



**PUBLIC SECTOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS PROMOTING  
PROFESSIONALISM AND IMPLEMENTING THE PUBLIC SERVICE CHARTER  
AT NATIONAL LEVEL: ROLES, FACILITATING AND INHIBITING FACTORS  
AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Charter for Public service in Africa aims to ensure that effective services of the highest quality are provided by making optimal use of resources and through use of best practices in the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). According to the Charter, fundamental values of a public servant shall be based on a Public Service rooted in professionalism and ethics. Professionalism is not a technical skill but a set of internalized character strengths, attitudes and values directed towards high quality service to others through one's work. According to CIM (2002) professional discharge of duties entails application of expertise and judgement; the motivation and direction of others and a positive contribution to the achievement of the objectives of the organization.

*'One cannot empower others if they are not themselves empowered'*

Human Resource (HR) managers cannot promote professionalism if they are not professional or if they do not believe in professionalism. Their commitment to empower themselves must stem from a belief in and acceptance of the goals and values of the Charter and of their organization so that it may translate into willingness to exert effort towards its accomplishment (King & Erhard, 1997). The HRM professionals may promote professionalism through networking to empower, connect people and encourage sharing of knowledge about issues that are important and to improve relationships and communication with other departments and thus help in the integration of functions for better results. They must encourage a shift from thinking of experts as the primary source of knowledge to thinking that everyone engaged in work tasks has knowledge someone else could use to advantage (Dixon, 2000). By adopting systemic thinking, they will learn better about the interdependence within the organization so that they know what keeps their non-HR colleagues awake at night and then decide and market what HR can do to help them sleep more easily.

HR managers' roles in the implementation of the Charter entail playing all the four roles of: employee advocate; functional expert; human capital developer and strategic partner and a leader in HR issues effectively (Ulrich & Brockbank, 2005, Martin & Hertick 2007). Use of ICT would facilitate speedy transactions; enhance organizational cost effectiveness and encourage a performance driven culture (Truss, 2003, Kessler et.al., 2000 and Farnham & Horton, 2000). They must safeguard the psychological contract.

The factors likely to facilitate HR managers in their roles include: Strategic positioning of HR their ability to raise the profile of HR in the organization; capacity to act as strategists and to direct the thinking within the organization from the traditional 'doctor-type' thinking to the more innovative 'architect-type' of thinking and their ability to provide transformative leadership in HR issues. They must influence the rest of the organization, not through driving performance against a pre-determined vision but by creating a process of sharing the wisdom of many different and contrary perspectives (Stacey, 2007). They must keep updating their knowledge and skills required for their roles in the organization and must demonstrate value in what they do by operating in a way that increases public value generated by their organizations (Cheal (2006),.

The factors that may inhibit HR managers to perform their roles include the public sector 'heritage' that has coloured people's perception of HR roles; traditional lack of HR visibility in organizations and their inability to keep other departments informed of what they do. Other factors include *inconsistencies between tradition and best practice* to pursue, inability to balance between operational and strategic roles and the not so cordial relationship with senior

managers who do not often involve HR managers in mainstream decision making and planning making it difficult to use HR managers to leverage the business perspective (Becker, Huselid & Ulrich, 2001). Lack of alignment between national priorities, Government policy, planning and budgeting and delivery and implementation leaves HRM hanging in the balance. HR issues tend to be an “add on” in reforms in the Public sector. It is also doubtful if it is possible to transfer the body of sound HR practice in the private sector to the public sector. Studies (Agere & Mendoza, 1999) have shown that social values of integrity, honesty, dependability, helpfulness, impartiality and fairness etc. are fast disappearing from the public service in Africa and this is a challenge to building an ethical service.

