constraints?

YAMBESI: *It's quite difficult. It's proved to be very, very difficult. Because—of course, there are very tough tradeoffs. It's not easy. Because on one side, you have to link pay and the size of the public service, but then when you look at Tanzania, Tanzania is a big country. And you'd like to ensure services are spread throughout the country. You have dispensaries, health centers; you have to have primary courts, schools, and so on and so forth, to all corners of the country. You need people to man those service points, but on the other side, it costs money. So do you increase? If you cut numbers, which means you deny access of services to some people... So I am saying it's a very difficult tradeoff. I think the only response is faster economic growth, maybe to increase the quantity of resources so that we can be able to meet some of these challenges.*

SCHALKWYK: OK, and have there been any attempts to—. You talked about incentives. Have there been any attempts to join pay changes with performance contracts?

YAMBESI: *No, I think in Tanzania, we said we would implement that in the future, but not for now, given the low level of salaries at present. Because if what you are giving now, it's not yet even enough to meet some of the needs, then it becomes very, [very difficult to implement performance-based pay]; it's difficult, really, then to go to performance-based pay. That has been our own feeling. So we have been postponing that until later.*

SCHALKWYK: But you have implemented some performance management—

YAMBESI: *Yes. Performance management systems.*

SCHALKWYK: Could you talk about those briefly?

YAMBESI: *OK. One is, we've introduced strategic planning in all ministries, so we have strategic plans, and they are used as the basis for annual plans and budgets. It is on that basis that individuals [have performance targets], that we have individual objectives. They are cascaded to departments and then individuals, so now we can appraise the performance of individuals, although we cannot link that to pay for the reasons I've just mentioned. It's one of the areas where we are all done. So we've introduced it, because initially, we had a secretive performance evaluation system, which was just filled in by the supervisor without the knowledge of the person who was being evaluated. But now we've moved to—on the basis of the strategic plans, we've now moved to open performance appraisal with the actual targets which are emanating from the strategic plan. We have put in place client service charters, which explain the kinds of services which are going to be provided by the various institutions. Human-resource recruitment systems have been put in place—human resource planning and succession planning on the basis of training needs assessments and so on and so forth. We are putting in place monitoring and evaluation systems within the public service. We have put in systems for communication and education of public servants on the basis of a number of programs. There are quite a number of systems which were put in place.*

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SCHALKWYK: What effect do you think they've had? I'm particularly interested in the shift from secretive to open performance evaluations.

YAMBESI: *I think it is—it has the impact of actually improving performance—but also even the perception, because I think now, even the employees are happy about the new system. Because now, I sit with my directors, and we discuss—on the basis of the strategic plan, we discuss with each director, “How are you going to deliver on the strategic plan, given the resources and the targets which I’ve given you?” And we discuss those. And after six months, we sit again for the mid-year review, where I call each director, and we say, “Yes, these were the targets; you said by the end of the year, you would have implemented this. How far have you gone now, and how does that compare with the resources you’ve used, and what are the prospects for you achieving the targets by the end of the year?” And come the end of the year, then the directors come in with their own assessment of their own performance, and I make an assessment, and we sit, and we discuss. So I think it has become quite productive—and improved, even—the working relationship.*

SCHALKWYK: Was there resistance to these when they were first implemented?

YAMBESI: *No, there wasn't much resistance. Actually, problems were in setting targets. That was the biggest challenges, because for government work, it's not very easy to quantify and measure. It's quite challenging. But we started slowly, and we've been improving. So there wasn't resistance as such.*

SCHALKWYK: But you have made improvements in measuring—?

YAMBESI: *Exactly, yes.*

SCHALKWYK: I wonder if I could talk to you about promotions and appointments, and what changes have happened in the promotions and recruitment systems.

