

PRESENTATION ON CIVIC EDUCATION UNDER LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY THEMATIC AREA FOR THE MASTER TRAINERS' CLASS AT NIMROD HOTEL LUWERO ON THE 8TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 2016 BY RONALD SEKAGYA – REGISTRAR, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION.

Note: We will navigate through the Leadership and Accountability thematic area of the Consolidated Civic Education Modules – Civic Education for Effective Participation of Uganda Citizens

Uganda resting peacefully at position 139 out of 168 countries according to Transparency International should get us concerned as to what is going wrong¹. The country has probably one of the most admirable laws in the world and yet we still find it hard to redeem ourselves out of the mess of poor leadership and accountability. The president of Uganda has been on song as a visionary leader but seems to be losing the battle on corruption. We also know of many good leaders in the country who are being failed by what we should address in this presentation. We have various institutions or a framework for accountability and good leadership but the war on corruption seems to be failing. The constitution empowers the Parliament, Local Government councils, Inspector General of Government, the Auditor General, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Uganda Human Rights Commission, and Courts of law to check on the poor leadership that leads to wastage of public funds and resources². Various provisions in our supreme law being the Constitution are so elaborate to wit: the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy XXVI on Accountability state that

“(i) All public offices shall be held in trust for the people.

(ii) All persons placed in positions of leadership and responsibility shall, in their work, be answerable to the people

(iii) All lawful measures shall be taken to expose, combat and eradicate corruption and abuse or misuse of power by those holding political and other public offices”.

The Constitution further provides under article thus:

¹<http://www.transparency.org/country#UGA> last accessed on the 8th December, 2016

²Uganda Project Implementation and Management Centre (UPIMAC), “Consolidated Civic Education Modules” at 95-97

“The Permanent Secretary or the accounting officer in charge of a Ministry or department shall be accountable to Parliament for the funds in that Ministry or department. Any person holding a political or public office who directs or concurs in the use of public funds contrary to existing instructions shall be accountable for any loss arising from that use and shall be required to make good the loss even if he or she has ceased to hold that office.

(3) Parliament shall monitor all expenditure of public funds”.

With such good laws, there must be reasons why we are not achieving the results we intended. We may have to examine success stories in the world to find out why probably we are where we are.

Following the 2005 World Summit at the 60th Session of the General Assembly, many of the transparency and accountability reforms (Related Resolutions) endorsed by world leaders at that time, relating to increased transparency and accountability in the UN Secretariat affairs have been implemented in some form within the UN Secretariat.³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has a long-standing commitment to transparency, with Country Offices publishing financial, procurement and programme information on respective websites on an annual basis.⁴ There have been attempts now in Uganda for the Ministry of Finance to publish funds released to each Government Institution. This we must recognize as a good practice. It was a secret for anyone to know how much an institution has received in the past. Considering the success achieved by such reputable institutions may be a thing that can help us appreciate the best way to sensitize.

Accountability an obligation to the leader (definition)

The way our leaders understand accountability will inform how they respond. According to our civic education module, accountability is given the meaning as a policy of holding public officials or other employees accountable for their actions and results. This definition seems so brief to bring out what is expected of the leader. Looking at the definitions of accountability elsewhere brings interesting results. When the United Nations Secretary General was taking comprehensive steps towards effective resource accountability, he stated;

Accountability is the obligation of the Organization and its staff members to be answerable for delivering specific results that have been determined through a clear

³<https://usun.state.gov/about/2196/6657> Last accessed on the 7th December, 2016

⁴<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/transparency/overview.html> Last accessed on the 7th December, 2016

and transparent assignment of responsibility, subject to the availability of resources and the constraints posed by external factors. Accountability includes achieving objectives and results in response to mandates, fair and accurate reporting on performance results, stewardship of funds, and all aspects of performance in accordance with regulations, rules and standards, including a clearly defined system of rewards and sanctions⁵

“Accountability is the obligation of the Secretariat and its staff members to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by them, and to be responsible for honouring their commitments, without prequalification or exception. Accountability includes achieving objectives and high-quality results in a timely and cost-effective manner, in fully implementing and delivering on all mandates to the Secretariat approved by the United Nations intergovernmental bodies and other subsidiary organs established by them in compliance with all resolutions, regulations, rules and ethical standards; truthful, objective, accurate and timely reporting on performance results; responsible stewardship of funds and resources; all aspects of performance, including a clearly defined role of the oversight bodies and in full compliance with accepted recommendations⁶.”

UNDP on the other hand considers accountability to be the obligation to

(i) Demonstrate that work has been conducted in accordance with agreed rules and standards and (ii) report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans⁷. This may explain why UNDP is ranked first in all United Nations programmes twice. The conceptualization of accountability has a direct link to how leaders conduct their businesses.

We realize that accountability to be effective, work has to be conducted with agreed rules and standards, performance results and mandated roles and plans have to be fairly and accurately reported on. Most importantly, accountability is an obligation on part of the leader.

