

WELCOME STATEMENT BY MRS. BRIDGET KATSRIKU, CHAIRMAN, PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION (PSC) AT THE 8TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF PUBLIC SERVICE CHIEF DIRECTORS, CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND CHAIRPERSONS OF GOVERNING BOARDS/COUNCILS HELD ON 23 -26 APRIL, 2015 AT THE CAPITAL VIEW HOTEL, KOFORIDUA, EASTERN REGION

Madam Chairperson and Hon Minister for Education,

Your Excellency, John Dramani Mahama, the President of the Republic of Ghana, Our Special Guest of Honour,

Hon. Ministers of State,

Hon. Minister for the Eastern Region,

Vice Chairman and OTHER Commissioners of the Public Services Commission (PSC),

The distinguished past Chairman and past Commissioners of the PSC,

Chairpersons of Public Service Governing Boards/Councils,

Chief Directors and Chief Executives of Public Service Organisations,

Distinguished Resource Persons,

Our friends from the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all, a very warm welcome on behalf of the PSC and to say how grateful we are to you for accepting our invitation, once again, to attend this Conference – the 8th in the series.

We are extremely grateful to His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, our President for finding time this year to be with us. Your Excellency, you are welcome, **ANSANKABA**.

I also wish to welcome Hon. Ministers of State who have accepted our invitation to join us this year. This is the first time that we have extended a special invitation to our Honourable Ministers. This is borne out of observations and suggestions from previous conferences, as well as information gathered by the commission, in the course of the discharge of its regulatory and consultative mandate, that there is the urgent need to forge a stronger, better and legitimate working relationship and understanding between Ministers and the Governing Boards and Councils to promote good governance and better service delivery. I am confident that you will find this conference very refreshing and valuable.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, the annual Conference is meant to be a platform for H.E the President to meet and interact with his Chief Executives and Chairpersons of Governing Boards and Councils and to share his vision and any concerns of his administration. The Conference is also intended to afford you the leadership of the Public Service, the opportunity, to deliberate on emerging issues on governance and public administration with a view to exchanging ideas and making recommendations that would lead to improvement in service delivery. It has also, over the years, created other opportunities such as networking amongst participants. Gradually, however, over the years, an additional dimension is emerging. There has been a growing interest by some colleagues to use the platform to share information and or showcase programmes of their agencies that we as leaders, in the public service, need to be aware of.

The Commission welcomes this development since this conference is the only forum of its kind in Ghana today that brings all of us together at one place. However, it is needless to say that the original objective of the conference will be maintained, and the continuous presence of our Presidents encourages us greatly to sustain the idea.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Theme for this year's Conference; "Leading and Managing the Dynamics of Change through the Professionalization of the Public Service" could perhaps not have been chosen at a more opportune time than this year, when the IMF bailout would soon require of us a radical paradigm shift in the way we do business in the public service.

Changing the way we function in order to become more effective and efficient demands that in today's dynamic and fast changing environment, we, the leaders should employ innovative management tools to continuously promote and foster change. Change, as we know, is , a fundamental prerequisite to any serious and bold effort to improving efficient service delivery. The complexities for managing change require managing people who are good at what they do in an ethical, competent and professional manner. Managing the complexities of change in the public service, therefore, calls for professionalism.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, professionalism requires a combination of several attributes in an individual.

A professional is one whose work and conduct are consistently of high quality, and who employs attributes such as knowledge and skills necessary to perform a particular function, coupled with strict adherence to codes of conduct, while adhering to rigorous ethical and moral obligations expected of the profession.

Successfully leading and managing change is therefore contingent upon, amongst other things, working with people who have adequate relevant skills and competences and who are also endowed with the desired personal attributes and behaviours such as integrity, ethics, transparency and accountability, to mention but a few.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with increased pressure on governments to deliver quality services to the citizens , it goes without argument that being professional at what we do as public servants should be one of the prerequisites of delivering quality service. Being professional is being excellent at one's job and this should lead to satisfying one's clients. In the case of the public servants, the satisfaction of our citizens with our services is manifested in the existence of peace and sustainable development.

However, mediocrity, resulting from incompetence and unethical behavior, often breeds unprofessional conduct, corruption and citizens' dissatisfaction, conflict and stunted development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this may seem to be a very simplistic theory but I am convinced that mediocrity and unprofessionalism in public service has a high correlation with our poor public service delivery today.

There is an urgent need for us the leadership of the public service to wake up to our responsibility and to endeavour to change the way we lead.

One obvious thing we should consider doing to ensure high quality public service delivery is to continuously develop the capacities of our employees in the requisite skills and competencies. We must also insist on adherence to the various and applicable codes of conduct, while at the same time we ourselves lead by example. This, I believe will change the current public service landscape, inadequate capacity ,and where indiscipline, unnecessary delays, corruption etc results in unsatisfactory or poor service delivery.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is true that the truth hurts at times .But it is always good to know the truth in order for us to get the opportunity to reflect and change .So if what I am going to say hurts some of you ,please forgive me .The truth is that some of us, as leaders, are failing our country in many ways. One typical example is that we are not committed to making sure that the various mandates of our agencies are achieved in an efficient and effective way. We do not ensure that the performance of our staff is

measured and poor performance is adequately addressed or sanctioned. How many of our governing boards and councils sign performance contracts with our chief executives and hold them accountable? How many of our chief executives set targets for their Directors.

