

Introduction

When President Hifikepunye Pohamba addressed the people of Namibia on the occasion of his inauguration on 21 March 2005, he stated, among other things, the following:

“Our experience in the past fifteen years has informed a new realism in our approach to serving the people. I am conscious that the peace, security and stability we enjoy today will have to be accompanied by sustainable economic growth, social development, discipline and self-sacrifice. ... The questions of disparity in socio-economic development, unemployment and poverty will only be addressed effectively if we transform the Namibian economy and accelerate economic growth. This should be done with a strong emphasis on empowering previously disadvantaged citizens through education, training and skills development, underpinned by efficient economic management and productivity.”

The Public Service of Namibia needs to assimilate this quest for equity, social justice, peace and stability. The Office of the Prime Minister should chart the course for and show the way towards this new realism. In so doing, the following questions should be addressed:

- ✂ How could economic growth be accelerated, e.g. how could the social and economic situation of women and the youth be broadened?
- ✂ How could the disadvantaged be empowered?
- ✂ How could disparities in the socio-economic sphere be effectively addressed, e.g. how can the social and economic gap between rural and urban citizens be narrowed?
- ✂ How could the economy be efficiently managed?
- ✂ How can productivity be improved and enhanced?

Before we address these questions we must highlight some aspects of our economic life today, that is, the challenges of socio-economic development facing our country. In this way we will be able to chart a new paradigm for socio-economic development.

The challenge

The challenge facing our Government in socio-economic development and growth can be summarised as follows:

- ✂ Insufficient growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in relation to population growth
- ✂ Low employment growth
- ✂ High poverty levels
- ✂ High income inequality
- ✂ Reduced diversification of economic activities
- ✂ Insufficient productive investment
- ✂ Rising levels of public and private sector debt
- ✂ Low international competitiveness
- ✂ Low productivity levels, and
- ✂ Shortage of skills.

In other words, Namibia belongs to a group of countries described as having “small, open economies”. Such countries are characterised by the underdevelopment trap. Their economies are volatile and dependent. They export a limited supply of primary commodities. They are less diversified. They have small domestic markets. Their products are of low market value. They also lack access to credit and quality education.

Unless Namibia addresses these enduring constraints to growth and development, our President’s dream will remain out of reach. Can we afford to disappoint our President and our people in this respect? The answer is **No!** We need to adopt a new paradigm in our quest for economic growth and development. The underdevelopment trap needs to be exposed and destroyed. This can only be done if we can learn from the experiences of others. We can learn much from south-east Asia in this regard, for example.

The opportunity

The challenge of the underdevelopment trap can be turned into an opportunity for growth and development – if we adopt some of the economic development models of the Asian Tigers. As they stood ready for their launch into industrialisation, they adopted the features of “developmental states”. The idea of a *developmental state* is a function of specific conditions of economic, political and institutional structures. In our own case, our economic stagnation can be attributed to the constraints of our history, the economy, politics and global integration. Our colonial history has been a constraint to our human capital development. Our commodity-driven exports are a constraint to our economic autonomy. Our fragile institutions of governance may be a constraint to foreign direct investment.

If Namibia were to conform to the paradigm of a developmental state, then the country must boldly adopt strategic policies for economic growth and development. Like Asian states, Namibia should ground its industrial policy on learning processes and the borrowing of technologies. In this regard, Namibia should strive to develop into an entrepreneurial state. The following policy guidelines characterise the *developmental* or *entrepreneurial* State:

- ✎ **Public service:** The State should promote public education and training in order to grow the nation’s intellectual capital. In particular, the State should develop a meritocratic civil service and promote general training in technological competence. The State should also promote public intervention in the economy.
- ✎ **Industrial policies:** The State should promote policies of targeted taxation; protect infant industries; promote incentives for savings and investment; provide for sound financing; conduct research and development; and intervene in strategic industries. In short, the State should develop a long-term relationship between the political powers and the private sector. The State should also promote alliances between banks and entrepreneurs, between foreign investors and local entrepreneurs, etc.

All in all, Namibia needs to realise that market forces alone cannot advance economic development.

The State should act as the lubricant of the engine that drives economic development. The State should, therefore, emphasise the following in its quest for economic development and growth:

- ✘ Promoting a diversified export-growth driven economy
- ✘ Providing access to credit and education
- ✘ Promoting the adoption of and adaptation to technology
- ✘ Promoting a national private sector
- ✘ Moulding a quality bureaucracy, i.e. a technocratic bureaucracy, and
- ✘ Emphasising infrastructural development.

If the country can move in this direction, through the Second National Development Plan (NDP2) and Vision 2030 we will be able to answer our President's call for economic development and growth, employment creation, poverty reduction, and empowerment of the disadvantaged.

The role of the Public Service

Namibia can only become a developmental or entrepreneurial State if its Public Service is **efficient, effective** and **accountable**. *Efficiency* means delivery on time. *Effectiveness* means that the impact of delivered goods and services empowers people. *Accountability* means that public servants are answerable for their actions. Thus, the Namibian civil service should become professional and meritocratic, and should enjoy a measure of autonomy from political pressures. *Professional autonomy* means self-supervision, responsibility and accountability.