There is more rhetoric than reality in the area of HRM, for example between HRM theory and practice; between what the HRM function says it is doing and that practice as perceived by employees and between what senior management believes to be the role of HR professionals and the role it actually plays (Gratton L. & Hailey, V. H. 1999). Shifting towards more strategic models of HRM require strategic actions at National level which may include: re-positioning HR organization, its structures, processes and boundaries and decentralizing policy making so that organizations can ‘Think globally but act locally’ by developing their own HR systems that support alignment with organizational strategies to deliver generic outcomes of HR in strategy execution, administrative efficiency, employee contribution and capacity for change (Ulrich, 2001). There is need for *a Paradigm shift in training and development to focus more on changing mindsets and* Africa should move towards competency-based training and be proactive in the use of other developmental initiatives like coaching, mentoring; job shadowing; internships etc. *Continuing Research should inform policy to avoid putting new wine in old wineskins and to inform the adoption of innovative HRM practices from the private sector so that they have similar positive impact on performance in the public service* (Pichault, 2007).

## **Introduction**

The Charter for Public service in Africa was adopted at the Third Pan African Conference of Ministers responsible for the Civil service in Windhoek, Namibia in 2001. It defined a framework to guide Public Services in Africa in taking such legislative, regulatory, technical and practical measures as would be *necessary to make adjustments to the way in which its services are organized and operated in order to respond on a sustainable basis to changing needs and the demands of the public at large. Article 10 of the Charter provides that Public service in Africa shall ensure that effective services of the highest quality are provided by making optimal use of resources at its disposal and must be informed by best practices in the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)*

As the public sector modernizes to become more efficient and cost effective, the strategic importance of human resources and their management continues to receive increased attention. Research by academics including Huselid (1995), Ruona&Gibson,( 2004) has provided convincing evidence of the link between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and the profitability and economic value to an organization in the private sector. This has led to increasing acceptance of the fact that HR professionals play a key role in making a business successful (Ulrich, 1998, Cooke, 2001). This acceptance has spread to the public sector which now refers to the strategic role its human resource is likely to play in the achievement of national goals and objectives.

The Public Service Charter states that fundamental values of a public servant shall be based on a public service rooted in professionalism and ethics. It defines professionalism as residing in how skilfully and how well a public servant performs their duties. Professionalism is therefore not a technical skill. It has been described as a set of internalized character strengths, attitudes and values directed towards high quality service to others through one's work. A professional views their work as a statement of personal commitment to excellence of performance and has respect for experience of others and an on-going need to learn and improve. The mark of a professional is the ability to maintain and enhance professional competences throughout a career. According to the CIM (2002), professional discharge of duties entails application of expertise and judgement; the motivation and direction of others and a positive contribution to the achievement of the objectives of the organization.

This paper describes how public sector human resource managers can promote professionalism in the implementation of the Public Service Charter. The author adopts the stance that implementation of the Public Service Charter is about modernizing the public service to make it more efficient and effective and suggests factors that can facilitate or inhibit HR managers in this role. The author concludes by proposing strategic actions which, if taken would help human resource professionals to play their rightful roles in making the implementation of the Africa Public service Charter more meaningful.

### **Human Resource Managers promoting Professionalism**

According to the CIM (2002), professional discharge of duties entails application of expertise and judgement; the motivation and direction of others and a positive contribution to the achievement of the objectives of the organization. The key role of human resource managers in the public sector is to ensure that organizations meet their goals and objectives through their employees. This means ensuring that organizations have the right employees at the right time in the right deployments and that these employees are empowered with the requisite

competences, skills and attitudes to do what they are expected to do in their work. Their role in promoting professionalism entails making sure that they are professional themselves before influencing others to do the same. *'One cannot empower others if they are not themselves empowered'*. Similarly, one cannot promote professionalism if they are not or do not respect professionalism.

This *'log in your eye paradigm'* implies that HR managers must focus on their practice before they can attempt to assist others. Through a heightened sense of self-autonomy and self control, empowerment will offer the HR professionals prospects of sustaining good performance and reinforce their dedication to learning, growing and self engagement (Erstad, 1997). Only then can they role model the art of being a professional. They should ensure they have the expertise and skills in HR and can apply this expertise in the performance of their work and continue to pursue their own growth processes and to seek development opportunities to surface, experiment, challenge and adapt to their work expectations (Barker & Camarata, 1998). Their commitment to empower themselves must stem from a belief in and acceptance of the goals and values of the Charter and of their organization so that it may translate into willingness to exert effort towards its accomplishment (King & Erhard, 1997).

