



## **Transparency and accountability Forum (TAF)**

### **How to make Public Service an effective tool for Transparency and Accountability in the Management of Public Resources in South Sudan**

**Saturday, March 30, 2019**

**Juba, Grand Hotel**

#### **Introduction**

This report explains the presentation and discussions on how public sector can be used as an effective tool for transparency and accountability in the management of public resources. The report consist of opening remarks, main speakers, presentation, summary of the discussion, key issues, consensus issues that emerged, policy recommendations and conclusion.

#### **Opening session**

Dr. Lual A. Deng, Managing Director of Ebony Center for Strategic Studies (ECSS) recognized the participants and panelists. He highlighted the importance of South Sudan flag which reflects authority and acknowledged the presence of Dr. Salwa Jebreel, Deputy Chair Board of Directors, ECSS and Dr. Benjamin Apai, Program coordinator, ECSS. He invited Bishop Tombe to open the event with a word of prayer. He mentioned that this TAF event was covered by tweeter by Reja and Mandera for other policy makers and the diaspora to follow and contribute to the debate online. Dr. Lual encouraged participants to feel free and participate on the debate. Then he invited Hon. Salwa.

Hon. Selwa Jebreel; the Deputy Chairperson of the Board of Directors, ECSS, observed the protocol on behalf of the board of directors and acknowledged the participants, Minister of Public Services, Labor and Human Resources, other National Ministers, present panelists. She noted that, the event is interesting which focus on transparency and accountability at all levels of Public cooperation, institutions of high learning, plus other sectors such as; Non-Governmental

Organizations (NGOs), and civil societies. She mentioned that the Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan clearly mentioned Public service reforms to attain Transparency and Accountability.

Hon. Abdon Agau Jok; the Secretary General of the Government and the moderator of the function, on his remarks pointed out that, national issues are discussed together as policy makers propose policy options. The moderator explained the rule of the debate which was inclusive and encouraged all participants to contribute based on the subject matter. The audience composed of Ministers, Government employees or civil servants, foreign diplomats, civil societies, non-governmental organizations, UNDP representatives, the academia, women and youth.

**Main Speaker:**

Hon. James Hoth Mai, the Minister of Labor, Public Service and Human Resource Development (MLPSHRD)

**Discussants:**

- 1) Justice George Anier Ring
- 2) Dr. Stephen Abraham
- 3) Prof. George B. Nyombe
- 4) Hon. Bethy Ochan

**The Presentation**

Hon. James Hoth Mai, acknowledged Abdon Agau Jok, Ministers, advisors and participants. He highlighted vital role of Public Service as an effective Tool for Transparency and Accountability in management of Public Resources. He mentioned that since the independence of South Sudan, some Ministers tried to do reforms at his Ministry. He stated that Hon. Awut Deng Acuil, the Minister of Gender, Child and welfare, the former Minister of MLPSHRD introduced reforms that path her way out of Public Service office. He also outlined the mandate of Public Service; to build and manage the capacity of the public service for effective and efficient delivery of services, to regulate the operation of the private sector labor market, the vision; to have a responsive, well managed transparent and accountable public service, mission; to provide policy

guidance, regulatory framework and develop institutional and human resource capacity for effective delivery of services to the public.

Hon. Mai stated that strengthening of the public sector for good governance and effective use of public resources require reforms in public institutions through ethics, integrity, transparency, accountability and professionalism to prevent and combat corruption. He mentioned that the measures to have vibrant civil service that uphold merit or professionalism include; enforce public service regulation, improve remuneration, improve transparency in recruitment and other HR policies, strengthen ethics or anti-corruption, legislations implement code of conduct, improve the induction program, verify or make public disclosure of conflict of interest, give more resources to independence investigating agencies, and prosecute corrupt act.

The main speaker also pointed out that public services reforms include, clean institutions of the government of South Sudan from procedural placement, appointment and promotion, facially screen all the employees and review their dossiers, sort out genuine public servants from the ghost names, find out all directorates and units have job descriptions of the positions they possess, assess the compatibility of job specification with the holder's identify staff on provisional pay, provide data for retirement program to identify public servants due for retirement, find out employees released for further studies and whether they are released official or not, find out those absent for work and still on payroll, provide a secure identification system for public services, and compile baseline report for human resource planning purposes.

Hon. Mai concluded his presentation insisting that, public service in any nation is the heart for stability and economic growth and is entrusted by people to manage their resources and direct them toward service delivery, its influence efficiency, transparency and accountability. He also emphasized that through its human resource, public service served as driver and champion for change therefore, its success depends on transformation and modernization of human resource function. In order to meet the challenges identified, public service need to embark on professional development, multi-skilling and a broad understanding of responsibilities connected to human resource management approach. Ethics, integrity, transparency, accountability and professionalism are interrelated and formed a crucial part in transformation of public service any

absent or lack of one will have a direct impact on others. Putting into practice all policies, laws and regulations governing public service will have a positive result for government to regain confidence of the people.

After the presentation the panelist added their view on the presentation. **Dr. Stephen Abraham Yar** appreciated the participants. He explained the background of civil services in South Sudan, with historical facts based on civil services with references to 1980s in Sudan and during the colonial rule. He mentioned that in 1972, after the first civil war between Southern Sudan and Sudan and after the signing of Addis Ababa agreement, the Government of Southern Sudan was formed to enable Southern Sudanese to participate in the matters that affect them with Able Alier as the first President, who had 10 or 11 Ministries followed by civil servants appointment. The First task was to appoint directors, later the name of their position was changed to regional ministers, and Directors changed to Director Generals. The selections of the Directors were based on “personnel relationship”, although the selection during the recruitment process was based on the records of civil services in Khartoum.

