



Federal Republic of Nigeria

**MAINSTREAMING ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE:
THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE**

A PAPER PRESENTED

**AT THE
CONFERENCE ON THE AFRICAN CHARTER AND RELATED REFORMS,
SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA**

3 - 7 OCTOBER, 2005

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Introduction

The crisis of Governance over the past decades in Nigeria has been associated with the collapse of ethical and professional standards in virtually every aspect of our national life. For example, the inability to maintain professional and ethical standards in the Armed Forces resulted in various military coups which adversely affected every stratum of the Nigerian society. It accounted for the near collapse of the educational system, the increased wave of crime, the decadence in the health sector and the pervasive culture of greed, indiscipline and corruption in the Public Service. The resultant effect of compromising on standards is that everybody in the society becomes the ultimate loser judging from the following examples:

- (i) every time a Police Officer receives a bribe to cover up an issue, it encourages disobedience to law which ultimately fuels the breakdown of law and order;
- (ii) health professionals who divert medical supplies from public institutions where they are to be administered to the sick may benefit from the ill-gotten wealth but their actions increase health-related problems in the society and impacts negatively on national productivity; and
- (iii) public Service officers who engage in over-invoicing in connivance with contractors to loot public treasury are diverting resources which should have been deployed to provide physical and social infrastructure to improve the living standards of the people.

Ills of the Public Service and the President's Vision of an ideal Service

The Public Service reflects the state of the nation and no nation has been able to advance beyond its Public Service. The ills of the Nigerian Public Service have been identified at various times. A few years ago, the Ayida Panel, which was instituted to review past Public Service reforms in Nigeria with a view to proffering measures of further re-invigorating the service, identified the major ills of the Service, which needed to be corrected to improve the dynamism and effectiveness of the Civil Service as follows:

- (i) politicization of the top hierarchy of the Civil Service;
- (ii) lack of financial accountability and probity;
- (iii) perpetual breakdown of discipline;
- (iv) virtual institutionalization of corruption at all levels and segments of the Service;
- (v) disregard for rules and regulations;
- (vi) loss of direction;
- (vii) general decline of efficiency and effectiveness.

In order to address these ills, President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, after his inauguration as President of a democratic Republic of Nigeria on May 29, 1999, unfolded his vision of an ideal Civil Service for Nigeria and by inference, an ideal Public Service with the following elements:

- (i) a competent, professional, development-oriented, public-spirited and customer-friendly Civil Service capable of responding effectively and speedily to the needs of the society;
- (ii) a Civil Service with the core values of political neutrality, impartiality, integrity, loyalty, transparency, professionalism and accountability;
- (iii) a Civil Service that is guided by equity, where things are done in the right way based on extant rules and regulations but with room for discretion, which should be exercised in the public interest;
- (iv) creation of a suitable environment where Civil Servants are assured of protection and job security in the faithful discharge of their duties and responsibilities;
- (v) a competitively, well remunerated and innovative Civil Service.

Reinvigoration through Public Service Reform

The reform of the Public Service therefore became the ultimate strategy for repositioning the Service for the realization of this Vision as part of a multi-sectoral approach to promoting good governance, ensuring sustainable democracy and accelerated transformation. Various policy initiatives and legal instruments have been put in place for the effectuation of the multi-sectoral reforms of the present Administration, as encapsulated in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, the medium term development strategy document of the Administration. Two of the core components of the Strategy relate to Public Service Reforms and Anti-corruption Reforms, through the inculcation of a culture of transparency and accountability. The articulation and adoption of the Charter for the Public Service in Africa in Windhoek in 2001 fitted into Nigeria's Public Service Reform Agenda in terms of the objectives of re-professionalizing the Service and ensuring a sound ethical culture in the Public Service. Some of the initiatives for mainstreaming ethics and professional standards in the Public Service form the focus of the rest of this paper.