The HRM professionals must collaborate effectively through use of the existing networks and also establish others to empower themselves, connect people and encourage sharing of knowledge about issues that are important. Networking for them should be an ongoing process of reaching out and getting in touch with other managers and employees to get tasks done. This is because collaborative people are always thinking of new patterns of working and connecting. By promoting networking, HR managers will be able to participate in setting standards for all cadres working at various levels in the organization. They will improve relationships with other departments and also improve communication within the organization and thus help in the integration of functions for better results. Their responsibility to others in the organization is to ensure that others are aware of their responsibilities for human resource management issues and to encourage and assist them to develop their potential for it. By becoming nodes in the network, HR professionals will be able to tap into available knowledge and increase their effectiveness.

Business impact is less about title, position or hierarchy and more of mindset, influence and skills. Instead of being confined by the chain of command, HR managers can go directly to sources of knowledge whether inside or outside the organization (Savage, 1996). Professionalism will entrench itself only when people in organizations accept that one does not have to be a senior manager or necessarily an expert to shape policy or to share knowledge in the organization. HR managers must encourage a shift from thinking of experts as the primary source of knowledge to thinking that everyone engaged in work tasks has knowledge someone else could use to advantage (Dixon, 2000).

According to Wenger (2000), the knowledge that drives an organization does not reside in its formal procedures but in communities of practitioners who on a daily basis negotiate meaning. Though people are given job titles and assigned to separate departments, work is essentially a social process; the practice of which brings different functions together to fulfil a mandate and goals. This is the thinking in the private sector where, though organizations are hierarchical just like in the public service, work processes have been used to 'flatten' the structures to enhance efficiency and increase productivity.

Professionalism for HR managers is about adopting systemic thinking to learn better about the interdependence within the organization. They must ensure they know what keeps their non-HR colleagues awake at night and then decide and market what HR can do to help them sleep more easily. They must reach out to other managers to show them what HRM can do for them towards achieving their goals and objectives, HRM must adopt a more proactive role and not to limit itself to a reactive and administrative role through interpreting and applying government rules.

### **HR managers Role in Implementation of the Charter**

*'Fundamentally, man is the key to all problems not money. Funds are valuable only when used by trained, experienced and devoted men and women..... Dag Hammarskjold-UN Secretary-General 1953-1963*

The underlying aim of the Charter is to reconcile the perspectives of the citizen as customer with those of the Government and the Public employee. The Charter has clear obligations on employees to use their competences and professionalism to offer efficient services. The role of HR managers is to provide services to internal customers. Successful provision of HR services requires HR managers to play all the four roles of: employee advocate; functional expert; human capital developer and strategic partner and a leader in HR issues (Ulrich & Brockbank, 2005, Martin & Hertick 2007). As employee advocates, the HR managers should care for and listen to the employee but respond with an eye on stakeholder (citizens) interests so that they communicate only what is required for value addition to the stakeholder in order to promote customer focus and responsiveness in service delivery. Changing work conditions are increasing civil servants' vulnerability. Traditional job security associated with civil service jobs is increasingly being eroded by requirements for performance contracts, appraisals linked to rewards and sanctions etc. The *psychological contract* has been broken and with it commitment and loyalty. HR managers must work to sustain the psychological contract between employers and employees. This requires managers to develop specialist knowledge and skills in core HR practices like recruitment, promotions, deployments, training and development and work design. They should continuously seek better ways of doing things and develop employment practices that promote high employee commitment in a system where extensive re-structuring is quickly eroding anticipated career paths for many employees and challenging traditional forms of employee commitment (Harris, 2005).

