

# RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

## ***INTRODUCTION***

### **Background**

- 1.1 The Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) was set up under Act 39 of 2001 with a view to providing maximum autonomy to the Island of Rodrigues. Being a body corporate the RRA is empowered to make regulations pertaining to issues for which it has jurisdiction. The exercise of its functions is regarded as being conducted on behalf of the Republic of Mauritius. It is the responsibility of the Assembly to formulate and/or implement policies in respect of areas falling under its purview.
- 1.2 The functions of the Regional Assembly are carried out by the Executive Council which comprises the Chief Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Commissioner and five Commissioners. The Commissioners have the responsibility of exercising general direction and control over the Commission falling under their purview in line with the set policy.
- 1.3 As the Supervising Officer, the Island Chief Executive (ICE) is vested with the responsibility for the efficient administration of all the functions of the Executive Council and the staff of the RRA operates under his administrative control. The ICE is empowered to exercise the functions of the Magistrate (in the latter's absence), of the Director of Environment in the enforcement of environmental laws and of the Tourism Authority in the enforcement of Tourism Act.
- 1.4 The departments under the jurisdiction of the RRA have been grouped under the supervision of Departmental Heads who are Accounting Officers of their respective departments.

### **Consultations/Work Session with Stakeholders**

- 1.5 Official visit to Rodrigues has been a traditional approach of the Bureau in the context of a General Review of Pay and Grading Structures and Conditions of Service in the Public Sector. The visit is seen as an opportunity to: meet people of Rodrigues in general, understand the changes taking place in the work place, consult the Chief Commissioner and officials of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to have a thorough grasp of the mandate of the RRA and to hold meetings with all stakeholders to take cognizance of their organisational problems and provide practical and implementable solutions for an enhanced service delivery.
- 1.6 Prior to the visit, preliminary works were carried out, *inter alia*, to probe into the mass of materials submitted by the Rodrigues Administration in response to our circular letters, to organise sampling and despatch of Job Description Questionnaire, sampling and interview of employees in the manual grades in the

RRA, and to plan the different meetings with, on the one hand, the Staff Association, comprising namely the Rodrigues Government Employees Association (RGEA), the Government Services Employees Association (GSEA) and the Rodrigues Public Service Workers Union (RPSWU) and, on the other hand, the official side which includes the Island Chief Executive and the Department Heads of the different Commissions. The list of officers sampled for Job Description Writing and for interview as well as the schedule meetings with the official, staff sides and joint (Staff Association and Official Side) were communicated in advance to the Rodrigues Administration for prior arrangements.

- 1.7 However, prior to the official visit scheduled for May 2015, the Rodrigues Administration invited the Director to have an official preliminary meeting with the Island Chief Executive and other stakeholders. The Director accompanied by the acting Deputy Director went on a 3 day visit to Rodrigues from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The top management of the PRB met the Island Chief Executive (ICE) who was apprised of the calendar of activities and different stages involved which form part of the general review process. These stages comprise job description writing, site visits, meetings with different parties, staff associations, official side as well as individual employees. The ICE informed the PRB delegates that the RRA and the staff association would be submitting a joint memorandum for consideration by the Bureau and gave a brief description of the conduct of business of the RRA.
- 1.8 During consultations with all stakeholders, the Director made an exposé on the main themes of the forthcoming report, requested the Departmental Heads to focus on problem areas that were impeding on the service delivery of their organisations and to come up with proposals for PRB to address these issues. On the other hand, representatives of the Staff Associations expressed their grievances on several issues as well as implementation problem of certain recommendations made in the EOAC/Committee Reports. The Director invited them to submit their proposals well in advance to allow the Bureau ample time to study their representations before hearings scheduled for May 2015.
- 1.9 As per the established practice, the Bureau proceeded on its next mission to Rodrigues from 11 to 16 May 2015. Initially, on the 12 May 2015, an Acting Principal Job Analyst accompanied by a team of five Survey Officers started the interview of the selected job incumbents, wrote their job description and had them signed by job holders and where possible vetted and signed by their immediate supervisors and returned to the team. That exercise continued up to 15 May 2015. Those job description questionnaires which could not be completed were despatched later to the Bureau.
- 1.10 The Director and the Acting Deputy Director went to Rodrigues in the evening of the 12 May 2015. On the next day, the Directorate assisted by the Ag Principal

Job Analyst met the Island Chief Executive apprising him of the 4 days' visit programme. The delegation met the representatives of the Government Services Employees Association (GSEA) and heard two other staff Associations namely the RGEA and the RPSWU. During the latter meetings, the "Modus Operandi" of future submissions were discussed and agreed thereon.