Initiatives for Mainstreaming Ethics and Professional Standards in the Public Service

(i) Formulation of Overarching Vision and Mission Statements

Prior to the on-going reforms, the Public Service was not driven by visible Vision and Mission Statements. The formulation of an overarching Vision and Mission to drive the Civil Service was therefore undertaken by the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, in the overall context of improving service delivery and improving professional and ethical standards in the Civil Service. Accordingly, the Vision Statement of the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation which translates to the overall vision of the Civil Service is *'to build a Public Service that works for the people'*, while the Mission Statement is *'to build a Public Service that is performance and results-oriented, customer driven, investor friendly, professional, technologically sensitive, accountable, fostering partnerships with all stakeholders and committed to a cautious improvement in Government business and the enhancement of overall national productivity'*. Various initiatives are being undertaken to ensure the commitment of the Civil Service to the deliverables enunciated in these Statements.

In recognition of the need to implant this practice service-wide, each Ministry, Department and Agency in the Civil Service is now driven by its Vision and Mission Statements which were democratically formulated within the organization and have become the standard for measuring performance.

(ii) Institutionalization of Service Charters

Part III of the Charter on the Public Service in Africa on **Rules Governing Relation between the Public Service and the users** contain many provisions which make it obligatory for the Public Service to render services to the public efficiently and effectively with due diligence to the rights of the customers. In order to fulfill this obligation, all MDAs in Nigeria today have a contract with their customers embodied in their respective Service Charters which they must discharge and which also form the basis of measuring their effectiveness in terms of quality and timely delivery of services. The Charter spells out the mandate areas of the organization, its range of customers, the range of services provided, quality expectations, schedules and time of delivery, avenues for lodging complaints and of seeking redress, among others. Our efforts in this direction are illustrated with examples of from the Nigerian Immigration Service and the Federal Ministry of Works.

(a) Nigeria Immigration Service

The major functions of the Nigeria Immigration Service include:

- controlling and monitoring movement of persons in and out of the country;
- patrolling the nation's borders in order to control movement of persons in and out of the country and to ensure security of borders;
- issuing various types of travel documents;
- granting visas and permits to enable foreigners enter, reside and work in the country;
- investigating cases of abuses of immigration laws and regulations.

The Nigeria Immigration Service probably impacts more on the public in the area of issuance of passports. Before the on-going Reforms, it was apparent that the public was poorly served and this was attributed to a number of factors some of which include:

- (i) poorly trained staff who are unwilling to communicate with customers;
- (ii) lack of accurate information to guide customers about the process of obtaining passports;
- (iii) corrupt staff demanding more than the prescribed fee from prospective customers for passport procurement;
- (iv) scarcity of passport booklets; and
- (v) general poor working conditions.

The cumulative effect of this was that, on the average, it used to take between four weeks to three months for a prospective customer to be issued a passport. There were also frequent cases of multiple acquisitions of passports arising from a poor data base and photo substitution on passports.

Working under the guiding principles of its Service Charter, the Nigeria Immigration Service made significant improvements in meeting customers' satisfaction through the following approaches:

- provision of information to the public on the guidelines and procedure for the issuance of passports;
- admonition to the public not to exchange cash with any official of the passport office to stem corruption and theft of government funds;
- display of notices in conspicuous places providing comprehensive information on the procedure for obtaining passports and affirming the rights of the public to be well served;
- increased capacity building of staff, especially on the technical aspects of the job;
- promotion of attitudinal change for improved customer relations;
- ensuring constant supply and replenishment of machine readable passport booklets and accompanying forms by entering into an agreement with the Nigerian Security, Printing and Minting Company. The agreement has complementary provisions for supply of computers and other passport issuing equipment, vehicles for moving passport booklets and equipment to the State Commands as well as generators for ensuring uninterrupted service when there are outages;
- institution of measures at various stages of passport processing to avoid delays and to make officers alive to their responsibilities to deliver timely services;
- provision of comfortable waiting rooms at various passport offices equipped with CCTV;

- setting up of public relation units headed by senior officers with proven integrity and good human relations to attend to enquiries and complaints;
- involvement of the Assistant Comptroller-General (Passports), at the service headquarters and passport control officers, at the State Command level, in dealing with complaints received from the public, involving sanctioning erring officers as deterrence to others;
- carrying of name tags by all officers in the passport offices for easy identification of officers by the public so that officers can be held accountable for their actions; and
- procurement and placement of suggestion/ complaints boxes at strategic locations in passport offices as one of the measures of obtaining feedback from the public.