As functional experts, the HR managers should focus on having the right people in the Public Service and ensure they are motivated and professional in their approach to work. By adopting use of ICT, HR managers can ease some of the routine operational procedures, encourage flexibility, focus on individual performance and reduce formalization within the public sector. Use of ICT would facilitate speedy recruitment and retention of valued staff; enhance organizational cost effectiveness and encourage a performance driven culture (Truss, 2003, Kessler et.al. 2000 and Farnham & Horton, 2000).

As developers of human capital, they should seek to address organizational issues about management and development of people and employment relationships. They should influence line managers to develop strategies that make best use of core competences of the organizations' human resources. HR managers should seek to develop a proactive orientation towards learning and develop mechanisms which support and utilize the learning of individuals. People must be given the opportunity to change the way they think and interact through increased training and development and through new management methods (Senge et. al., 1999). This will ensure high levels of staff engagement and involvement and more

training ensures that employees in key roles have the right skills, expertise and freedom to use them.

According to Buyens et al (2001) development initiatives should move from a reactive isolated function towards assuming a more strategic input in which: human capital development is not just about training but should focus on supporting the learning process throughout the organization; everyone in the organization should be involved in supporting the learning process and learning is seen as part of everyday work and not a separate activity. HR managers must ensure training and development contributes and is integrated with rewards and recognition, information flow, vision and strategy. They should contribute towards effective talent Management through such processes like Workforce Planning, employee appraisal and learning needs analysis

As strategic and business partners, HR managers should be able to see the whole picture and understand how human resources can help in achievement of the organization's mandate. They should focus on the future while dealing with the present and seek to develop capacities of individuals and teams. They should play a role in formulating the Vision, Mission and strategic objectives of the organization. They should bring know-how on change management and partner effectively with line managers to develop and implement strategy. As Business Partners, they must be Part of strong HR Function, Participate in strategic initiatives, provide consulting services to internal clients and co-operate closely with clients to bring innovative ideas. They should share responsibility for people management with line managers and ensure they take people management issues seriously and that their management of staff allows for discretionary behavior to spur creativity and increase productivity (Purcell, 2003).

As HR leaders, they should become experts at effective organizational communication and executive leadership processes, then set standards and influence compliance by collaborating with other functions. They should break down 'silos' and integrate action towards achievement of goals. They should be change agents, to facilitate change in organization, protect employees against the side effects of constant changes, align different projects together and minimize their impact. Their greatest challenge will be to build capacity for change. This requires them to be more innovative and to continuously review and introduce new working practices that improve the performance of people so that they deliver the goals of their organizations. Buchanan & Body (1992) identified five competence clusters required for people to be effective change agents. These include: Team building abilities; networking skills; communication; negotiation and management and leadership skills

## **Factors facilitating HR managers in their roles**

### *Strategic positioning*

The leadership of HR in many countries has been elevated to senior management level and even to policy level. This requires HR managers to stop watching from the sidelines and concentrate on all-round excellence as they sit at table with other managers. It gives HR a forum to negotiate ownership of the HR agenda and an opportunity to adopt a strategic role. By building their credibility and being proactive, HR managers can utilize innovative strategies to demonstrate an understanding of business and gain the trust of line managers. Gaining trust and credibility is a by-product of doing things right. It requires them to change their thinking and acquire appropriate skills especially in employment relations, team

building, interpersonal skills and negotiation skills. They should develop a HR strategy to ensure people issues are kept at the heart of business decision making.

To raise the profile of HR in the organization, HR managers must challenge their thinking and change their mindset. *'It is impossible to develop new ways of organization and management while continuing to think in old ways'* (Gareth Morgan, 1993) What HR practitioners need is the kind of knowledge they can apply to their behavior in the midst of ongoing events in order to help them inquire more effectively with other managers about their common purpose and about how they can produce outcomes congruent with such purpose. By learning to change the frame they use to make sense of the world (mindset), they can change meaning and when meaning changes, their behavior will follow suit (Cope, 2001). By demonstrating knowledge of what the organization does, they will give line managers a credible reason to consult them.

