



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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ANDREW SCHALKWYK: Today is the 4th of December. I'm with Teo Wenene, the Commissioner for Public Service Inspection at the Ugandan Public Service Ministry in Kampala. Before I start the interview, can I ask that you give your consent to this interview?

MARY THEOPISTA WENENE: *I give you the consent to the interview.*

SCHALKWYK: Thank you very much. I'd like to start the interview by asking you about your current position, the responsibilities you have, and the jobs that you've had that have led up to this position.

WENENE: *Currently, I am the Commissioner for Public Service Inspection at the Ministry of Public Service. My main responsibilities in this position include inspection of ministries and local governments for two reasons. The first one is to ascertain the level of compliance to public service regulations and standards, and the second is to provide them support, supervision. Then the other responsibilities include the promotion of results-oriented management and other good practices for enhancing public service delivery, including the client charters and service delivery standards. I have -- this is my third year in this -- in this job. Prior to this, I was working in the Administrative Reform Secretariat. The Secretariat, that is responsible for coordinating the entire Public Service Reform Program for the government of Uganda. So I must really say that I have had quite a reasonable experience in the public service administrative reforms. My background is basically human resources management, but the experience in the reforms have given me a wide experience in public service management issues, generally, in the public service.*

SCHALKWYK: Thank you. Could you talk about the issues and challenges that face the civil service, before the reforms were started. Or at least when you were as part of the Secretariat.

WENENE: *Before the reforms were started, the main issues that challenged the public service mainly included -- or rather, mainly were the organization of the public service, the structure of the public service, how it was organized. And the other one was the capacity, both in terms of numbers and in terms of the competencies and the facilities that the public servants use. And also the pay of the public servants. Those were the key challenges that faced the public service before the Public Service Reform. The Public Service Reform Program implementation was preceded by a review of the public service reform, and a Public Service Review and Reorganization Commission was specifically commissioned to undertake that review.*

SCHALKWYK: When was this?

WENENE: *This was in 1989, and they produced their report in 1990, and it is this report that highlights some of those challenges. At that time, the way the public service was organized, it was not effective enough to deliver the services it was expected to. Yeah.*

SCHALKWYK: When you were on the Secretariat, what were your major goals?

WENENE: *When I was at the Secretariat, my main goals as a Secretariat, or as a -- my contribution to the Secretariat?*

SCHALKWYK: Both.

WENENE: *Well, the objective of the Secretariat, first of all, was to promote the Public Service Reforms, but also to put in place the strategic direction, dimensions of the reforms, to identify the priorities for the reforms and also to obtain the funding for the reforms and the capacity to obtain other capacity that is necessary to implement the reforms. And my own role in the Secretariat is that I used to work as a counterpart on some of the human resource initiatives for the reforms. Initially as a counterpart to some of the advisors, then eventually, some of my other duties involved writing minutes of the technical meetings of the task managers for the reforms, and also minutes for the steering committee of the reforms, budgeting, and writing the quarterly reports and the annual reports, organizing workshops and the other fora for discussing reform issues. I must say that I have been very greatly involved in the initial phases of the reform. I was involved in the downsizing program, reducing the numbers of the public service. Mainly the voluntary retirement scheme. I participated very much in the voluntary retirement scheme, and also in the restructuring of the local governments, the review of the staff performance appraisal form -- those are some of the things that I have specifically provided input.*

SCHALKWYK: Could I ask you about (clears throat) -- Sorry. Could I ask you about the human resources initiatives that you were undertaking at -- in the Secretariat? What were those? Could you give me some examples?

WENENE: *The human resources initiatives that were undertaken, mainly during the second phase of the Public Service Reform Program included the design of a training needs -- training needs assessment. The training needs assessment was undertaken during that period, and a training plan was developed during the second phase of the reform program.*

SCHALKWYK: How was the training needs assessment designed -- how did -- how was it carried out?