YAMBESI: *OK. In 1998, we introduced the Public Service Management and Employment Policy, which, basically, the focus was on reintroducing meritocracy in recruitment and promotion within the public service. And in the year 2002, we passed the Public Service Act. Initially, what we had was that all positions were advertised. So if there are openings within the public service, those would be advertised by the respective ministries, interviews would be conducted, and then the most suitable candidates would be recruited. Also for promotion. But then, I think last year, we did make some amendments to the act, and now what we are doing is that we are only advertising for new entrants, only fresh entrants. And then, for the other positions, for promotion, first of all, we start by considering internally on the basis of performance. If there is no one, we look through the broader public service. If there isn't a person within the broader public service, then we advertise it. So that's the amendment which we did. And that was basically to respond to the fact that, because when we were advertising even senior positions, invariably, we got people who mostly don't have the public service culture. It became a problem. Secondly, most did not have the requisite experience. And we found that, thirdly, we were losing institutional memory [and there was no succession planning any more]. So the amendment which we did was that, of course, the principle of meritocracy must remain. We must recruit based on merit. But we said that for promotion and other senior positions, we would, on the basis of the open performance appraisal system, look first internally. And if there is no one who qualifies on the basis of merit, this is when we would open it up. That's the amendment which we have now.*

SCHALKWYK: What has been the public's response to these changes? Are they aware of them?

YAMBESI: *They are aware of them.*

SCHALKWYK: Do they support them?

YAMBESI: *They are very supportive of them. Especially the focus on merit. Let me add, with the focus on merit, we also decentralized the management of public servants. Now, permanent secretaries can do the recruitment, can promote people, confirm people, and promote them, while initially that was done centrally. And actually, the essence of that is on performance management, to enable the permanent secretaries to have control over all the resources which they need to deliver on their strategic plan. So to have control over the financial resources, the human resources, and the physical resources which they need to deliver on the strategic plans.*

SCHALKWYK: And what remain the major challenges, in terms of performance management and meritocratic recruitments?

YAMBESI: *OK, meritocratic recruitment: I think the key challenge is to make sure they are fully implemented. Because much—as I said, we have introduced them, but when we make an assessment of ministries, departments, and agencies, for example, many have gone very far [in terms of compliance], others not. And in most cases, you find it is a question of leadership. Some leaders are pro-reform, and they moved quite far in terms of their implementation; others have not. So there is the challenge of leadership, but also, there is a challenge of change of mindset. Change of mindset is still something which remains. Some public servants are slow to change, and to adapt to [new ways of doing things].*

SCHALKWYK: OK, I wonder if I could ask some questions about training programs and capacity-building, specifically because you've said that you had experience with that. And you mentioned that you identified capacity gaps, particularly back in the late '80s. What have you done to fill those gaps?

YAMBESI: *One of the systems which we have in place is that each ministry must have a training program. So each ministry has a training program, [based on training needs assessments, and] which is normally updated in terms of identifying what are the gaps and what training programs are going to be undertaken. And it is mainly updated on the basis of the performance appraisal which is done. Because one of the things which is assessed during the appraisal is for each employee to see—maybe there are some gaps in terms of training, to assist that employee to improve. So all the training interventions are on the basis of this training program, which is for each ministry.*

SCHALKWYK: How many people go through those training plans? Does everybody in the ministry go through, or...?

YAMBESI: *Everybody in the ministries. For all levels, yes.*

SCHALKWYK: But the content is based on the appraisals?

YAMBESI: *Exactly, based on the appraisal, mainly. But there are some [cross-cutting skills] also, for some groups. For example, there are some key skills, which may be offered depending on identified needs. For example, in some cases, we do it for*

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*communication skills, for example, just for a group. And we include writing skills or things like that. So mostly on the basis of their appraisal, but then other core skills which we think are still lacking from groups of servants. How it's incorporated in their plan. But of course, in most of their plans, the constraints—again—are on resources, so we have to prioritize ourselves.*

SCHALKWYK: And who conducts the training?

*YAMBESI: Some training is conducting by the Tanzania Public Service College. We have a public college. We have the Tanzanian Global Development Learning Center where courses can be accessed online and elsewhere. We have other training institutions within the country. But we also have—some training outside the country is paid for in various countries. So institutions may be in Malaysia, Singapore, Britain, elsewhere, depending on the nature of the training.*

SCHALKWYK: When you have these training programs, do people rotate through the programs? Are they done at the workplace, or do people go and sit in classes?

*YAMBESI: As I said, it depends on the nature of the program. But we have some programs which are in-house. We have programs which are in-house, or others, people go to institutions outside of the public service, which offer specific programs. Or in some of the programs, we do invite trainers who come, and then they conduct training for groups.*

SCHALKWYK: And those are both local and foreign?

*YAMBESI: Exactly.*

SCHALKWYK: And the training is mainly done in which language?

*YAMBESI: It's English. Almost exclusively in English.*

SCHALKWYK: In some countries, civil servants lack basic literacy or numeracy, which can be a problem for day-to-day work. Is this a problem in Tanzania?