As strategists, they should direct the thinking within the organization from the traditional 'doctor-type' thinking to the more innovative 'architect-type' of thinking. A doctor examines a patient and on noting the symptoms goes ahead to make a diagnosis, and a line of treatment. He thus identifies a problem, analyses it, and identifies the cause and prescribes treatment based on past experience. An architect on the other hand asks the client questions like; 'where is your land?', 'how much do you want to spend?', 'what's your need?' and then goes on to *design* something. A good architect does not go through a book of patterns or relate to what happened in the past to help his client, he acts more like a consultant who guides the client through a process in which he is able to come up with solutions suitable to his unique problem.

#### *Transformative leadership*

People in an organization have a position and experience different levels of access to and understanding of the evolving and changing external context of which they are part but do not have access to sharing their perspective with senior decision makers. Traditional notions of hierarchy are intolerant to views from below because of well ingrained 'junior is ignorant' unspoken philosophy. There is a need for an enabling leadership which creates the right conditions to optimize learning, exploration of different perspectives and problem solving. Leaders' roles must be less about driving performance against a pre-determined vision and more about creating a process of sharing the wisdom of many different and contrary perspectives (Stacey, 2007)

#### *Continuing professional development:*

The skills that made one get their job won't probably be the same to sustain that job forever. It pays to actively seek opportunities to develop new skills, gain different experiences and expand your networks. Otherwise, your speciality is at risk of being outdated soon. Practitioners must keep updating their knowledge and skills required for their roles in the organization. Organizations must facilitate development of their HR managers for them to be effective. Building capacity of HR managers is not so much about traditional training programs. It should be more about developing intellectual capital and promoting organizational, team and individual learning. It is about planning approaches to encouragement of self development; self managed learning with appropriate support and guidance from within the organization. It is about reshaping attitudes. Training has tended to focus on skills and recently on customer focus. There is need for a pragmatic approach towards attitudinal focused training (Economic Commission for Africa?, 2004).



HR managers must demonstrate value in what they do. Value is a measure of efficiency and effectiveness. A value chain is a way of looking at an organization's processes as a chain of activities meant to convert inputs into public services. Value to customers result from activities that differentiate the service, lower cost and meet needs quickly. According to Cheal (2006), HR managers should operate in a way that increases public value generated by their organizations. Moore (1995) proposes that value can be increased when the level of service provision increases in quality, equity and fairness and when it is sustainable and enhances the level of trust between the Government and its citizens.

### **Factors inhibiting HR managers performing their roles**

#### *Heritage*

*We are often mediocre because of our conformity to past solutions or ways of behaving. The big danger in conforming to any pattern that is accepted is that we do not even question why the pattern is accepted or by whom it was accepted in the first place.*-**Unknown**

There are distinctive features of the Public sector context that have inhibited the development of the HRM function and encouraged an essentially administrative role with limited influence. Traditionally, the function was characterized by low credibility, a narrow operational contribution and a peripheral position. The influence of this Public sector 'heritage' has coloured peoples perception of HR roles. Again, over the years, Public service has been characterized by job stability, routine jobs handed down from the top in a well organized hierarchy. Decisions were made at the top and all that was expected of those in lower rungs of the ladder was to implement the decisions without question. HR managers are now expected to take decisions and to offer leadership in strategy making which is far from what they are used to and this poses a challenge.

#### *Lack of visibility:*

Lack of HR visibility in organizations is related more to their skills and their capacity to keep other departments informed of what they do and the relationship between HRM and other managers in the organization. There is lack of specificity about what it means for HR to be strategic and what they are meant to be doing on a day to day basis in their jobs. Ulrich (2008) argues that while HRM practitioners may now have access to the senior management meaning that they are at the table with others, it is still doubtful if 'getting to the table was just about ego and status? He proposed that it should be more about what they bring to the table -if all they talk about is HR, they are missing the point. They must talk ...globalization, strategy and customers-issues that affect HR and the organization.