WENENE: *It was carried out by an independent consultant, but working with the team of staff from within the ministry. And then they developed a training program to cut across the public service. This -- to provide the courses that would cut across all the public servants in the various ministries, mainly those courses that were expected to revitalize the energy of the public servants. So that is one issue that was undertaken related to human resource. The other is concerned with the review of the regulatory framework for the human resource, and it included the review of the standing orders, the review of the code of conduct, the review of the staff performance appraisal instrument. Other initiatives that were undertaken during that period for the human resources was the design of the Integrated Personnel and Payroll System, but which implementation now is expected to take root during this phase of the program.*

SCHALKWYK: So what is the -- what is the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Management System?

WENENE: *The Integrated Personnel and Payroll Management System is expected to help the government to maintain an up-to-date management information system for human resources that allows us to have the staff list for the public servants, also to manage the payroll for the public servants, to manage their exit from the public service, and also training, and also to do administration, like leave from duty. So that is what the payroll is -- the Integrated Personnel and Payroll System -- is expected to do, including human resource planning for the public service.*

SCHALKWYK: Who's responsible for it -- who's in charge of that?

WENENE: *It is -- the responsibility for this area is the Department of Human Resources. Now, also during this phase of the reform program, results-oriented management was introduced in the public service. And the introduction of results-oriented management -- its objective was to change the management culture of the public service, because originally, it was believed that the public service was focusing on the processes and was not taking into account the end results for which the public service was established. So the second phase of the reform program, so the introduction of results-oriented management in the public service.*

SCHALKWYK: How does the results-oriented management work?

WENENE: *The central unit of the Ministry of Public Service has designed what we call a results framework for the Uganda public service. So we have a results framework. Now, that results framework allows each organization to define -- to define the -- it's -- to redefine its vision, where it wants to go in relation to the national vision and objectives. Then the organization should redefine its mission statement, the objective for it -- for which it exists, its strategic objectives, the key outputs that it is expected to deliver, the performance indicators that should be used to measure its outputs -- whether it is making progress or not. That is basically the results framework. So the organization should have a clear vision, a clear mission, strategic objectives, outputs, and performance indicators. Now, using those, then it should put in place a plan, and when the plan is put in place, then it should implement and monitor the plan, and then review performance and take action to correct. I'll provide you a copy of this concerning how the results-oriented management framework for the public service, how it has been designed. Because it is unique to the Uganda public service; this has been designed here. But it is applicable across all the institutions in the public service in Uganda. Yeah. Only what I can say is that not all the institutions are at the same level of implementation. Some institutions definitely have implemented ROM (results-oriented management) ahead of others.*

SCHALKWYK: When was it -- when was it designed, and when was it rolled out?

WENENE: *The implementation of ROM started -- it's a long history -- it started in 1995 with a pilot. A pilot exercise was undertaken in five ministries and five local governments. After the pilot -- after the successful pilot, the government agreed it was the best way to go. So in 1997, it was incorporated as a key strategy in the Public Service Reform Program for the government. So most of the rollout -- most of the rollout of the -- of results-oriented management -- took place between 1998 to 2002. This is when we had -- the rollout has followed a cascade approach from top to bottoms. So the first focus was on the political leadership and taking up -- practical leadership -- to buy -- to have the buying and support that this was the way to go. And then the second stage was the heads of department in the institutions. And after that stage, the third stage we are at now, in this phase of the reform program, is the individual level of public servants, trying to ensure that each individual level public servant is applying the principles of results orientation. Yeah.*

SCHALKWYK: What have been the challenges in implementing this -- implementing ROM?

WENENE: *Yeah. The implementation of ROM has faced a number of challenges. The first challenge, of course, is -- that it faces is the resistance to change: we are used to doing things the way we have been; why should do them differently.*

SCHALKWYK: So how is ROM different?

WENENE: ROM is different because it emphasizes the issue of accountability -- accountability for your actions, accountability for your inactions, accountability for the resources that you have been provided to perform your duties. So they face resistance, usually, because of the demand that it imposes, but also because of the attitude. Maybe people may not necessarily be resistant because of the demand that it imposes, but because of the attitude. What is really new in ROM? What difference is it going to make? So that is the first challenge. The first challenge is the attitude and the initial resistance to apply it. The other challenge that we have is to have -- have the support -- the support of the leadership of any institution. If -- for ROM to work, the strategic leadership of the institution must be committed to its implementation. Where there's no such commitment, it becomes difficult for the other stuff really to implement it. The other challenge that we have, then, is the -- of course, the limitations of the resource envelope. There are so many priorities, and usually the -- there will always be a resource constraint. So there's always a challenge. You may have a very well defined results framework, you may have a very good plan in place, but you may not have all the required resources to have it implemented. So --

SCHALKWYK: What other sorts of resources does ROM needs?