He added that civil servants sustainability has been based on respect for law, order and proper recruitment process. He explained an example of Able Alier as a good civil servant at the judicial services for 5 years and joined politics after attaining is postgraduate degree.

**Prof. George B. Nyombe**, acknowledged previous speaker’s presentation. Civil service and governance are important aspect which requires independent recruitment process through merits based on the institutions policy. He emphasized on the importance of rule of law in South Sudan. He gave examples of Turkey, that collected children from age of 8 to 18 in Europe and trained them to be good civil servants, the Arabs trained slaves as good civil servants, British use both direct and indirect rule during the colonial regime to train discipline and loyal civil servants who were effective and efficient. Hence effective civil service demands the government to train the civil population moral culture, values and norms.

**Justice George Anier Ring** as a former Judge explained how the judicial system was established in South Sudan based in regions such as, greater Bahr el Ghazal, greater Equatoria, and greater Upper Nile. After the signing of CPA, the role judiciary is to ensure all the laws are in

confirmative with the constitution of South Sudan. The courts have rights not to apply other laws, any constitution cases before the Superior court, the Judiciary shall have powers to execute justices to all South Sudanese and have mandate to reject or set aside all constitutions. However, the judiciary failed to perform cases like that of Pagan Amou, and failed to pass judgments on the case of Dr. Lam Akol. Mr. Ring emphasized for independency of the Judiciary and Judiciary reforms for accountability.

**Hon. Achan Bethy** highlighted the difference between public services and civil service. She mentioned that recruitment process at public sector lacks clear procedures; hence there are large unskilled labors that are unwilling to work due to limited space at the ministries. She highlighted the reforms that she did when she was a Minister at state level, when she requested all unskilled labor to lay bricks to build 3 offices. She screened workers and introduced induction. However government employees with more than 30 years experiences refused induction. Hence, she emphasized on need for induction, institutional analysis, job description, SWOT Analysis of Ministries. Finally she added that “Public service means giving services to the people”.

**Key issues raised and consensus that emerged:**

- There is link between democracy and civil service; without democracy, civil servants can't work well.
- Youth neglected public service; they prefer to be hired by the NGOs due to low payment at the Government institutions.
- Government officials who are supposed to retire, but still serving at the public offices (Gray hair/long term at public offices); there is need to established an effective pension system.
- Budget release difference; there has been great difference in budget release, for instance, some spending ministries obtain only 15 % of the allocated budget, yet other spending ministries get 300% of their Budget.
- Appointment of office managers at the government offices has been based on personal relationship.
- The 1972 government considered qualification and current government, some individual consider nepotism and political affiliation

- Pensions system has not been efficiently established to pay the retired civil servants
- To achieve effective transparency and accountability, South Sudan should have strong anti-corruption system
- No independency among the three arms of the government (i.e executive, legislative and Judiciary).
- There is no respect for the South Sudan constitution
- Government of South Sudan started in 2005 with unskilled personnel being recruited in the government offices.
- Many war/ agreements are challenge to civil servants
- Lack of supervision by directors at public offices; civil servants absent themselves from work.
- Some fresh graduates although appointed through normal recruitment process yet, they can't perform well.

### **Policy recommendations**

- Total reform of public service to ensure transparency and accountability.
- There should be no any political interference in the recruitment process; recruitment should be based on merits.
- Establish public service institute to train public servants and upgrade their skills.
- There is need for induction for new public services employees to impact knowledge and skills for junior ones
- The execution of the budget should be restricted and translated into activities and projects for implementation according to the work plan.
- The Ministry of Finance should grant and release the budget to spending agencies to deliver Public Services.
- General transfer of civil servants system should be re-introduced
- All office managers should be appointees of the public services/ no appointment of relatives in these positions
- Certificate evaluations and authentication for all graduates should be a prerequisite for appointment.

- There is need for an efficient public service system to accommodate most of the 3000 South Sudan annual graduates.
- Motivation of civil servants through annual salary increment and job promotion.
- Civil servants recruitment should be done through written exams based on general knowledge policy.
- South Sudan Foreign Policy interest with neighboring countries should be based on Trade and Security
- The current government should take into consideration TAF debates suggestions/policies.
- The public servants should be train to able to communicate in the official language to ensure good reports writings.
- Efficient pension system to execute retirement transactions
- Independency of the Judiciary and Judicial reforms for accountability in South Sudan

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Lual, in his closing remarks; invited the chairman of Development Policy Forum (DPF) to give concluding remarks. Hon. Aggrey T. Saboni, the Presidential Advisor on Economic Affairs recognized the presence of Dr. Salwa Barbari, Dr. Lual A. Deng, Hon. James H. Mai, Hon. Abdon Agau Jok, who was the moderator of the event, panelists and the participants. He explained how the DPF was designed to discuss national issues that matter to the public. DPF purpose mainly; to evaluate the performance of the public sector and draw lessons for the challenges, provide opportunities for the movement of the people. He mentioned that, South Sudan Public service is at the state of decay. He recommended that office managers appointment should be changed; they should be civil servant and not relatives as the situation is now. He emphasized reforms of government institutions and civil servants mindset- change. The mind-set should be changed through job analysis.

Dr. Lual acknowledged the presence of United Nations Development Program (UNDP), South Africa Embassy, USA, Norway Embassy, and the team who put up South Sudan flag, the young people and all participants who participated during TAF event. He appreciated Bishop Tombe for being a good friend of Ebony Center for Strategic Studies (ECSS) and asked him to give a closing prayer and to bless the food.