- 1.11 On the 13 of May, the Director, HR and one Manager HR from the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (MCSAR) joined the PRB team. The Chief Commissioner received the Directorate and the Director, HR of the MCSAR in the early morning of the 14 May.
- 1.12 The Chief Commissioner apprised the delegation of the new policy orientation of the RRA and its main priorities. He invited the Director to give particular attention to some emerging and pending issues in the Next Review.
- 1.13 Consultative joint meetings were held as from the morning of 14 May which continued till 15 of May. Individual employees who expressed their wish to depone were also heard by the PRB delegation. Survey Officers after completing job description writings joined and assisted the Directorate during the last part of meetings which ended usually after 6.00 to 7.00 p.m.
- 1.14 During their stay, the Survey Officers conducted around 150 job description writings. Prior to the visit some 300 self-written description questionnaires were submitted to the RRA to be filled by officers.
- 1.15 A revised memorandum was handed over to the delegation at the time of meetings. The Bureau examined and discussed thoroughly each issue that was raised. Joint representations which were made related mainly to: the restructuring of different units in the RRA, restyling of grades/cadres as is obtainable in the Mauritian Civil Service, increasing the establishment size of exiting grades, creation of levels, filling of long standing vacant posts, requests for job-related allowances, payment of Rodriguan COLA, provision of training facilities for continual development and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to be adopted for certain categories of manual workers who are performing duties of a higher nature though not possessing the prescribed qualifications for the higher post, amongst others. Whenever creation of levels were submitted, parties were requested to provide profile, duties and justifications for same. For a few representations which were found to be incoherent, parties were requested to provide fresh submissions with additional information for examination anew. It was also strongly highlighted during the meetings of the excessive delay (at times one year) in the processing of representations by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms for conveying approval for payment of allowances and

prescriptions of schemes of service. Representatives of the MCSAR promised to probe into the matter and to act fast on their representations.

1.16 At the very start of every meeting, the Director emphasized on the main theme of the forthcoming Report which reads as follows:- “Transformation of the Public Sector for enhanced service delivery in order to meet citizen’s/non citizen’s as well as other stakeholders needs”. Expatiating on the theme, the Director highlighted that for the transformation to happen, alignment of the resources of the following six institutions would be mandatory:

- (i) Public Service Commission – responsible for recruiting the best qualified, most suitable and meritorious candidates;
- (ii) the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for providing funds for posts and projects;
- (iii) the Ministry of Technology, Information Communication and Innovation for the provision of innovating IT Infrastructure;
- (iv) the Ministry of Good Governance and Financial Services for assisting organisations in adopting/adapting the principles of transparency and accountability and good governance in their day to day management.;
- (v) the Pay Research Bureau – responsible for making recommendations pertaining to salary grading and condition of service; and ensuring the proper interpretation and implementation of its recommendations.
- (vi) the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms – responsible for implementing PRB’s recommendation and spearheading reforms in the Public Sector

1.17 The Director expatiated that after the publication of the Report, it would be mandatory for Ministries/Departments/Organisations to carry out HR Audit in order to identify the appropriate number of officers/employees on establishment so as to enable the right sized organisation to deliver on their respective mandate. He also averred that in the forthcoming Report, emphasis would be made on the concept of “Strategic HR” which would encompass: HR Planning, Recruitment/Retirement and other HR policies to ensure best practices in the Service.

### **Report on Man Power Assessment and Re-engineering of Commissions/ Departments**

1.18 The staff association and the Management has expressed their deep concern regarding the need for a re-engineering of the Commissions, the absence of which is impeding service delivery. The Island Chief Executive requested for a separate exercise to be carried out independently by PRB. The Director advised the parties and particularly the ICE to take up the matter with the Secretary to

Cabinet and Head of Civil Service. We have made recommendation pertaining to specific Reform in RRA in this Report.