WENENE: The resources that ROM needs. Of course, they are the people themselves, first of all, the human resources. I think that is key. Secondly, the financial resources. And thirdly, the tools and the equipment to implement the plans. However, as a principle in ROM, when we go out to promote the application of ROM, we -- our message is, we then -- whatever resource envelope you have, what is realistic for you to accomplish? Can you define what can be done within the resource envelope that you have, and can you make sure that you do that part? Because we are in an environment of scarcity of resources, and as I have mentioned, resources will never be enough.

SCHALKWYK: How were performance appraisals done in the past?

WENENE: Pardon?

SCHALKWYK: How were performance appraisals done?

WENENE: Oh, performance appraisals. Yes. One aspect of ROM -- maybe -- let me mention the aspects of ROM that we are emphasizing. There's the defining the results framework, putting in place a plan, and then there's implementation, and during implementation, you need to collect and maintain data. Within the ROM, we have staff performance appraisal, and then we have the issue of the client charters that should link the results of one institution to the expectations of the service recipients. And talking about staff appraisal, originally, staff performance appraisal was closed. For example, by the time I joined the public service, I completed a confidential staff performance appraisal form. Until the reforms were introduced. So, you completed your part, and then the supervisor completed their parts. Because of the culture in the public service at that time, the staff performance appraisal did not provide enough room for the individuals to discuss their performance with their supervisors. Don't -- the form provided, but it was not being complied with. The individual would complete, and the supervisor would also complete, and the form would be countersigned. So there were cases where the individual should have been informed about their performance shortfalls, but actually, they did not get to know, because the system was closed. So the new staff performance appraisal system that has been introduced is now open to the appraiser and to the appraisee, and it

provides opportunity for the individual staff to know what actually the supervisor thinks about their performance. But above all, it provides that the individual defines their outputs and understands how those outputs are going to contribute to the outputs of the department and eventually to those of the organization. That is how the new staff performance appraisal instrument has been designed. But again, we have to encourage the public servants to be open (laughs) so that they are free to discuss the staff appraisal experience with their supervisors.

SCHALKWYK: And have you -- what effect has ROM had on the public service in Uganda?

WENENE: *ROM has had an effect on the public service in Uganda, and I will point out some of the areas where we can say ROM has had an effect. The first one, really, I could say, is the attitude of the public servants. There is no consciousness; people are conscious that they have to produce results. Actually, at the end of the day, they will be asked, "You have been working the whole day, the whole week, or the whole month. What have you done? What have you produced? What is the evidence to show that you have done something?" So the -- ROM has changed our attitude to think about the results that we are expected to produce. That is one. And when a public servant at the individual level does not deliver, there's a sense, a feeling, of inadequacy. And people are shy to confess that they have not actually delivered. In the same way, even institutions now are being asked to set their outputs and the outcomes of their outputs when they submit the policy assessments to what? -- to Parliament. So again, there's a sense of -- a sense in the ministries that they must deliver on the commitments they have set out. So there is the contribution to the attitude.*

The other contribution is a uniform understanding of the results framework. It is a big contribution. If you go out to any organization in the public service and you ask them, "Do you have a vision, do you have a mission, do you have objectives, do you have outputs, have you developed indicators?", you are likely to find that they are uniformly responding to those issues. So they are able to develop those and to feed them into their plans. But the other influence is that ROM is now influencing two key issues in performance management. The first one is the planning and budgeting process. So the planning and budgeting process requires that institutions define the outputs for which they need their resources to be provided. And this is included in the budget framework papers and in the policy statements. So ROM is having an impact in planning and budgeting. And ROM now is also influencing, monitoring, and evaluation. Because the monitoring, evaluation, and the reporting of performance, used mainly to focus on activities and narrative. But now, when you are requested for a report, you are expected to report on deliverables, what you have actually achieved.

