

Role of Cabinet Secretary as Liaison between the President and Ministers

The Liberian Experience

by

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INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- A hybrid Cabinet system
- The Act creating the Office of Director-General (DG) of the Cabinet (mid-1960s)
- The TOR of the DG of the Cabinet
- The DG as Cabinet member/ministerial rank
- Sharing the Office of the President
- Creating the Cabinet Secretariat and building capacity

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN CABINET SYSTEM AND PROCESSES

- 10 Guidelines for Cabinet Presentation (2009)
- First Cabinet Manual (2010)
- Cabinet eNewsletter (2010)
- Advanced Cabinet Meetings Schedule (2010)
- Cabinet Directory (2010 – periodic updates)
- Revised Cabinet Manual (2012)
- Cabinet Information Session (2012)
- Cabinet Updates/Briefing (2012)
- Cabinet Survey (2013)

PRE-CABINET PREPARATION OF DOCUMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Section 7 of the Cabinet Manual (preparing documents for Cabinet)
- Section 9 of the Cabinet Manual (Cabinet presentation guidelines)
- One-page Executive Summary for the President
- Two- to Five-page Summary and Recommendation(s) for Cabinet
- Distribution of PowerPoint Script
- Briefing Notes for the President (2011)

Preparation and the actual Cabinet Meetings

- Setting the Cabinet Agenda
- Cabinet Agenda Template (2009)
- Indicative Timing for Cabinet Meetings (2010)
- FYI for the Cabinet Chair (2011)
- Cabinet Updates/Briefing (2012)
- AOB – for information-sharing only

POST-CABINET MEETING PROTOCOLS

- Cabinet Minutes with Actions Grid (2009)
- Follow-up Matrix of Cabinet decisions per all MACs (2010)
- Summaries of Cabinet Minutes (2010)
- Status Reports from Follow-up Matrix for President's attention (2010)
- Cabinet Post-mortem (2011)

THE LIAISON ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL (DG) OF THE CABINET

Relationship between the President and Ministers:

- Cabinet as the President's political family
- The President's view of Cabinet Ministers
- The President as Chair of the Cabinet
- The Director-General as "wise counsel" of the political family

The Liaison Role (contd.)

Relationship between the Director-General (DG) and Ministers:

- Ministers as political animals
- The DG as a facilitator and liaison
- Consultation with the Dean of Cabinet
- Communicating with Ministers – email log
- The Cabinet Secretariat as a Resource Center
- Fostering a mutually beneficial relationship

The Liaison Role (contd.)

Balancing Access to the President:

- Access through the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs/Chief of Office Staff
- Access through the Director-General of the Cabinet
- Filling the Communication gaps
- Inter-Cabinet Dialogue (2012)

INCREASING ROLE OF THE DG

- Scheduling Cabinet Briefings with the President
- Drafting the Dry-Season Cabinet Schedule (of Cabinet Retreats/County Tours)
- Conduit of Presidential Directives
- The DG as participant in policy discussions
- The DG as coordinator of the Performance Contract
- Evaluation of the DG by the President

Conclusion

Thank you for your kind attention!