*YAMBESI: No, not for civil servants. Because there are certain basic qualifications which one has to have in order to enter the public service.*

SCHALKWYK: It's also often a concern that people who are trained leave the civil service to use their skills in better-paid positions in the private sector. Has this been a problem?

*YAMBESI: No, it's not a major problem. For us, it's not a major problem. One is that, for us, the private sector is still very small in Tanzania. But secondly, and given the nascent nature of the private sector, normally they don't train people. So most people [requiring training] are not attracted by the private sector, because the only—the place they know they can get training and their capacity developed is within the public sector. So it hasn't been a major problem. But maybe what you can say for the new private sector—by that, I am saying, there are now quite a number of international banks, for example, which are setting house, some international companies which are paying very well. Yes, those, at least now, are posing quite a big threat in terms of drawing quite a number of people from the public service, and that is a very recent phenomenon. But on the whole, we haven't lost many people to the private sector, no.*

SCHALKWYK: So I wonder if I could talk about the reform process.

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YAMBESI: *The reform process, yes.*

SCHALKWYK: If you could talk about some of the ways that the limited resources you've had available to you have shaped the reforms you've done, or the types of reforms that you've attempted—. Are there any ways that you could suggest that Tanzania has been successful in getting around resource constraints?

YAMBESI: *I don't think we got around resource constraints. I think we have tried to make the best use of what we were able to get by mainly focusing the reform programs on areas which we thought were critical. Yes, areas which we thought were critical, because invariably, as elsewhere, reform is a very expensive undertaking, and particularly in a developing country like Tanzania, where you still have other development challenges which we are still facing. You still have to improve access and quality of education, health, water, and so on and so forth. So it can become very difficult. And that's where I think the role of development partners has been key in terms of supporting the implementation of the various reforms in Tanzania. They provided resources to supplement government contribution to implementing the various reform programs. And that has been key.*

SCHALKWYK: And what role did the donors play in establishing the reform agenda—the goals of the reform?

YAMBESI: *The goals of the reform? I don't know about other countries, but what has happened in Tanzania—apart from the Civil Service Reform Program—beginning with the first phase of the Reform Program, the goals of the Reform Program were based on our own assessment of what we thought were the gaps. So what we did is, we carried out an assessment: we broadly defined what we thought were the responses to the gaps which we were experiencing, and then we presented that to our group of donors, that this is the direction which we think will be able to address the kind of reform program. We engaged them in that discussion and refining on what we thought was going to be the reform agenda. And that has continued even for the second phase. I would say here, actually, the reform agenda, particularly for the Public Service Reform Program, has been driven by Tanzania itself, on what we thought was important in terms of furthering the agenda of the reforms. And fortunately, donors have supported us in implementing that.*

SCHALKWYK: Have you had any problems where donor goals have been different from your own goals?

YAMBESI: *Well, there's some—in some marginal areas, yes. I wouldn't say they agreed 100% with what we were proposing. But again, then we would engage them—because, I think, we—our funding arrangement is a basket funding arrangement, where all donors put resources in a basket to support the implementation of the agenda which has been identified by the government. There are frameworks where we engage the donors in terms of how we're implementing the program, the use of resources and the various reporting mechanisms, and so on and so forth.*

SCHALKWYK: Have you gained anything from other countries' experiences? Have you looked at other countries' models for reform?

YAMBESI: *Yes, we looked at some countries like Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand, and some other countries. But I might say, also—I mean, in Africa, most countries have been looking to us for experience within Tanzania. And I think actually, it has been one of our strengths—I think we have been always trying to see what*

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*we can learn from other countries. This way, if you look over the years, Tanzania has sponsored and hosted three regional meetings on public service reforms in Africa. They've all been hosted by Tanzania. And we have reports from those meetings. So to try to bring African countries to discuss about reforms, but see how they can share their knowledge and experience in furthering the various reform agendas.*

SCHALKWYK: That brings me quite nicely to my last two questions, which is: are there any aspects of Tanzanian history or context that may influence—the lessons that you've learned here may be inapplicable to other—

YAMBESI: *Inapplicable to—*

SCHALKWYK: —specifically Tanzania.