SCHALKWYK: Has there been the involvement of the public in establishing the results?

WENENE: *The public?*

SCHALKWYK: Yeah.

WENENE: *No, the public originally have not been involved in defining the results -- directly involved -- excepting the local governments. In the local governments, the budgeting processes is bottom up, and there is adequate participation of the communities in defining -- in identifying the priorities for the budget. However, as part of strengthening the framework for results-oriented management, we have put in place guidelines for developing and implementing client charters. Now, this is now where the public is coming in, because an MDA -- MDA stands for ministry, department, agency or local government... In the process of developing*

a client charter, they must, as a requirement, subject it to a consultative process with the key stakeholders. And the charter sets out the commitments that the MDA is making over the medium term and specifies the indicators that the public will be looking for in the (phone rings) deliver of that MDA. So while the charter's being developed, the key service recipients being involved in that process, and now they are beginning to understand the roles of the respective MDAs and their expectations from those MDAs.

The other way that the government has involved the service recipients under the Public Service Reform Program is through the National Service Delivery Surveys. Since the reform program commenced, the government of Uganda has undertaken two National Service Delivery Surveys. The first one was in 2000; the second one was in 2004. And currently we are undertaking a third National Service Delivery Survey, 2008. Now, the objective of these surveys is to reconfirm from the service recipients the quantity of the services that they are receiving, the quality of those services -- whether they are happy with it or not -- the coverage, and also the cost -- whether they can afford the services (phone rings) in case the service is paid for. So that is the objective of the National Service Delivery Survey. And this survey is both a quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative part of this survey involves going to the specific households at household level to ask them questions that -- directed to the household: Have you accessed the health service? What is your view of the health service? Have you had contact with an agriculture extension worker? Do your children go to school? Which school are they going? What is your view of the performance of the school? Questions that are really concerned with service delivery and that are geared to helping the government to improve service delivery and to make people participate in service delivery issues. The other methodology is qualitative, where focus group discussions are held with the communities, and then the issues of service delivery discussed. So it is through those two that we really expect to bring on board the service recipients. One is through publishing the client charters. Again, I can give you a sample of a client charter that has been developed for a rural local government, so that you can see the kind of commitments that the local government intends to provide to the service recipients. And if a service recipient is aware of these commitments, then they can demand for the public service. And if they are not happy with the way the service has been provided, then they may complain about the quality of service delivery. Yeah.

SCHALKWYK: I wonder if I could ask you about one of your responsibilities as a Commissioner -- and that's with the compliance with regulations and standards. Has there been any change in the way you've done that monitoring or any major change in those regulations and standards?

WENENE: *Yes, there have been a number of legal reforms since the Public Service Reform started, besides the Public Service Reform Program, which mainly focuses on the administrative reforms. There are other sector reforms, like the financial management reforms; the reforms in the local governments; and the reforms in the other sectors, like water, roads, and health. Now, as a ministry responsible for public service, we are responsible for how all the other services are delivered and ensuring that there are systems in place to make sure that the services are delivered. We have a comprehensive checklist that we use to check on the services. When we go to inspect, we inspect against a checklist. So there has been a change since the reforms, mainly one because of the various legal provisions that have come in place that have to be implemented. Also, there has been a change in the methodology. You see, inspection of quality assurance is not only a fault-finding activity. No, it is really a technical support supervision*

activity. So there has been a change of focus in that. You go, you find out, "OK, if this is not happening, this is the best way it should have been happening." So you provide information; you also build the capacity of the people on the ground to actually perform their duty the best way they should do that. So -- but the next level we'd like to take this under this phase of the Reform Program is we are thinking about having an instrument that can enable us to compare performance of institutions and to reward and recognize good performance. And then the cycle of results-oriented management will be complete when we bring on the rewarding and recognizing. And if people know that when they perform very well, they will be nationally recognized that they have, that will -- I think that will also make a difference. Yeah.