#### *Inconsistencies between tradition and best practice*

People management in the Public sector is in transition between personnel administrative / management preoccupied with basic record keeping and compliance with the law, performance records and recruitment criteria than with strategic focus, business partnering or professional practice (Epan, 2005). Inconsistencies exist between best practices to pursue and the traditional models. For example, best practice models emphasize performance management and performance related pay in a system where traditionally salaries are determined centrally. Again, civil service has always paid attention to equal opportunities, diversity HR and issues of 'demonstrable' fairness in HR practices. This inconsistency prevents institutionalization of best practice. The balance between operational and strategic roles is still an unresolved issue. HR managers are still kept too focused on operational

issues. The strategic input they can make is too constrained by the time they have to commit to administrative duties, lack of skills and lack of incentives.

#### Stakeholder expectations

The role of HR Managers is contingent on expectations of its stakeholders. These act as mediating mechanisms in generating meaning and sharing about what effective HR managers should be doing. However, *if somebody is used to seeing you in one role, then all of a sudden, they are trying to accept you in another that could be a challenge.* Senior managers do not often involve HR managers in mainstream decisions and planning. People issues are therefore not accorded sufficient attention at an early stage in the decision making process. While senior management profess that people are strategic assets, the HRM systems have not been integrated with the operational systems. Therefore, HR managers cannot be used to leverage the business perspective (Becker, Huselid & Ulrich, 2001)

#### *Lack of alignment*

Since the onset of reforms, most issues HR managers have to deal with have been externally driven e.g. Retrenchment and other cost cutting measures of early 2000's, reforms and HR had very little input. In many instances, Africa Public Services have implemented strategies designed by outside experts with questionable knowledge of the African environment. Now, a lot of innovations brought into public sector HRM have come from the private sector. Most of the issues require rapid organizational responses and effective decision making without reducing quality (Stewart, 2005) and by a HRM function least prepared for this.

Lack of alignment between national priorities and Government policy, planning and budgeting and delivery and implementation leaves HRM hanging in the balance. HR issues tend to be an "add on" in reforms in the Public sector. Thus, while HRM function is still structured the same way it was in pre-reform days, it is doubtful whether it is possible to transfer the body of sound HR practice in the private sector to the public sector. With limited resources often at its disposal, it is also not possible for the public sector HRM manager to combine all the four roles of business partner; change agent; administrative expert and employee champion conceptualized by Ulrich(1997) to deliver desired results.

#### *Declining Values*

Lam (1997) noted that declining civil service morale is an impediment to the implementation of new public management initiatives. Human resource managers are expected to enhance commitment of employees who are increasingly being fearful of being measured in case it translates to a job loss; increased workloads and changing work environments. Harris (2005) found that in a sector offering less job security than before while facing growing levels of employment regulation, litigation and resource constraints, it is becoming more difficult to enhance commitment ( Harris, 2005)

Human Resource managers are expected to be paragons of virtue in an environment of declining values. A study done by Agere & Mendoza(1999) for Commonwealth Secretariat found that social values of integrity, honesty, dependability, helpfulness, impartiality and fairness etc. are fast disappearing from the Public service in Africa. Corruption, meaning behavior that deviates from the normal duties of a public servant because of pecuniary or status gains (McCormack, 1997) is now a pervasive phenomenon in Africa and has its impact in terms of capacity to enhance effectiveness of service delivery. This is making it extremely difficult to enhance efficiency of systems of management and accountability.

## Recommendations for Strategic Action

### i) *Match rhetoric with action*

Thomas (1996) proposed that catch-phrases feature prominently in the vocabulary of civil service reforms all round the world. However, the generals of administrative reforms prefer to match in action behind a protective advance guard of rhetoric. The rhetoric draws on whatever ideas are internationally fashionable resulting in many statements of intent and no corresponding action to back it up. For Africa, implementing the Charter must be through matching the rhetoric and the reality in the area of HRM; between HRM theory and practice; between what the HRM function says it is doing and that practice as perceived by employees and between what senior management believes to be the role of HR professionals and the role it actually plays (Gratton L. & Hailey, V. H. 1999).