The Office of the Prime Minister's

The President has assigned the Office of the Prime Minister a number of functions. These include the following:

- ✘ Supervising Offices, Ministries and Agencies

- ✘ Leading Government business in Parliament
- ✘ Advising and assisting the President in executing the functions of Government
- ✘ Coordinating public administration, i.e. assuming overall responsibility for the civil service
- ✘ Administering and managing information and communication technology in the Public Service
- ✘ Liaising with the Public Service Commission
- ✘ Bearing responsibility for emergency management, and
- ✘ Any other functions that may from time to time be assigned to the Prime Minister by the President.

These functions may be described in detail as follows:

Supervision of Offices, Ministries and Agencies

- ✘ Coordinating the work of Offices, Ministries and Agencies
- ✘ Monitoring plans, programmes and activities of Offices, Ministries and Agencies in relation to the NDP2, Vision 2030, and the SWAPO Party of Namibia's Election Manifesto
- ✘ Assessing resource requirements of Offices, Ministries and Agencies
- ✘ Evaluating the implementation benchmarks plans and programmes undertaken by Offices, Ministries and Agencies

Parliament

- ✘ Monitoring the work of the Cabinet Committee on Legislation
- ✘ Tracing Bills approved by Cabinet
- ✘ Leading Parliament Business
- ✘ Coordinating the agenda of the SWAPO Caucus
- ✘ Liaising with the SWAPO Party on the legislative agenda
- ✘ Liaising with opposition parties on matters of national importance pertaining to Parliament

Advising and assisting the President

- ✘ Updating the President on issues pertaining to the Public Service and staff welfare
- ✘ Seeking Presidential decisions on issues pertaining to good governance
- ✘ Providing the President with reports on progress regarding the work of Offices, Ministries and Agencies
- ✘ Providing services to the President as required by him

Civil service

- ✘ Coordinating public administration
- ✘ Liaising with representatives of Public Service unions
- ✘ Resolving conflicts
- ✘ Hiring, firing and promoting staff, and overseeing due process in the case of misconduct and transgressions
- ✘ Establishing the National Institute of Public Administration and Management
- ✘ Making the Public Service professional body

Information and communication technology (ICT)

- ✘ Reviewing and developing ICT policy in the Public Service
- ✘ Monitoring policy on ICT equipment and software
- ✘ Promoting e-governance
- ✘ Developing ICT competence in the Public Service
- ✘ Providing assistance to Offices, Ministries and Agencies in respect of their ICT needs
- ✘ Coordinating ICT collaboration

Emergency management

- ✘ Ensuring preparedness for emergency management
- ✘ Mobilising resources
- ✘ Monitoring national emergencies
- ✘ Coordinating the response to emergencies
- ✘ Advising the President and Cabinet on emergencies and possible response strategies

Public Service Commission

- ✘ Liaising with the PSC
- ✘ Tabling PSC reports in Parliament
- ✘ Developing the PSC's budget
- ✘ Studying and reacting to recommendations made by the PSC

Other functions assigned by the President

- ✘ Launching the Anti-corruption Commission
- ✘ Streamlining due process procedures in the Public Service in dealing with transgressions and misconduct
- ✘ Monitoring State-owned enterprises
- ✘ Coordinating activities for employing the youth
- ✘ Monitoring the living conditions of people living with disabilities or HIV/AIDS
- ✘ Coordinating rural development
- ✘ Coordinating political matters
- ✘ Coordinating matters of State
- ✘ Finalise the implementation of Government policy on Black Economic Empowerment

Conclusions

In carrying out these functions, the overriding purpose will be to enhance Namibia's status as a developmental State. In this regard, the Public Service should complement the private sector in augmenting the national capacity for economic development and growth. To achieve this objective, the Public Service should be moulded into a professional cadre – one that will boost the State's capacity to participate in the economy.

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Broad Functional Categories

Political functions

- ✎ Advising the President
- ✎ Carrying out special assignments
- ✎ Providing policy guidance to the Public Service in terms of the ethos of the ruling SWAPO Party

Coordinative functions

- ✎ Monitoring the strategic plans and implementation programmes of the various Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies
- ✎ Coordinating with the private sector and civil society on matters of mutual interest
- ✎ Promoting the concepts of Public-Private Partnership and partnership with civil society

Specialised functions

- ✎ Implementing the Anti-corruption Act
- ✎ Finalising the State-owned Enterprises Bill
- ✎ Managing national emergencies
- ✎ Any other specialised function the President may assign to the Office of the Prime Minister from time to time

Legislative functions

- ✎ Leading Government business in Parliament
- ✎ Coordinating with the SWAPO whip and those of other political parties
- ✎ Participating in the SWAPO Caucus
- ✎ Monitoring the process of legislative approval through the Cabinet, the Cabinet Committee on Legislation, and the certification of Bills
- ✎ Coordinating legislative debate in Parliament