The result is that it now takes not more than 72 hours to obtain traveling passport in Nigeria.

(b) **Federal Ministry of Works**

The Federal Ministry of Works is organized into the Departments of Highways Planning and Design, Highways Construction and Rehabilitation, Engineering Services, Administration and Supplies, Planning, Research and Statistics and Finance and Accounts. It also has functional and supervisory relationship with the Office of Surveyor General of the Federation and Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA). As one of the key Ministries in Nigeria impacting significantly on the public, in view of its crucial importance in the delivery of infrastructure, it was important that the Ministry should log on to the reform process and embrace the new culture of service delivery. This important lesson was not lost to the Ministry as it developed its SERVICOM strategy based on the need to provide customer satisfaction in its key operational activities. A comprehensive checklist on core performance criteria was also developed in the following five focus areas:

- setting standards and ensuring exceptional performance;
- being actively engaged with customers, partners and staff;
- being fair and accessible;
- continuously developing and improving service;
- using resources effectively and imaginatively;

In order to deliver services better and faster, the Ministry formulated new vision and mission statements and prided itself as “the-Ministry-that-works” in line with the new orientation of total commitment to service delivery improvement. Working through the Ministerial SERVICOM Unit, within the Ministry which liaises directly with the Minister and Permanent Secretary, some of the other specific initiatives on service delivery in the Ministry include:

- providing information on the range of services offered by the Ministry and the clientele served;
- promoting attitudinal change by encouraging officers to be increasingly responsive to public demands and monitoring staff performance;
- letting the public to know who to hold responsible for the condition of Federal Roads,
- providing information to the public on the profile of contractors executing road projects and the value of contracts awarded;
- providing a directory containing the names, contact addresses and telephone numbers of the two Ministers of the Ministry, the Permanent

- Secretary and Controller of Works in each State of the Federation so that these key officials could be reached directly by the public;
- directing contractors of major projects to liaise with village heads and other important groups within the beneficiary communities with a view to involving the communities in the non technical aspects of the job, to foster a culture of participatory monitoring of job execution;
- erecting directional signs at the three main blocks of the Ministry and providing a map at every block for proper guidance of the public in relating with the Ministry;
- providing table name tags and labeling of all doors for easy identification of staff and to ascertain the actual number of staff on the pay roll as well as displaying each individual staff schedule in each room in order to hold every staff accountable for his or her actions;
- enhancing the work environment including providing a staff canteen; and
- creating a SERVICOM Sub-Unit in each Department of the Ministry and in the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA) working through the Ministerial SERVICOM Unit in enforcing compliance with the obligations and rights contained in the respective service charters drawn-up by the Departments and FERMA.

(iii) **Professionalization of the Service**

Article 21 of the Charter states that ‘professionalism resides in **how skillfully and how well a Public Service employee performs his/her functions and duties and that it also manifests itself in the Public Service employee’s behaviour at work and in her/her constant effort to improve, reinforce and update his/her knowledge, refine the skills that are necessary for carrying out his/her tasks and enhancing his/her output and productivity.** Inferred from this definition are dual responsibilities; the first on the part of the employee to commit himself/herself to a sustained programme/initiative of self development and the second, the state as the employer with the responsibility of providing the enabling environment.

Presently, various approaches are being undertaken to promote professionalism in the Civil Service. These include:

(a) **‘Rightsizing the Service’**

Through the activation of hitherto unapplied Human Resource Management (HRM) rules, the Public Service is being right sized based on some defined criteria to weed out those who are not professionally, technically and ethically competent to continue to remain therein. The relevant criteria which are being applied for staff severance as it relates to professionalism are:

- officers adjudged grossly inefficient in the performance of their duties;
- officers with unsatisfactory character;
- officers without entry qualifications;
- officers without mandatory skills to enter into their cadres and who have not improved themselves since joining the Service; and

- officers who failed promotion examination on three consecutive occasions.

A total of 8,916 officers are to be severed using the above-mentioned criteria out of an overall number of 30,056 already identified to be exited from the Service using all other criteria.

