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!