SCHALKWYK: I wonder if I could talk to you quickly about downsizing --

WENENE: *Mm-hmm.*

SCHALKWYK: -- and your role there. Did you set specific goals in terms of the number of people you wanted in the public service? And what form did they take?

WENENE: *Well, as I mentioned earlier, one of the recommendations of the Public Service Review and Reorganization Commission was that the public service was too big, and it wasn't well -- what? -- organized. Hm? Now, what happened is that that commission recommended a new lineup of the structures of government, and said, "You know what? We think the government should be arranged this way, and these could constitute the number of ministries." So government accepted that recommendation. Government accepted the recommendation and implemented that recommendation. That recommendation was first implemented in 1991, and the government decision then was to reduce the number of ministries from about 33 to about 23 ministries. So that had implications of the numbers of staff that were employed in those ministries; because functions were merged, positions were merged, so there were excess staff. However, the rationalization of the ministries was followed by a detailed analysis -- staffing analysis -- which was undertaken by this ministry with the also support -- consultants' support at that time. As of now, our ministry has the capacity to do the rationalization. But then, we sought consultants' support to redefine the functions and to determine the staffing levels. So once the structures were put in place, public servants were then subjected to the process of selection to establish who was suitable to be retained. Again, it's the first that way available in a ministry or a department.*

Let me give you examples -- very, very vivid examples. Today, we have the Ministry of Tourism, Trade, and Industry, but originally, this ministry -- within this area, we had a ministry in charge of industry and technology, we had the Ministry of Commerce, we had the Ministry of Trade. But all these have been merged into one ministry. We also had -- and agriculture. We had two separate ministries. We had a ministry for agriculture, which focused on the crop, and then we had a ministry for animal resources. Now, we have one ministry, which is responsible for both crop, animal, and the fishery sector. Now, when the ministries were merged, you need one chief executive, you need one accountant, you need one person in charge of personnel. So the vacancies were reduced, and the only logical way was to subject the public servants to an assessment in order to identify who qualified to retain the job. That is the process that was followed. Now -- but as I mentioned earlier, that was a compulsory process. So if your job was phased out, you had to go. There was no question about it. Maybe you didn't even need to be interviewed, because your job has been phased out. But if your job was merged, and you are two people, then they need

to select one person to take that job. So that is exactly what has happened. Now, realizing that compelling people to go through the compulsory system was very stressful, the voluntary scheme was put in place. If the jobs have been reduced, those who want to go, let them apply to go, and when you don't get the number, then you compare those who are still there, and they are still excess, through the -- you take them through the whole process. So that was the methodology that was used. Yeah. Maybe what I can say about this is that while we have been restructuring, mainly in the local governments -- in the central ministries -- but we have also restructured the local governments, where we have seen a bit of expansion of the public service as opposed to a reduction, because more local governments have been created, especially during the current phase of the reform program. Yeah, so that has been the challenge.

SCHALKWYK: Thank you very much. I think we're out of time. So, do you have anything to add before we finish?

WENENE: You can switch off first, then if it is necessary to record, we can --

(break in recording)

SCHALKWYK: This is part two of the interview with Miss Wenene.

WENENE: *Well, what I would like to say about the interview and about the experience of the reforms is basically that the reform process is a journey. (laughs) You can not say that you are finished, and you have ended. It is a continuous process, and we have got a challenge of continuously identifying what needs to be done, what needs to be improved upon, in order to improve public service delivery. It would really not be a good practice to say that you have reformed and you have finished the reform program, because each time you introduce an initiative, it brings with it another set of challenges that you need to reexamine and see how they should be addressed. I think that is really one thing that I would like to say. And maybe the other one that I would really like to emphasize is that addressing performance management in all the reforms is a critical -- what? -- issue, because if performance management of the public servants is not addressed, then the results chain of the whole reform process are not visible, they are not evident. So, but if performance management is addressed and monitoring and evaluation is institutionalized, then you can begin to see that you are actually making progress or not. And also maybe what I would like to say is the need to publish -- to market the initiatives that we do, both within the ministries and outside, because the people who receive the public services need to know the changes that are taking place in the public service in order to also appreciate what has been done, but also to make their own contribution to the reform process. Thank you very much.*

SCHALKWYK: Thank you.