### ii) *Decentralize policy making 'Think globally, act locally'*

Success stories of reforms in Africa include the “*corporatization*’ of public enterprises by converting civil service departments into free standing agencies as has happened with many income tax departments. These enterprises good performance has everything to do with the management of their human resources. Perhaps there is need to refashion the delivery of human resource management services at national levels to allow each Ministry to develop policies that are feasible in the context of its mandate. This requires decentralization of policy making and to adopt a more context specific approach. Then each Ministry / Department can develop their own HR systems that support alignment with organizational strategies to deliver generic outcomes of HR: strategy execution, administrative efficiency, employee contribution and capacity for change (Ulrich, 2001). This will allow borrowing of best sectoral policies and practices globally, analyzing the implications in order to implement only what can work locally to produce desired results.

### iii) *Refashion delivery of key HR services*

The prime Minister of Sweden was quoted in a Newsweek article “*Sweden is so tough*” in 2006 saying that he believed they were doing relatively well because they had developed policies that facilitated structural adjustments e.g. those that facilitated change for individuals meaning they provided people with opportunities to learn new things and to move or change jobs even late in life.

HRM reforms are not automatically transferable from one setting to another. Shifting towards more strategic models of HRM require repositioning of HR organization, its structures, processes and boundaries. There may be a need to review how Governments recruit, reward and punish errant workers by reviewing the role of Public Service Commissions in Africa. In this era of performance contracting, there is need to enhance flexibility of public service managers in the hiring of staff to meet their contractual obligations; improve their ability to reward and motivate their employees to perform better and strengthen their ability to purge underperformers from their ministries/ Departments. There is also a need to increase discretion in the management of people by eliminating many procedural restrictions on deployments, transfers and appointments in the civil service.

### iv) *Paradigm shift in training and development*

There is a significant challenge for HR staff if they are to fulfill their role of providing advice on strategic organizational development since current development initiatives may not be sufficient. A lot of training in the public service has been more on development of skills and

acquisition of knowledge. There is need for a paradigm shift to focus more on changing of mindsets. To do this effectively, each country should specify a competency framework for their HR professionals to guide their development. The frameworks would indicate expected professional standards of HR practice and therefore act as a guide in the recruitment of HR managers. This has happened elsewhere e.g. in the UK, where they have defined HR professional standards under four key areas: knowing the business; demonstrating HR expertise; acting as a change agent and building personal credibility (<http://www.psg.civilservice.gov.uk/>). There is need in Africa to move towards this competency based training and proactive use of other developmental initiatives like coaching, mentoring; job shadowing; internships etc

v) *Continuing Research to inform policy*

There is a need to institutionalize research on HRM practice in the civil service to inform on how re-positioning of HR has affected HR organization, its structures, processes and boundaries. This would ensure that HR is not assigned a role requiring a more proactive role while it remains enslaved in a reactive administrative role focused on personnel matters- *'like putting new wine in old wineskins'*. Research should inform the adoption of innovative HRM practices from the private sector so that they have similar positive impact on performance in the public service (Pichault, 2007).

**Conclusions:**

The more Africa adopts new public management ideas, the more it will require strengthening the management of its human resources. Human Resource managers will have to 'remove the log in their eyes' with regard to professionalism for them to see the log in others eyes and remove it. The hallmark of a professional is their commitment to doing things right and in their continuing development along with others and this is what HR managers should aspire for.

Implementation of the Charter for Public service requires HR managers to offer leadership in people issues and to pay attention to their multiple roles as employee champions; business and strategic partners and developers of human capital. Networking and effective partnering with line managers facilitates HR managers to perform their roles while lack of skills, low credibility and failure to align their activities to address strategic needs of the organizations tend to inhibit their effectiveness. Governments in Africa should purposefully decide what they want HR managers to be able to do and then refashion the structures and delivery of HR services to match needs for modernization in the various sectors. It is not enough to borrow from the private sector if no empirical research is done to determine how well the borrowed practices will situate within the civil service. Research will help to match the rhetoric of HRM transforming Public service delivery to the reality of making it play its transformative role effectively.

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