(b) **Restructuring of Ministries**

The restructuring of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) is also being intensified and the restructuring exercise has been concluded in a few Ministries. The Federal Ministry of Finance, one of the pilot Ministries under reform, represents a success story in restructuring with the overall goal of fully professionalizing the Ministry. Prior to the on-going reform, the professional staff in the Ministry constituted less than 15% of the entire staff population. Some Technical Departments were headed by generalists rather than those with relevant academic and professional qualifications. Under the on-going reform, the Ministry has been repositioned to ensure that only those with the relevant experience and qualifications are retained while the excess staff is being deployed to areas where they can function optimally based on their qualifications and work experience. The functions of the Ministry of Finance have also been enlarged to include oversight responsibility for Oil and Gas Management and Customs. In order to fill the capacity gaps occasioned by the restructuring exercise, key staff of the Ministry has benefited from several training programmes locally and overseas, rare and needed competencies are being injected into the Ministry in its key mandate areas. Information Technology applications are being promoted, remodeling of work operations is being carried out and staff is being provided more opportunities for self advancement.

(c) **Service Wide Capacity Building**

At the level of government, there is awareness of the need to sharpen the skills of Public Service officers service-wide. This is being done through a mix of strategies including:

- repositioning of existing training institutions such as the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), Badagry, the Centre for Management Development, Federal Training Centres, etc;
- establishment of the Civil Service College in Abuja to focus on both Middle level Management and Executive Management Training and Development;
- strengthening the capacity of the Management Development Office (MDO) in the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation for effective discharge of its oversight functions in the area of service-wide staff training and development;
- adequately harnessing the opportunities provided in the area of training and development through the avenues of International cooperation as well as partnership with development partners such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, World bank, Department for International Development (DFID), etc; and
- realigning training curricular and current requirements in terms of needs service-wide.

(iv) **Review of Performance Management System**

A review of the Performance Management System is being undertaken to ensure the transformation of the Service from an input-output-process system to a result-oriented performance system and to spin-off other developments such as systematic training, process re-engineering and organization-customer harmony as well as evolvment of a pay regime that aligns performance with reward.

(v) **Review of Public Service Rules and Regulations**

A professional Public Service operates on the basis of rules, regulations and procedures to ensure orderly conduct and uniform standards. A major review of the rules and regulations was done in Year 2000 but this was considered inadequate for meeting the imperative of fast tracking the on-going reform of the Public Service. Accordingly, a 13-member Presidential Committee on the Review and Revision of Public Service Rules, Regulations and Procedures was constituted on Thursday, 3rd February, 2005 comprising two Ministers of Cabinet Rank, 5 servicing and one retired Permanent Secretary, a Commissioner from the Federal Civil Service Commission, Accountant-General of the Federation, Auditor-General for the Federation, the Director-General, Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) and the Director-General, Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR). The Committee which was chaired by the Principal Secretary to the President and Permanent Secretary, State House, Mr. Stephen Oronsaye, OON, had the following as its Terms of Reference:

- (i) to immediately work out transitional arrangements to facilitate on-going Public Service Reforms, especially in the areas of recruitment/appointments, deployment, discipline, performance management and incentives and voluntary exit incentives, among others;
- (ii) to study, analyze and review the existing January 2000 Public Service Rules, Financial Regulations, circulars and other extant regulations and to bring them in line with the current reforms of government, taking into account, recent policies like monetization of fringe benefits, the Pensions Reform Act and Public Procurement Bill now before the National Assembly;
- (iii) to incorporate into the Revised Public Service Rules and Financial Regulations, other relevant rules and procedures that will ensure enforcement of compliance, strict observance of transparency, justice, equity and accountability in the conduct of government business;
- (iv) to make appropriate recommendations that will ensure that the application of the Public Service Rules and the Financial Regulations on public officers is consistent with the provisions of the Constitution; and
- (v) to make any other recommendations on the Public Service Rules and Financial Regulations as may be deemed necessary.