Despite PSC's efforts at calling for the implementation of the new performance management policy and the associated instruments, as well as building capacity to enable you understand and implement the policy, many of the governing boards and managements of some AGENCIES just do not care apparently because they know that nobody will hold them accountable. The Commission will continue its efforts to ensure that this situation is addressed, to ensure that we operate in a public service that we can all be proud of and on which the citizens of this country can depend for better service delivery that they are entitled as of right.

Madam Chairperson, Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, this brings me to one important item on the Conference programme this year, namely "The interface between Governing Boards/Councils and Sector Ministers". As I mentioned earlier, we have for discussion because we at PSC have realized that the interface is often not very clearly understood by some Governing Board/Councils, as well as some Sector Ministers.

We are all aware that sector Ministries are responsible for overseeing the formulation of sectoral policies and implementation by agencies under them. It is also understood that Sector Ministers hold political responsibility for all agencies under them. However, the enabling Acts of most of the agencies, give the Governing Boards/Councils the responsibility for operational policies and strategic direction.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been observed that the working relationship between Governing Boards/Councils, the management and sector Ministers does not appear to have been well understood and or discussed. Some decisions and directives that should have properly been made by one party are sometimes made by another, who does not have the mandate. This has not only been construed as undue interference in one party's role and responsibility, but it has invariably led to serious avoidable administrative, operational and at times, legal implications.

This situation does not augur well for, the development of the sector. And the Commission is convinced that it is about time it was discussed as part of the move towards institutionalization of good governance practice in the public service. Tomorrow, one of our resource persons will examine this subject to afford us the opportunity to discuss and arrive at some workable solution, in a frank, open and dispassionate manner.

To us at the PSC, Governing Boards/Councils and Ministers must work in partnership and harmony to promote productivity of the sector. To foster this partnership, the PSC has developed a Manual on Good Corporate Governance, with the assistance of those of you who participated in the last year's conference in Kumasi, in which amongst other things, the roles of the key stake-holders, including the Minister, Boards and Councils are clearly articulated. This Manual is one of two manuals included in your conference pack this year. I would plead with all of you to make full use of the documents to assist you in the effective performance of your roles and responsibilities.

Hon. Chairperson, Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, the annual forum of the leadership of the public service has been a source of pride and encouragement to the PSC because we have used it not only to discuss trends in public administration, but also to disseminate information on Public Service rules and regulations, to assist you better perform your various roles and responsibilities. In order to assess the impact that our interventions are having in the management of your MDAs, the PSC has begun conducting an annual survey into various aspects of the management of the Public Service.

The Report of the first survey, which is named the "State of the Public Service Report" will be ready before the end of this year. We hope that through the findings of the survey, PSC would be able to recommend actions that each MDA will need to take to improve upon or address its weaknesses. My plea is that you and your staff should participate fully in both the survey and the dissemination of the Report, as well as the implementation of the recommendations. This year we were not satisfied with the response rate of the survey. We hope you will be more committed in providing information to enable us continue to serve you better.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are all aware of the public outcry over the Government wage bill, the payroll and the "ghosts" that have refused to disappear from the payroll. Coupled with other reasons, the PSC will, in May this year begin an exercise to audit the human resource of nine pilot MDAs, and continue the rest next year. The objectives of the HR Audit are :

- to determine the exact number of positions and staffing levels in each MDA, with a view to identifying any idle and excess staff, 'ghost' workers and or any jobs or positions which are no longer required or relevant to the achievement of the mandate of the MDA; and
- to improve establishment controls and impact the integrity of the payroll.

We are also progressing with our Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS), about which you were brief at the Kumasi Conference, The system will go live in July this year. The nine pilot agencies, include the Ghana Health and Ghana Education and the Local Government Services. All being well, the system will be rolled out to the rest of all agencies on GOG payroll next year. When this is done, the challenges of the payroll and ghost names will hopefully be a thing of the past.

Madam Chairperson, Your Excellency, Hon .Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to provoke you with one question which all of us must endeavor provide an answer to. **Why is it that we all appear to have accepted the claim that in this country our policies, are not implemented and that our laws, our rules and regulations are not enforced?** As leaders of this country's public service, let us think about this and together come out with workable suggestions and recommendations.

Before I take my seat, let me once again welcome you all and encourage you to actively participate in the proceedings of the Conference.

One of the reasons why we hold this Conference outside Accra is to get your full participation. Another is to take you from the bustle and hustle of the Accra life and help you de- stress. Therefore, after the proceedings of the day, do take advantage of the spa and massaging facilities, amongst others , here in the hotel to give you a deep, reflective and invigorative rest .

Thank you.