The governance function

Overall, the Office of the Prime Minister should provide guidance to the Public Service in terms of its ethos, operational values and administrative procedures. The ethos of the Public Service derives from the overall political imperatives of the ruling party. Our President in his speeches has emphasised a governance framework underpinned by the following ethos:

Performance

- ✎ Efficiency
- ✎ Effectiveness
- ✎ Accountability

Personal qualities

- ✎ Honesty
- ✎ Commitment
- ✎ Teamwork

Values

- ✎ Transparency
- ✎ Openness
- ✎ Fairness

Public resource management

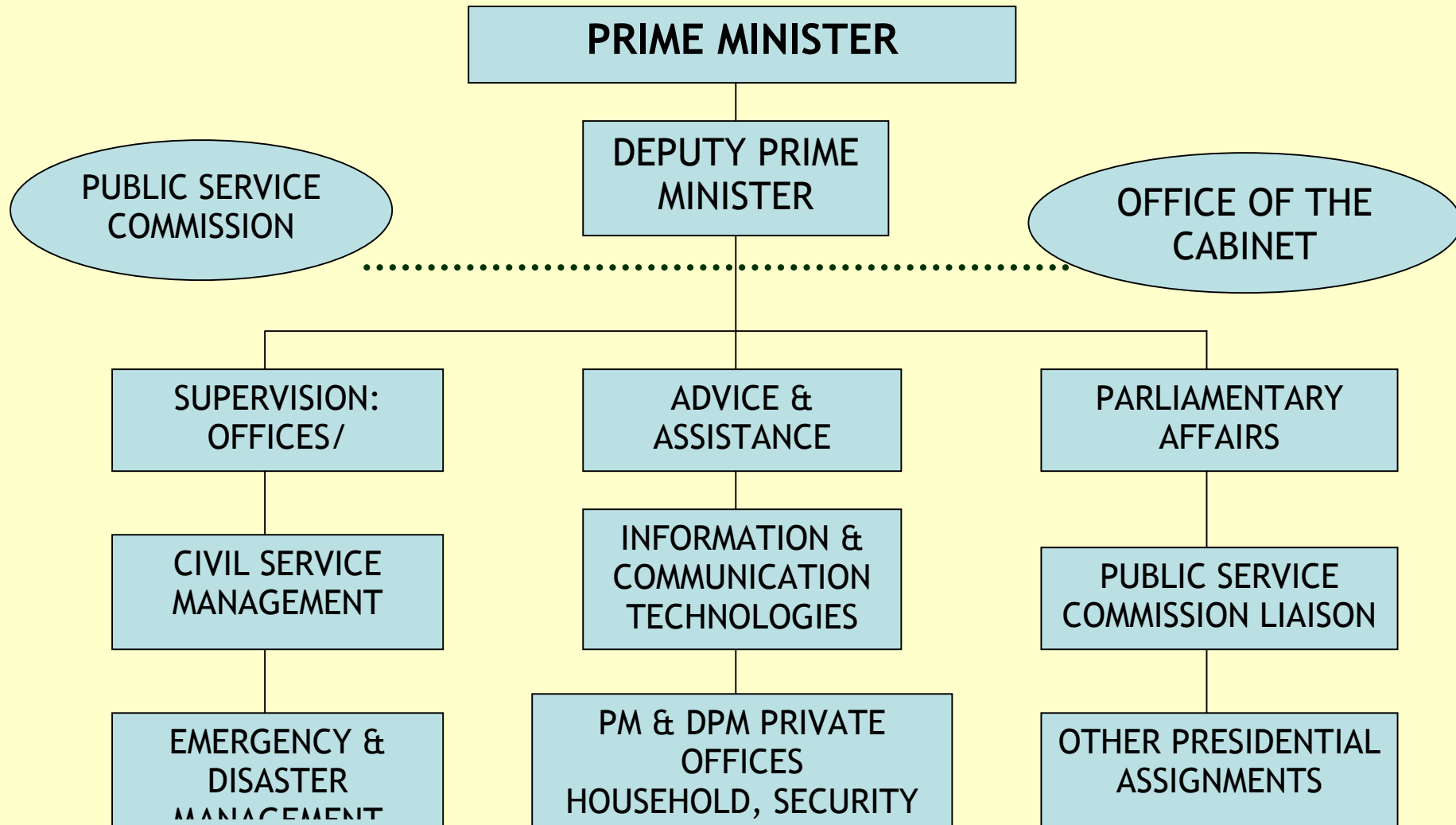
- ✎ Prudence
- ✎ Value for money
- ✎ Respect for public resources

These operational values should guide all public servants' actions. A public servant's performance should, in fact, be judged in terms of his or her adherence to these values.

The operational procedures of the Public Service are defined in the Public Service Act, 1995 (No. 13 of 1995), and associated laws and regulations.

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Broad Functional Outline



**Issued by the
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
April 2005**