In April 2005, the Presidential Committee submitted an Interim Report to the President containing provisions on Appointments, Recruitment and Deployment, Performance Management and Incentives, Discipline and Exit from the Service, pending the conclusion of its assignment. Following the approval of the Report by the President, many of the

recommendations are currently being implemented, especially those on exit from the Service, which had been mentioned earlier. The Committee is in due course, to submit to the President, for consideration and approval, the revised Public Service Rules and Financial Regulations as well as other key recommendations on each of its Terms of Reference. The revised rules and regulations have already been aligned with the underlying principles and practices for promoting the effectiveness of the Public Service as the engine of government for the realization of the goal of good governance and sustainable democracy, as enunciated in the Charter for the Public Service in Africa, which they are also meant to strengthen.

(vi) **Promotion of Ethical Conduct**

The promotion of a sound ethical culture, in both the public service and the enlarged Nigerian society, has been the driving force underpinning every action of government and its agencies since the inception of the present administration in Nigeria. As enshrined in the Public Service Charter for Africa, ethical culture manifests in an officer, when among others, he performs his/her **duty efficiently, displays discipline, dignity, integrity, equity, impartiality, fairness, public spiritedness and courtesy in his/ her actions.** The Civil Service handbook in Nigeria prescribes the code of ethics in government business as **discipline, loyalty, honesty courage, courtesy, cooperation, tact, industry, tidiness, helpfulness, kindness.** On attitude to public funds, the code emphasizes **frugality, conscientiousness** in collecting **government revenue, avoidance of waste** of public funds on ill-advised purchases, especially near the end of the financial year and preparing appropriate financial reports. The code emphasizes efficiency, which comes through training and advises the judicious use of authority by the public servant in a way that promotes National interest.

The sources of authority available to the public servant are identified as follows:

- (i) constitution of the Federal Republic
- (ii) Acts of the National Assembly
- (iii) Government Procurements and Publication
- (iv) Public Service Rules
- (v) Financial Regulations
- (vi) Government Notices in Gazettes
- (vii) Circular, Letters from Ministries and departments
- (viii) Official Notices and Instructions in Ministries or Division within Ministries/ Departments

Some of the strategies being implemented to promote ethical conduct in the public service include:

- (i) creation and strengthening of anti-corruption agencies for strict enforcement of anti-corruption laws;
- (ii) creation of more institutional platforms for enforcing standards
- (iii) initiating reforms to combat corruption and promote transparency and accountability;
- (iv) balancing the powers of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and the Federal Civil Service Commission in the area of discipline;
- (v) empowerment of the top hierarchy of the service to set the moral tone in ethical conduct;
- (vi) creation of African Peer Review Mechanism Desks in MDAs.

(a) **Creation and Strengthening of Anti-Corruption Agencies**

The major anti-corruption agencies created within the life time of the present administration are the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences

Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). The third Agency, the Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal were set-up by the Federal Government as extra-Ministerial Departments under the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, Cap 56, LFN 1990. The Code of Conduct Bureau was set up to assist public officers to be accountable and to adopt transparent practices in carrying out their duties. Public Officers, as defined in the Public Officers Handbook published by the Code of Conduct Bureau, include the following:

- (i) the President of the Federation
- (ii) the Vice-President of the Federation
- (iii) the President and Deputy President of the State, Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Houses of Assembly of states, and all members and staff of Legislative house.
- (iv) Governors and Deputy Governors of States.
- (v) Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justices of the Supreme Court, President and Justices of the Court of Appeal, all other judicial officers and all staff of law.
- (vi) Attorney-General of the Federation and Attorney General of each State.
- (vii) Ministers of the Government of the Federation and Commissioners of the Government of the States.
- (viii) Chief of Defence Staff, Chief of Army Staff, Chief of Naval Staff, Chief of Air Staff and all members of the armed forces of the Federation
- (ix) Inspector-General of Police, Deputy Inspector-General of Police and all members of the Nigeria Police Force and to her government security agencies established by law:
- (x) Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Permanent Secretaries, Directors-General and all other persons in the civil service of the Federation or of the State.
- (xi) Ambassadors, High Commissioners and other officers of Nigerian Missions abroad.
- (xii) Chairman, members and staff of the Code of Conduct Bureau and Code of Conduct Tribunal.
- (xiii) Chairman, members and staff of local government councils
- (xiv) Chairman and members of the Boards or other governing bodies and staff of statutory corporations and of companies in which the federal or State Government has controlling shares.
- (xv) All staff of universities, colleges and institutions owned and financed by the federal or state government or local government councils.
- (xvi) Chairman, members and staff of permanent commissions or councils appointed of full time basis.

