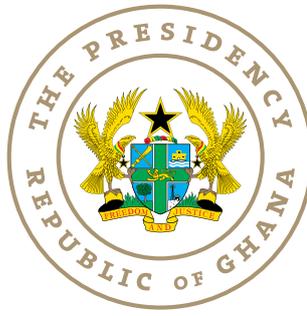


HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

TALKING POINTS

**SECOND ROUNDTABLE MEETING
OF AFRICAN CABINET SECRETARIES**

**FLAGSTAFF HOUSE
TUESDAY 14TH APRIL, 2015
(10:00 – 11:30HR)**



Dr. Surrur; President of the Council of African Cabinet Secretaries,
Your Ladyship the Chief Justice,
Chairperson of the Council of State,
Chief of Staff,
Distinguished Cabinet Secretaries,
Ministers of State and Hon. Members of Parliament,
The Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Ghana.

Nearly sixty years ago, our nation's founder and Pan-Africanist trailblazer, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah urged Ghanaians to continually remember that the eyes of the world are upon us in whatever we do. This admonition issued six decades ago resonates across Africa. Today the continent now bares testimony to the maturity of democracy, characterized by transparent elections, the rule of law and freedom of speech and movement, never witnessed before.

Over the last two decades, Ghanaians have worked tirelessly to ensure that transparency and accountability define our narrative as a burgeoning democracy. This is, perhaps, most evident in our globally respected electoral processes. In my government, good governance,

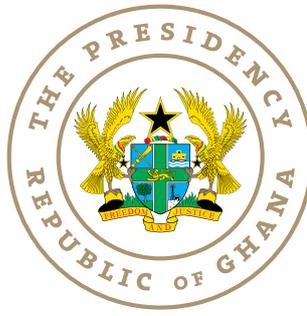


transparency and the fight against corruption are the bedrock of the Agenda for Transformation which we are actively pursuing.

The country's progress in this area has been commendable. For instance, Ghana recently adopted the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP). This effort is characterized by constructive and steady partnerships across stakeholders, including civil society. As a result of such initiatives, Ghana ranks high in all major governance indicators: human rights, freedom of speech, transparency and rule of law.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to know that the Africa Cabinet Government Network has decided to begin continent-wide deliberations on how it can champion transparency and accountability in policy formulation, implementation and accountability for results of public policies and programs.

In 2012, my Government was the first to introduce the notion of policy delivery, when I issued a comprehensive set of policy measures, and immediately followed these up with "instructions to deliver." However, as many of you know very well, the reality in most of our jurisdictions is that there is a long and often inconsistent trajectory towards ensuring policy delivery, even with instructions to deliver at the highest levels of government.

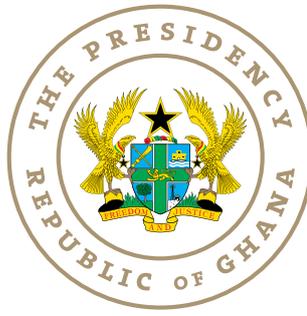


Permit me then to enumerate the strategy we have pursued, starting in 2013, to create and strengthen the machinery that would ensure a more robust process of policy making and the implementation of policies through Cabinet; as well as ensuring the delivery of the highest priorities in our public policy efforts.

First, the process begins with elaborating a clear policy framework. In 2013, I presented a transformative policy framework in my State of the Nation Address to Parliament and the people of Ghana. As this then constitutes the overarching policy direction of Government, Cabinet gave endorsement to the SONA, Parliament debated and accepted it. Being the authoritative policy framework, Cabinet then proceeds to be guided by SONA in all its deliberations as it seeks to translate intents and visions, into realistic, measurable policies, programs and projects.

As memoranda are presented to Cabinet, Ministers and all Ministries are guided to identify the key deliverables which will become the results of their policy making efforts. Indicators for assessing and tracking policy implementation have been developed to guide all Ministries when they submit their Memoranda for review.

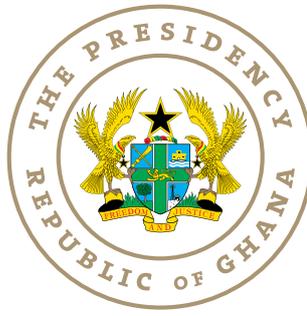
Next, to ensure transparency and accountability, sponsors of policy memoranda are enjoined to engage in wide-ranging consultations with relevant stakeholders, especially citizens in whose primary interest such policies and programs are being developed.



In effect, transparency and accountability in policy making, implementation and oversight undergoes a rigorous analytical process under my direct leadership, as President. It entails a clear transformative strategy; competent guidance and capacity-building support by the Cabinet Secretariat; a clear strategy on engaging citizens; and well-coordinated tools for tracking performance and, finally, ensuring that citizens are involved in providing feedback on the performance.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me elaborate on the last loop in transparency and accountability – accountability to citizens. This is one area of policy implementation that we all need to do more work on. The policies and programs we develop are all directed towards improving the lives of citizens, especially the citizens who are poor and marginalized – women, children and those with disabilities.

Therefore no public policy or program is worth the paper it is written on, if it has not engaged the primary stakeholders, the citizens, in its formulation, implementation and tracking its performance. I therefore urge you, in this Roundtable, to deliberate on various models of citizen engagement in policy making, implementation and oversight. It is this dimension that registers whether or not the policies and programs are transparent and accountable.