YAMBESI: *We've been a peaceful country since independence. I think that is an important asset. A peaceful country with a stable political system. I think with a stable political system, and therefore even the development agenda; I think that is one of the key things. Political leadership has been consistent, and by that, I mean we had Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, then he retired; President [Ali Hassan] Mwinyi came, two terms, he retired; President Mkapa [two terms, he retired; and currently President Kikwete]. So that smooth transition of leadership, also, has created a very conducive environment for even sustaining the reform effort. Because we all understand, reform is a long-term undertaking. It's a long-term undertaking. So the political context has also been very, very good. But we have had a lot of support from development partners, in terms of providing resources and for the reform program. So that is also something—it has been a strong point. What else can I say? I think that continuity in the institutions, too. Leave alone leadership, but also in institutions. One can see there has been quite a lot of continuity, and that also would account for a specific circumstance for Tanzania to be able to sustain the reform program. I would say those are some of the things. But also, in terms of even the bureaucratic leadership, I think we have been fortunate to have a bureaucracy that has been passionate about reforms. Because when I look at PO-PSM and Joseph—you know, Joseph managed the reform for quite some time. And after that, there was my predecessor who stayed for some time, but she was also from within. I took over. So there also has been, even in terms of the management of the Public Service Reform Program, a lot of continuity, so a lot of institutional memory in terms of how we've moved with the reform program. I would say that also has been quite instrumental.*

SCHALKWYK: All right. And finally, if you had a chance to write a handbook for people managing civil service reform, what kinds of topics would you think would be important, and what would make this handbook most useful to you, were you starting again?

YAMBESI: *There are quite a lot of things I think one would like to put in there, in a handbook. Of course, one would be on the challenges of reform. I think you'd like to focus on what are the key challenges, but maybe even before the challenges: the context for reform. You have to have certain preconditions for the reforms, in terms of what kind of systems need to be in place, what kinds of mechanisms have to be there—*

SCHALKWYK: What sort of—what would you think those would be?

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**YAMBESI:** *You know, the preconditions I've mentioned in Tanzania. You certainly need a stable political system; political commitment to reform is there. Because if political commitment is there, then at least you are also assured of getting resources for reform. Because at the end of the day, it comes to the distribution of resources. Now, do you put money in reforms, or is reform a priority? So that would also be there. And then the kind of people maybe you'd need in terms of steering the reform program itself, and namely the capacity. The capacity to manage the reform process itself, I think, is also important. But also, how do you bring in feedback from the general public in terms of the implementation of the reform program? What mechanisms would you use to capture that feedback, but also to use that feedback in terms of improving how the reform program is progressing? So I think there are quite a number of things, in terms of systems, capacity, capacity required, the context, and certain preconditions would be required.*

**SCHALKWYK:** What feedback have you received, and how have you used that in your reform process?

**YAMBESI:** *We've experimented with quite a number of things. For example, each year, we have a Public Service Week, where we have exhibitions on services which are provided by the public service. And people are free to go there to air their grievances and so on and so forth. We have radio programs, we have television programs where we put up information about what we are doing in terms of reform, and people are free to call us, to write to us, to email to us what are the things which they think need to be improved, and so on and so forth. So we've captured all that feedback. And normally, in the design of the program, or when we are reviewing the program each year, we try to see how we can factor in some of the things which we are receiving. But under the current phase of the program, I think we are also trying to look for strategies on how we can capture more voices. Because much as we have done the things which I've told you, we think we need to do more in terms of increasing demand for accountability from the general public. So how we are going to engage more civil society organizations is something which—those are some of the things which we are currently looking at.*

**SCHALKWYK:** Thank you. Is there anything you'd like to add before we finish the interview?

**YAMBESI:** *OK, maybe something else I would say: reform is a very difficult undertaking. It needs a lot of time. But something I didn't mention: it's also important to have champions of reform. I think it is—if you have people who are passionate about the reform, are ready to go all the way out to push for the reform agenda, I think it is also important.*

**SCHALKWYK:** What sort of people have those been in Tanzania?

**YAMBESI:** *In Tanzania? I would say within the public service, there are areas where you have people, but also the leadership. But also, by saying that reform is a difficult undertaking, it implies that you need—at times, certain bold decisions need to be taken, and people should be ready to take those bold decisions. Otherwise, reforms may stall. Another important thing is consistency in implementation. Yes. Because if you lose momentum with reforms, then it becomes very, very difficult. Because you would sort of be like starting afresh. So it's important to sustain the reform program.*

**SCHALKWYK:** OK, thank you very much.

*YAMBESI:*     *Thank you.*