The standards of behaviour expected of public officers are also clearly spelt out in the handbook and officers who violate these provisions are constantly being sanctioned in line with the law. The code of ethics for public officers, as enshrined in the handbook further reinforce and enlarge similar codes contained in the Civil Service Handbook.

The Code of Conduct Bureau has shown a great deal of effectiveness in enforcing anti-corruption laws in line with its jurisdictional powers, judging from the increasing number of public officers who have been put on trial for various offences and many others who are currently being investigated for various acts of violations.

The establishment of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) through the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000, which was signed into law on 13 June 2000, and the formal take off in 2003 of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), through the enactment of the Economic and

Financial Crimes Act in 2002, have further boosted the Obasanjo Administration's sustained war on corruption. Through committed and inspirational leadership, the two agencies have been particularly effective in the fight against corruption. In the case of the ICPC, from September 2000 till date, it has received about 1500 petitions on corrupt practices by public officers and a considerable number of these allegations have been investigated. Forty nine cases of corruption which involve about 104 suspects are being prosecuted involving former Ministers, serving Court judges, top lawyers who have been decorated Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), business magnates, Chief Medical Directors, Local Government Chairmen, high ranking policemen, State Security Officers, Immigration Officers and Permanent Secretaries. Other steps taken by ICPC in taking the war against corruption to new frontiers include;

- coordinating the establishment and operation of Anti-Corruption and Transparency Units (ACTUs) in 145 Government Ministries, Parastatals, Departments and Agencies;
- carrying out studies on the systems, practices and procedures of 44 public sector organizations, located in various States of the Federation, with a view to identifying the dysfunctionalities in the systems and the work processes of these sampled organizations which encourage the acts of corruption in order to address them;
- carrying out public education and enlightenment campaigns on the ills of corruption with special focus on public sector institutions and youths; and
- developing a National Values Curriculum in collaboration with the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council for implementation at all levels of the educational system

The great impact the EFCC has made since its establishment is reflected in the common saying in Nigeria today that **'the fear of EFCC is the beginning of wisdom'**. Operating under a philosophy of **zero tolerance to corruption**, the EFCC has been very effective in coordinating the enforcement of the following laws:

- Money Laundering (Prohibition Act 2004)
- The Advanced Free Fraud (and other related offences) Act 1995;
- The Failed Banks (recovery of debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks Act 1994, as amended;
- The banks and other Financial Institutions Act 19991, as amended;
- Miscellaneous Offences Act 1983;
- Other complimentary laws on economic and financial crimes, including the criminal code and penal code.

Through the strict enforcement of these laws, the EFCC was able to secure nine convictions on cases of Advanced Free Fraud, Cyber Fraud, and Money laundering and petroleum pipeline vandalism. Many highly placed officials including Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Governors, key functionaries of the legislature and judicial arms of government at the Federal, State and Local Government levels are been investigated by the EFCC so that formal charges can be raised against them once it is proved that they have cases to answer. The EFCC has also extended the war against Corruption beyond Nigeria's borders, especially those related to money laundering for which it is getting support from other international agencies. The success of these agencies has sent a positive signal to the public service that the era of compromising on the ethical standard of the Service is for ever gone.

(b) **Creation of other Institutional Platforms for Maintaining Ethical Standards**

The **Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU)** was created to enforce standards in the area of public sector procurement. Prior to the establishment

of the Unit, the procurement system was ridden with corruption leading to huge losses to government while some unscrupulous public sector officials fed fat on leakages from the system. The procurement system has now been reformed which provides, among others, for open and competitive tender arrangement for government contracts. In the current system, a mechanism has also been put in place to detect and punish over invoicing of government contracts. Unlike before, tenders are made open to all bidders while contract awards also undergo a process of rigorous review, oversight and certification by the BMPIU. This has curtailed 'looting' of public funds and ensured value-for-money in all government transactions. Increasingly, the malaise of uncompleted capital projects is also becoming a thing of the past because all properly packaged contracts that pass the acid tests of certification, now receive complementary funds from the budget office for their implementation.