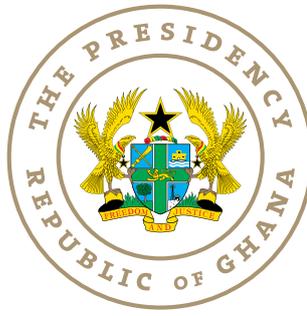


Here in Ghana, structures have been put in place to strengthen the policy delivery capacity of Cabinet and the government as a whole. We are reconstructing government for delivery. These mechanisms have gone a long way in ensuring that policy priorities are adequately reflected in Cabinet decisions, and that these decisions are effectively implemented and monitored for optimum delivery.

The Policy Delivery programme in Cabinet in its first year achieved some significant successes. The programme began the process of reducing the wage bill by conducting a Wage Verification Exercise across the country to enable government better understand the problem. This has culminated in purging the Government Payroll of “ghost names.” As part of this process, Cabinet made a set of decisions to systematically address the challenge of payroll fraud.

Under this policy delivery programme, for the first time in the history of governance at the centre, there is now increased coordination between the Policy Directorate, the President’s Secretariat and the Cabinet Secretariat. The increased coordination has meant better coherence in policy formulation and implementation.

This has also meant ensuring that the three units closest to the Presidency in priority setting, present a united front in influencing key decisions with other MDAs. The three units through various meetings and stakeholder discussions have used their influence and in many



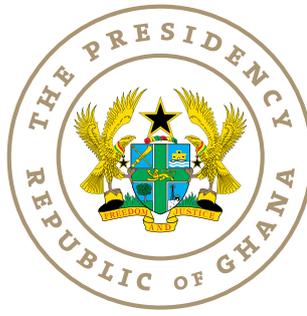
instances eased the bureaucracy in the centre that blocks delivery. The results from these efforts are increasingly being manifested in tangible reductions in expenditures on fraudulent payments to “ghost workers” and prosecution of persons involved in fraudulent activities in the payroll.

In effect, transparency and accountability in policy implementation through Cabinet, is leading to significant savings.

Such initiatives have tremendously increased the government’s credibility for driving reform and achieving impact. Instituting policy delivery systems within our Cabinet frameworks can help us ensure transparency and accountability in our policy formulation and implementation processes.

The structures established within Cabinet to assist with its policy delivery functions have focused on very strategic, overarching priorities. It zeroes in on some of the most critical challenges to the country, in this case, addressing maternal and child health related issues, where the aim is to improve the service delivery capacity of the Community-Based Health and Planning Service (CHPS) Initiative.

The theme of your Roundtable Meeting – ‘Transparency and Accountability in Policy Formulation and Implementation’ – underscores my rendition of the experiences here in Ghana. As Governments, we

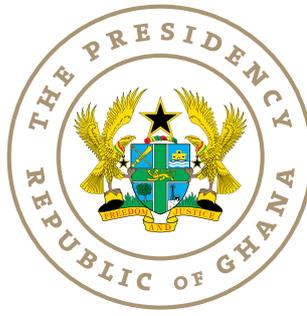


must ensure that we draw on evidence and opinion from all relevant sources, especially affected communities, businesses and other stakeholders. No longer can policy proposals be developed by bureaucrats behind closed doors and then imposed by political leaders, but this requires careful planning. We need to ensure that the voices of powerful interest groups do not drown out the weak or the silent majority.

Cabinet Secretaries have an important role in this, to help us decode the evidence and make balanced and fair decisions in the interests of all our citizens. Most importantly they need to ensure that these decisions are effectively and appropriately implemented.

Given the daily pressures on Presidents and Prime Ministers and Ministers, it is easy for us to take for granted the support that we get from Cabinet Secretaries and their staff. On behalf of other African leaders, let me take this opportunity to thank you for your work behind the scenes before, during and after each Cabinet meeting, to enable Cabinet members focus on the key issues and to make sound decisions to benefit our nations and our peoples.

As you proceed to discuss and exchange ideas, I urge you to keep the most important reason for our being here in mind, the PEOPLE. Let us work diligently towards ensuring that the mechanisms we adopt



directly and indirectly transform the lives of each and every person, from the doctor at the local hospital to the unemployed.

To my dear friend, Dr. Ernest Surrur, I would like to congratulate you and your colleagues on the initiative you have shown in setting up the Africa Cabinet Government Network. I am confident that this initiative will meaningfully contribute towards ensuring that Africa's development becomes a more tangible reality by improving support for executive government decision-making and helping us to make informed decisions in a transparent and accountable fashion. Like many governance initiatives, its impact will be indirect and largely behind the scenes, but no less important.

I have been reliably informed of the tenacity of your organization, and I commend your self-reliance in not being donor-dependent. Africa needs home-grown solutions to our unique challenges. We need also to tell our own stories of success, and learn from our own failures. History is made by people who are daring enough to learn from their own mistakes. Your organization is leading the way in using a peer learning approach to enrich the African experience in policy making and implementation; and now, this Roundtable will set the parameters for understanding transparency and accountability in policy making in Africa.

Let us get to work;

Thank You and God richly bless you all.