Instead of waiting for the people to bring up information about non performing entities, these leaders should be submitting reports to the agencies for scrutiny. If all accountability documents had to be submitted through Inspector General of Government and police, the impact would probably be greater. We should think about sensitizing the public with a clear message that the leaders are under an obligation to account for their decisions and in a timely manner. Leaders must know the rules, standards, performance results and mandated roles and plans they must report on.

⁵A/64/640

⁶A/RES/64/259

⁷ See 4

The keys to a robust accountability framework adopted by the United Nations System should be considered in our Government entities in Uganda. As civic educators, we should sensitize the leaders to adopt these values.

1: **Leading by values and example** - accountability as a top priority in day-to-day operation and evidenced by high standards of integrity of senior management. Leading by values is the basis for all other key competencies of a manager. The value of accountability should be the number one priority in every aspect of the organization's/division's/work unit's day-to-day operation. Through their decisions, the managers have to put the emphasis on accountability. In the event of a conflicting decision, accountability should always come first. This also underlines the need for a strong accountability framework, but also for a strong culture of compliance, personal integrity and accountability. In any organization, behaviour of leaders automatically trickles down the hierarchical levels. Effectively the tone from the top has to be unambiguous and every manager should abide 100 per cent by the regulations, rules and policies.

2: **Leading by information and communication** - accountability through transparent decision-making. Information and communication are a crucial component of a positive culture of accountability. Management should exert every effort to close the existing information gaps between hierarchical levels, divisions and workunits of their organization. In terms of management skills and organizational culture, accountability is fostered by transparent decision-making processes. Staff and other stakeholders have to be informed about the process leading to decisions and its outcomes and perceive the process to be transparent. Lack of information and communication can seriously handicap an organization's effectiveness.

3: **Leading by motivation** - accountability through recognition of staff achievements. Accountability and integrity have to be permanently mutually supported and encouraged by real or psychological incentives. Short-term advantage and opportunity often prevail over the long-term perspective. Thus, continuous and strong positive reinforcements are needed to overcome this bias. There is always a need to encourage accountability and to motivate staff to act in an accountable way. Simple recognition can lead to increased staff accountability. Awards and rewards can supplement this, but their impact is limited in time and duration. Continuous recognition by supervisors and colleagues is the key to increased awareness of accountability issues.

4: **Leading by guidance and discipline** - a zero-tolerance policy for unacceptable behaviour at all levels. In order for the staff to perceive accountability as being one of the United Nations core values, management has to provide strong guidance first. Acceptable behaviour should be highlighted and the reasons for classifying some behaviours as not acceptable should be explained. The Staff Regulations and Rules (SRR) must be complemented by an explanatory

section/separate document highlighting the types of sanctions practised for certain kinds of misbehaviour. Sanctions should be carried out in an equal, systematic and transparent way from the top. All sanctions should be properly justified and executed with a thorough follow-up. This should be corroborated by the Secretary-General's annual reports on disciplinary matters and alleged unlawful behaviour and interviews conducted with management and staff representatives of United Nations organizations. Effective sanction mechanisms would deter every hierarchical level in the organization from engaging in non-accountable activities.

5: Leading by participation - an open dialogue should encourage mutual accountability. Participation is key to accountability because it transforms the accountability principle from a personal ethical guideline to a collective tradition, setting the basis for a shared culture of accountability. Ownership is then not only in the hands of management, but on every level. Staff participating in setting up such a culture should feel rewarded and their expertise can be used to improve existing systems. Their experience sheds a different light on existing practices. Management openness to feedback/complaints and the valuing of participation from member States, staff and the general public is important and sets the tone of the culture of accountability. Some organizations, including UNDP, state that they carry out regular and systematic surveys of development activities, staff perception and client satisfaction to continuously receive feedback with a view to improving current practices. This – if complemented by effective awards and rewards mechanisms – constitutes a great opportunity to initiate cultural change.

Accountability culture

Accountability that should be applicable at all levels, from top down should be adopted. The executive heads and the heads of major organizational units should therefore be the first to be held accountable for the results that they are expected to deliver.⁸

Lack of Political will to fight Corruption

The Inspector General of Government in Uganda was quoted protesting lack of political will to fight corruption.⁹ There have been press reports of selected prosecution. Though we cannot rely on these press allegations, we should be sensitizing the leaders especially those in politics to throw their will behind fighting corruption. These should be part of the targeted participants at all levels.

We should conclude on the note that the culture of accountability in Uganda should be upstaged. There is need for attitude change if our leaders will move in this new direction. The law seems to have overtaken our culture explaining why those investigated may not be

⁸ JIU/REP/2011/5

⁹ Daily Monitor Publication, "IGG protests lack of Political will to fight corruption" 4th August, 2016

prosecuted. As we sensitize, consistent sensitization of potential leaders should bear fruit. Targeting schools, tertiary and university should bring in a caliber of leaders with an accountability culture.

UPIMAC (CECU)