The creation of the **Bureau of Public Service Reforms in 2003** and its formal establishment in 2004 has also provided an institutional platform for addressing issues of professionalism and ethical standards in the Public Service as key concerns of the on-going Public Service Reforms. The Bureau drives Public Service Reforms and also serves as the coordinating and expert Secretariat of all sectoral reforms. The centrality of ethics to reform is underscored in the Bureau's **Vision Statement** which reads:

*“Public Governance by a Public Service **Driven by Public Officers of Impeccable Character and Integrity**, Custodians of National Interests and Values, Experts in the Business of Government and the Management of Resources and Talents, for Efficient Service Delivery and Accelerated National Development to Meet the Challenges of a Globalized World”.*

(c) **Initiating Complementary Reforms to Combat Corruption, Promote Transparency and Accountability**

The key initiatives in this area include **reforming the bureaucracy** to reduce the incentive for corrupt practices, **monetization of fringe benefits** to eliminate wasteful public expenditure practices to bring all hitherto hidden costs of maintaining government and public officers within the annual budget, instituting **mechanisms for ensuring flatter administrative structures** in MDAs and **redesigning work processes** to reduce avoidable delays which fuel unethical practices. Government is also supporting the passage of the **Right to Information Bill** to provide access to government information and records as a way of promoting openness. The **Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI)**, is being implemented to make the oil and gas industries more accountable and transparent. The **privatization programme** of Government is also being carried out more transparently.

(d) **Maintaining Appropriate balance between the Oversight Functions of the Federal Civil Service Commission and MDAs in Staff Discipline.**

The on-going reform is endeavoring to strike a balance between the rights of MDAs to discipline erring staff while also recognizing the jurisdictional rights of the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) as the apex body on discipline. Modalities for achieving synergy between the duos are being worked out to ensure appropriate roles for MDAs and FCSC on the issue of discipline. This is to ensure that erring officers are disciplined promptly, so as to serve as deterrence to others, rather than what currently prevails in which an officer who has

committed an offence remains unpunished because of several lapses in the system. These lapses are of course, now being examined and corrected.

(e) **Empowerment of the Top Hierarchy of the Public Service**

The top hierarchy of the public service comprising Permanent Secretaries, Directors-General and Chief Executives of Federal Agencies are constantly being challenged to set the moral tone in order to build a sound ethical culture in their respective organizations. In this regard, several retreats and workshops were organized for them to be empowered to face this challenge. One of the significant retreats was an **Executive Training Workshop on Organizational Integrity and Strategic Corruption Control** which was jointly organized by the Bureau of Public Service Reforms and the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU) from 10th – 13th September, 2004, in partnership with Transparency International. At the end of the Workshop, the participants, comprising all Federal Permanent Secretaries, select Directors-General, Chief Executives of Parastatals and Directors of Key Agencies, renewed their commitment to fight corruption more vigorously.

The other was a two-week Commonwealth Secretariat Facilitated Study Programme with the theme '**Purpose and Propriety in the Public Service**' organized for all Federal Permanent Secretaries in London, the United Kingdom. Participants attended the programme in three batches, with the first batch of participants flagging off the process on 22 November, 2004 while the last batch of participants completed the programme on 13th May, 2005. One of the objectives of the programme was to contribute efforts at improving ethics, accountability and transparency so as to strengthen the fight against corruption. Similar workshops and training programme have been extended to the middle-level and other ranks of the enlarged public service in Nigeria

(f) **Creation of APRM Desks in MDAs**

In recognition of the Role of the Public Service in the achievement of the goals and objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, (NEPAD), African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Desks are being set up in all Federal Ministries, Department and Agencies to, among others, promote the values of transparency, accountability and anti-corruption for the achievement of the larger aims of good governance, sustainable democracy and economic emancipation. A Peer Review Mechanism which will rank all MDAs in terms of their effectiveness, using criteria which include public perception on corruption and institutionalization of mechanisms for dealing with accountability and ethical issues, is also being contemplated under Public Service Reform. The Bureau of Public Service reforms coordinates the APRM desks in the MDAs in its APRM Department under the APRM Director, Public Service.