### **Specific Reforms for the RRA**

1.19 During meetings, Management and Staff Associations averred that after 14 years of existence of the RRA, the need for certain reforms has become imperative, in order to enable the Commissions to deliver on their respective mandate, pertaining to befitting organisation structure catering for the specificity of Rodrigues, better existing human resources to adapt to changes and new responsibilities.

### **Findings and Considerations**

1.20 During consultations with Management of the different Commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Unions, the following salient features were highlighted:

- (i) A few divisions/sections cannot deliver their objectives effectively in accordance with laws and regulations in the absence of the appropriate structures/human resources. Some divisions are manned by a single officer and, as such, this causes long delays and work being attended to only partially.
- (ii) In several sections, the most senior officer is being paid an *ad hoc* allowance for performing higher duties in addition to the normal ones.
- (iii) Some structures need re-invention and modernization, as they do not fit the new sets of expectations in line with the new policy framework and the new direction. These structures have, so far, proved to be defective to meet the gradual increase in demand.
- (iv) Certain structures, particularly in those sectors constituting the major pillars, require professional and trained staff on their establishment.
- (v) Some structures call for strengthening at the top to cater for additional administrative and technical responsibilities as there is a gap in the overall supervision/coordination; hence the need for a permanent head to be accountable.
- (vi) Other structures need reinforcement at the promotional level, even on a one to one basis, as of necessity, to be in compliance with legal requirements and regulations in force.
- (vii) There is need for polyvalent and multifunctional personnel in some sectors, which would prove beneficial in terms of the judicious use of available human resources, job enlargement and a reduction of the multiplicity of grades and grade appellations.

- (viii) Some schemes of service need restructuring to remove rigidities and to widen the field of recruitment.
- (ix) With the advent of rapid development in the island and the consequent changes, the services of officers in a few grades would no longer be required.

## **Conclusions**

- 1.21 To address the foregoing issues, we have, among others, professionalised certain functions; strengthened several structures with the creation of posts at the apex to ensure proper accountability; strengthened other cadres to ensure an adequate level of supervision; phased out those grades which are no longer required; and restructured the schemes of service of a few grades to remove rigidities, to widen the field of recruitment and to align with the provisions set in the guidelines for prescription of scheme of service. In other instances where more in-depth studies are required, we have recommended that appropriate HR assessment exercises be undertaken for a complete modernisation of the whole service.
- 1.22 In the process of making our recommendations, we have taken into consideration the physical separation of Rodrigues, its isolation, the limited opportunities for employment and career fulfilment as well as the special needs of Rodrigues in view of its distinct identity.
- 1.23 We are, in this Report, while making recommendations taken into consideration, the following:-
- (i) the qualified job market;
  - (ii) service provided to communities by certain cadres; and
  - (iii) harmonisation, to the extent possible of cadres with what obtains in the Civil Service.

## **Consequential Structural Changes**

- 1.24 In general, structural changes effected in the General Services/Administrative cadres, Purchasing and Supply cadre, Finance cadre, Internal Control cadre and the Workmen's Group in the Civil Service have, as appropriate, been extended to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. **These changes are dealt with in details in the relevant Chapters of Volume II Part I of this Report.**

## **Structure of the Report**

- 1.25 As the organisation structures are linked to and depend upon the mandate of the Commissions/Divisions and the pay structures are based on the number of levels in the organisation structures, the Bureau considers that for this present review exercise, it would be practical to look at both structures i.e. organisation and pay Commissionwise/Divisionwise as it was the case in past reviews. Such an

approach would, besides emphasising the link between the mandates of the departments/divisions and their structures, facilitate the treatment of specific issues proper to each department/division.

1.26 The recommendations related to organisation design and pay structures have, therefore, been made under the respective Commissions/Divisions. The Master Conversion Table is given at Annex I.

1.27 In the introduction in respect of each Commission/Division, we have, wherever possible, defined and spelt out clearly the goals, objectives and future orientations for our users and have emphasised the link between the mandate of each Commission/Division and the pay and grading structures – a link primordial in the context of the drive to inculcate a performance management culture in the Public Sector. In defining the mandates, we have had the collaboration and inputs from all parties, more particularly management, which we acknowledge.

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